

NITH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF QUALIFIED PROPRIETORS
HELD AT FRIARS CARSE COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL
AULDGIRTH, DUMFRIES

on

15 March 2016 at 10.00 am

PRESENT

Percy Weatherall – Chairman
Erin Hunter – Buccleuch Estates Limited
Wally Wright – Netting Representative
Robbie Cowan – Caerlaverock
David Kempself – Dumfries & Galloway Angling Association
Thomas Florey – Savills
Brian Fox – P.O.F.R.
Jim Gregory
Danny Marshall
Peter Hutchison

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Jeff Walters
Raymond Mundell

IN ATTENDANCE

Roderick Styles – Clerk
James Henderson – Fishery Director (FD)
Deborah Parke – Nith Catchment Fishery Trust (FB)
David McMichael – Senior Water Bailiff

APOLOGIES

Derek Bathgate
Nick Brown
Nick Wright
Richard Gladwin

The Chairman convened the meeting and welcomed everybody in attendance.

The Chairman referred to the Agenda. The Clerk pointed out that item one of the Agenda should have stated that the Minutes were of the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors but dated 24 March 2015.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman asked for comments on these Minutes. There were none, there being unanimous approval.

2. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman referred to the Annual Report and asked for comments thereon. There were none thus deeming the Annual Report to have unanimous approval of those attending.

3. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Clerk referred to the Accounts and his notes thereon in the draft Annual Report, advising that he did not intend to comment on the Accounts unless there were specific questions.

The Clerk advised on the change of vehicle during the course of the previous financial year because of failure of the previous vehicle. The Clerk reported that the vehicle had been traded in with an engine management problem, account of which had been taken during negotiations on price, with agreement having been reached with Lloyds Isuzu to pay £500 to the bill incurred by them for repair of the previous vehicle to over £1,000.

The Accounts were approved by all concerned.

4. MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR AND THE NEAR FUTURE – (reference the draft annual report and Fishery Management Plan)

FD reported that enforcement may be a problem. The Nith had been categorised as a Category 3 River in the recent Government Categorisation of Rivers which meant 100% catch and release. FD expected that there would be problems with regard to people not returning fish. FD would have to enforce the law.

Engineering Plans – large scale overhead pylons were coming through the region.

A large bore gas pipeline was expected to run through the region. Wind farms were being constructed throughout the region. Hydro-electric schemes had decreased substantially due to the Government's decision to cut back on the tariff.

Coal mining had decreased with Hargreaves being the only operation extracting coal and that with a view to reconditioning the coal to make it more appealing at market. Work had started on the remaining sites to restore them.

A pump hydro storage scheme was being proposed for Glenmuckloch OCCS. This would be challenging for the Fishery. Feed would intake from the Nith for the initial purging of the system.

FD reported on a large amount of time being spent on Wild Fisheries Reform with his involvement at various meetings at Government level.

FB has done much work to get increase in number of predator birds to be scared off the river.

FB was attending outreach projects with children for educational purposes.

The Chairman reported on the AGM of Nith Catchment Fishery Trust held the previous evening. There had been a good report from FB. A lot of electrofishing work had been undertaken. Non-native species of vegetation were being dealt with. Nine hundred school children had been involved in the Fishing for the Future project to encourage them to become interested in the river and possibly to become anglers.

Danny Marshall asked what would happen if someone was caught in possession of a dead salmon. FD reported that he would have to continue to police the river system under the new law and rules that would apply in relation to 100% catch and release. It would become a criminal offence that he would have to report the taking of a dead fish on that basis to the Police.

Thomas Florey asked about the new gas pipeline and if there was a method statement had been issued yet. FD replied that he had been asked to look at a section of work from Cluden onwards to Lochfoot and the Consultant involved had no plans when last discussions had taken place. When the previous pipeline had been run through the system what had been expected to be an eight hour job took eleven days because rock was discovered half way through the river system.

The Board has baseline data for the rivers Nith and Cairn.

David Kempself asked that DGAA be kept informed of any pipeline crossing work. FD replied that he had asked the contractors to keep Angling Clubs informed directly and FD would do the same for DGAA.

FD asked that Danny Marshall get his members to advise if there were any problems with regard to the Euchar Water as it was projected that there would be four to five commercial projects in that area in the near future.

David Kempself invited FB to bring the Fishing for the Future project back to the Drum Fishery for which he was thanked.

5. A.O.C.B.

FD reported that the Board would have to produce a Conservation Plan given the Category 3 Status of the river. All rivers have been tasked with producing a Conservation Plan. Scottish Government is considering what to do with sea trout in 2017.

Scottish Government had produced a Conservation Plan template that it expects should be followed. FD suggested that Proprietors should get involved and that a sub-committee should be formed to deal with the production of Conservation Plan. The Board should be involved to represent multiple interests and different types of fishing water from private owners through to commercial interests. Peter Landale had shown interest for the formation of a sum-committee with strong views in conservation.

Peter Hutchison stated that netting representation was essential. A Small sub-committee will be formed and will include Board members to represent angling associations such as Danny Marshal and David Kempself. Friars Carse would provide representation as a commercial organisation. Peter Landale would like to represent private landowners and Peter Hutchison and Robbie Cowan will represent nets,.

FB reported that the Conservation Plan Template had been issued by Scottish Government the previous Tuesday with a deadline for response by end March. The draft had caused so much controversy that it had gone back to Scottish Government for them to reconsider it.

The meeting thereafter closed.