

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust Annual General Meeting 2014

7.00pm Monday 24th March 2014

Auldgirth Inn, Auldgirth

Trust members present

Percy Weatherall – NCFT Chairman
Thomas Florey - Director
Peter Hutchison – Director
Jim Henderson – Director
David Kempzell - Director
Brian Lord – Director
Jim McKie – Director
Robert Schiller – Director
Andrew Wood – Director
Gordon McGregor
David McMichael
Matt Walker
Brian Fox
Captin Beauchamp Blackett
Robbie Cowan
Johnathon Ystenes
Robert Gladstone

In attendance

Debbie Parke – Operations Manager/Biologist
Emily Iles – Project Officer
John Ystenes

Apologies

Ronald Clark – Director
Simon Kelly
Andrew Hunter-Arundell
Maggie Gordon
Maria Mosby
Sir Chips Keswick

The Chairman, Percy Weatherall welcomed everyone to the 4th Annual General Meeting of the Nith Catchment Fishery Trust.

1. Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 11th March 2013 were approved as a true and accurate account.

2. Matters Arising

At the previous AGM the possibility of running a grayling day had been raised. Debbie Parke informed the members that a grayling competition had been held at Friars Carse at the end of February. The event had been a success despite unfavourable fly fishing conditions. Debbie Parke had been present at the event and had encouraged the collection of scales and data for scientific research. Two grayling were captured and scales were taken. The grayling competition was felt to have been a positive experience and it will hopefully be run again next year.

3. Trust Update

The Chairman stated that 2014 had been a busy year for the Trust and referred to the Annual Report that had been published and distributed. He then introduced Debbie Parke, Operations Manager/Biologist who gave a presentation outlining the main topics of interest resulting from the work carried out in 2013 including an analysis of the catch statistics for salmon and sea trout during 2013, comparing them with other rivers across Scotland, the importance of gaining accurate catch returns and how catch and release rates are improving across the river. Generally the Nith had seen a decrease of 49% in the number of salmon caught during 2013 and when compared to other east coast and west coast rivers throughout Scotland a similar trend could be seen. This indicated that the main problem was at sea. One issue identified was the lack of anglers on the river bank and the fact that without knowing the effort being put into catching fish it was impossible to be able to determine exactly the extent of the decreases. This highlighted the importance of accurate catch data and encouraging more young people to take up angling, stating that in response to this issue the Operations Manager had sought and been successful in getting funding for the "Fishing for the Future" project to introduce young people to the aquatic environment and fishing. Debbie introduced the new project officer, Emily Iles, who had been employed to deliver the project. Emily gave a presentation about the aims of the "Fishing for the Future" project and updated the members as to the achievements so far.

4. Accounts

The Chairman presented the summary accounts for the period 1st January 2012 to 30th December 2013 to the members present. The Chairman requested that the accounts were adopted and this was unanimously agreed.

5. Special Resolution to Change Articles of Association

Debbie Parke stated that in order for the Trust to be compliant and be able to apply for funding from sources such as Dumfries and Galloway Council the Articles of Association that a special resolution be put forward to state that 'That article 72 of the company's articles of association shall be amended to read as follows:

"72. Bank accounts shall be operated strictly in accordance to such rules for financial transactions as shall be prescribed by the directors in writing from time to time subject to the following:

a) the bank account shall be managed by the company secretary and at least one director; and

b) there should be a minimum of two authorised signatories who are not connected, as per the definition of 'connected' in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005."

The changes to the articles of association were unanimously agreed by all members present.

6. Election of Directors

The Chairman informed the meeting that Mr Ronald Clark had decided to stand down and thanked him for the time that he had put into the Trust. The Chairman updated the meeting of the Wild Fisheries Review that was being carried out by Scottish Government. The review would potentially result in a major shift in fisheries management in Scotland and on the local organisations involved. It was suggested that in order to maintain continuity within the Trust whilst the review was being conducted, the current Directors/Office Bearers should remain unchanged. This motion was agreed following a unanimous decision.

The Trust Directors/Office Bearers for 2014 are:

Percy Weatherall - Chairman
Thomas Florey
Peter Hutchison
Jim Henderson
David Kempself
Brian Lord
Jim McKie
Robert Schiller
Andrew Wood

7. Written Questions

Prior to the AGM questions were submitted for consideration and discussion. The questions were as follows:

- From Gordon Macgregor "There has been a noticeable increase in *ranunculus* weed seen on the Cairn and the Cample, will this affect angling"? DP spoke about the nature of ranunculous weed being in shallower waters so it is unlikely to have a major impact to access in areas where fish will be. The likelihood is that the presence of the ranunculus will have more advantages than disadvantages to fish populations as it provides food and refuge for juvenile fish, including lamprey. There are difficulties in treatment of this weed in flowing water.
- From Gordon Macgregor "What will be the knock on effects to the Board and the Trust if Scotland becomes independent?" Jim Henderson stated there will be significant implications and the consequences have not been totally thought out. NASCO have been in touch with Alec Salmond to review this.
- From Brian Lord "Has the habitat enhancement schemes suffered in the recent high waters?" Jim Henderson explained that there have been serious management considerations in habitat enhancement and learning from previous years the Trust and the

Board have designed fences and tree planting in the upper catchment to survive challenging weather. He also explained that habitat enhancement is a 10 year investment and that older habitat schemes are showing good progress and do not require fences and water gates to be replaced now the trees have got up.

Any Other Competent Business

The Chairman informed the meeting that a proposal had been put forward by Andrew Wood to organise a fundraising event in to raise money for the Trust. The event has been confirmed and will be held at Easterbrook Hall on the 25th of October 2014 and Trust members were invited to attend.

Closing Remarks

The Chairman offered thanks to the Trust Directors for their dedication and input and to Debbie Parke and Emily Iles for their commitment and enthusiasm. The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.