

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust Annual General Meeting 2011

7.30pm Thursday 27th January 2011

New Cample Farm Shop and Tearoom, Cample

Present

Tom Florey - Chairman
Ronald Clark - Director
John Charteris - Director
Alan Bryden - Director
Jim Henderson - Director
Irene Celentano +1
William Howden
Robbie Cowan
John Kingan
Brian Lord
Maggie Gordon
David Tait
Simon Duffy
Gordon MacGregor
Brian Lord
Peter Hutchison – Douglas Hall Fisheriescapacity)
Jim McKie – New Cumnock Anglers Association
Maria Mosby – The River Nith Society
Matt Walker – The Grayling Society
Alex Saville – Dumfries Burgh Anglers Association
Ronald Weir – Mid-Nithsdale Angling Association
Nick Wright – Closeburn Castle Fishing
Stuart Graham – SNH (Advisory capacity)
Shona McFarlane – SEPA (Advisory capacity)
Tony Lightley – Forestry Commission (Advisory

In attendance

Debbie Parke (DP) - Biologist
Shona Kennedy (SK) - Admin

Apologies

Roy Green (Director)

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone and introduced himself. The Chairman asked everyone to introduce themselves. The Chairman outlined the roll of the Nith District Salmon Fishery Board and the part it played in setting up and assisting the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust during its first year. He then spoke about the aims and objectives of the Trust, which are outlined in the Trust Annual Report 2010.

2. Trust Management Structure & Voting Procedure

The Chairman explained the constitution of the Trust to the members present, stating that there can be up to ten directors for the Trust and that 1/3 of the directors have to retire every year and this meant that one current director had to step down but could be up for re-election if they wished. The Chairman informed the members that Mr Roy Green had kindly offered to stand down. It had been decided by the Directors that nine members in total could be elected this year as this would allow the Directors of the Trust the ability to co-opt a specialist during the course of the year if the Trust had need for specific skills.

This meant that four new Directors must be voted in. Members had been asked, previous to the AGM, if they would like to be considered as Directors. The Chairman explained that the names of the nominees were on the voting slips that each of the voting members had been issued with on arrival. Each voting member could vote for up to 3 candidates and the four candidates with the most votes would be elected as directors. The Chairman and SK would count the votes during the Biologists Presentation.

The Chairman stated that the accountants are content with the way the Trust works & at present there is no conflict of interest between the Board and the Trust and how they work together.

The Chairman explained that all office bearers must be re-elected every year.

2. Biologist's Presentation

The Trust Biologist, Debbie Parke, gave a presentation outlining structure of the Trust and its progress over the last 15 months. DP then opened the floor to questions.

- Mrs Maria Mosby would like to know if the Trust only aims to educate Primary School children. DP advised that she also runs salmon in the classroom in Sanquhar Academy and Wallace Hall Secondary school. Mrs Mosby enquired if the salmon in the classroom involved educating the children of the impact of littering etc on the environment. DP states that the impact of litter etc, in the ecosystem of the river is taught as part of the Salmon in the Classroom project. A brief discussion ensued regarding the challenges in teaching older children compared to primary school children. Mr Brian Lord suggested a more social and practical approach for example a tree planting project etc, while being aware of the limitations on time, health and safety etc. It was decided that this would be a matter for the Directors to discuss in the future, on how to engage the older children more effectively.
- The Chairman informed everyone that a cheque for £2000 from Sir Chips Keswick has been donated and he would like to be used to set up an entomology project to monitor the health of the River Nith. . DP advised that there is a possibility for funding from the Riverfly partnership to train volunteer anglers to carry out regular surveys.

4. Election of New Directors

The Chairman announced the new Directors of the Trust. They are (in no particular order);

Peter Hutchinson – Douglas Hall Fisheries,

Jim McKie – New Cumnock Anglers Association,

Brian Lord and

Roy Green.

3. NFIA

The Chairman announced that the NFIA has sadly been disbanded after many years of good work it was formed in 1932. At the meeting for the dispersion of the NFIA it was agreed that its assets would be transferred to the Trust, as it is a more modern project for their aims. These assets consist of £6000-7000 (which will be deposited into the Trust account by the end of February) and the haaf netting rights on the west bank of the Nith (for legal reasons the transfer date is still pending this is being dealt with by Mr R Styles and the NFIA solicitors).

- The NFIA has paid for all the website dues etc for this year and will continue to run the website, however it will be called something else. Mr Brian Lord commented that the NFIA website had millions of hits which generated about £1200 a year of which £500 went to them. If the Trust could keep that going in another area, it would be a good money maker for the Trust. The Chairman responded by advising that the Directors will consider all aspects of the website. The Chairman also mentioned that the river has a great website - Fish Nith, which will be upgraded shortly with links to other things for example accommodation, places to eat, shops etc. Fish Nith is currently supporting the Trust and so far £200 in donations have been collected through the aid of the website.
- Mr Gordon Macgregor asked if the Trust will be providing a scheme similar to the NFIA's Jr coaching scheme. The Chairman stated that they have been approached by Maxwelltown High School to provide support in after school activities. He was unsure of the logistics of this proposition at present, if this would include a day's fishing, help with the organisation of the activities, teaching etc. It will be discussed in more depth with the Directors.
- Disappointment of the dispersion of the NFIA was felt as the opinion is that the NFIA was half way between the anglers using the river and the NDSFB, can the Trust fill this void? The Chairman responded by advising that there must be more disclosure and better understanding between the river users, the Trust, the NDSFB and that it is a work in progress. He suggested that he brings this query at the next NDSFB meeting and perhaps each Board member take a section of the river to talk to people fishing, to make the NDSFB more accessible to everyone.

4. Accounts

DP stated that she maintains the accounts and that the pie charts representing the accounts in the Annual Report are accurate within a few thousand pounds, this is to the Annual Report being put to print before the Accounts had been finalised. The accounts have now been returned from the accountants (Farries, Kirk & McVean) and they quote *"The charitable company has existed for just over one year but has already established a reasonable level of reserves to allow for the continuation*

of the charitable activities and the trustees consider the financial position of the charity to be satisfactory.”

- The Trust extended their gratitude to all those who have donated towards the continuation of the Trust, it is much appreciated and also for the continued support from the NDSFB.
- DP briefly outlined the accounts regarding funding to date, possible funding opportunities and future plans. DP advised that in the next few years it is predicted that funding opportunities will get more difficult to ascertain due to the current economic climate, one of the main duties DP is undertaking is to establish funding for the Trust.
- The Trust has been able to purchase the van outright as well as computers, photographic equipment and other items that are essential for the day to day effective running of the Trust.
- The Chairman stated that the outgoings of the Trust will alter over the next few years and that the NDSFB will fund the Trust for however long it takes to establish itself.

5. Questions Raised by Members

The Chairman suggested a five minute limit per question to keep the discussing as concise as possible. The Chairman states that all points and opinions can be aired even if the question or statement needs answered at a later date.

- Mr Gordon MacGregor –*“should the Trust help in promoting and co-ordinating promotions for fisheries in the catchment?”* DP responded stating that this item was mentioned by The Chairman when talking about the NFIA. The Chairman agreed that this item will be discussed by the Directors and voted upon. A brief discussion ensued regarding the packages that could be put together and the best way for the public to access them, the upgraded Fish Nith website was mentioned.
- Mr Robert Perrett/Mr Matt Walker (The Grayling Society) – *“Would like to engage other members regarding improving access for Grayling anglers.”* DP stated that the Nith is extremely good for Grayling fishing and that the Trust will discuss this item with the NDSFB as well as fisherman regarding what can be done to improve access for grayling anglers. Concerns were raised regarding the safety of spawning salmon, while Grayling fishing is taking place. It was stated that grayling anglers will keep away from reds and will not disturb the salmon. The Chairman asked if the Grayling Society’s code of practice be made more assessable. It was also suggested that there is a Grayling research fund that the Trust might be able to access. The Chairman suggests discussing the possibility of a Grayling festival or something similar to gather information with the Directors.
- Mrs Maria Mosby (The River Nith Society) – *“As well as looking at all the positive aspects of our river will the Trust also be looking at the problems, particularly those of litter and flooding?”* DP responded by stating that the Trust took part in the civic pride annual litter pick and that the Trust can take a more pro-active approach on this topic as discussed previously. Mrs Mosby asked what the Trust will do regarding the removal of gravel to reduce flooding incidents. DP stated that the Trust is happy to assist with surveys regarding

the species present in the gravel and how they will be affected. A discussion ensued regarding the advantages of removing gravel from the river in relation to flooding and also the long term impact this would have both financially and practically. A discussion ensued regarding the practicalities, logistic and legality of altering the flow or water, reference was made to Network Rail and the ongoing issue of bank erosion at the Cowhill estate and SEPA responded regarding the White Sands and CAR regulation.

- Issues raised by Alex Saville (Dumfries Burgh Angling Association) –
 - *Fish counters*
 - *Gravel removal from Whitesands*
 - *Bank erosion*
 - *Light pollution*
 - *More trees planted*
 - *Paths reformed to allow better success*
 - *Height markers*

DP advised that habitat enhancement is one of the main goals of the Trust and trees will be planted in areas of the catchment that will benefit most from this work. DP also voiced the Trusts support for improving access to the river for everyone and praised the current work being done in order to do this. Jim Henderson and The Chairman agreed that standard height markers on the river would make a big positive impact and the Trust will look into this further and discuss with the Directors).

6. A.O.B

No other points were raised. The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.05 and thanked everyone for attending. The Chairman also requested a quick Directors meeting.