

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Meeting No. 30

6pm, 19th September 2016

Fishery Office, Blackwood Estate

Present

Percy Weatherall – Chairman
Jim Henderson
Peter Hutchison
Christine Carson
Stewart Cameron
Thomas Florey

In Attendance

Debbie Parke

1. Apologies

Raymond Mundell
David Kempell
Brian Lord

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous Directors meeting were taken as true and accurate.

3. Matters Arising

All matters arising would be covered during the course of the meeting.

4. Wild Fisheries Reform

Jim Henderson provided an update on WFR to date. Scottish Government released their legislative programme for 2016/17 but provision for Wild Fishery Reform had not been included. It is unknown as to when WFR may now be put to Parliament. JH has attended a number of working group meetings with Scottish Government and it appears to be business as usual. It will still go ahead but timescales are unknown.

Conservation limits – The draft 2017 conservation limits have been published and it has been proposed that the River Nith will be category 3 again in 2017. The change in the conservation limits has been varied across Scotland with some rivers being categorised from Cat 3 to Cat 1 and others downgraded. We have called Marine Scotland Freshwater Laboratory (MSS) to provide us with the details of the modelling system.

TCF presented a letter from the Urr River Board urging the anglers to go and fish the river. TCF enquired if there is anything else we could do. JH went through all of the things that we have put

done to improve our Conservation categorisation. It was stated that we had consulted Walter Crozier and gained data from proprietors, etc. We have fed into the Scottish Governments online mapping system using our best knowledge.

We haven't come across anyone killing fish. Everyone appears to be adhering to the mandatory catch and release policy.

DP presented figure on tickets sold to date and it showed a major decrease in the number of tickets sold. This was based on 4 major fisheries. JH confirmed that more fish had been observed in the river but that angling pressure was down. The underlying reasons are not known but generally stocks of salmon are in decline.

The future of RAFTS was discussed after JH and DP attended the RAFTS EGM. RAFTS will be winding down and will not be active after March 2017. ASFB will be changing and becoming Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS). There had been a long discussion at the RAFTS EGM regarding the status of Trusts in the new organisation.

Nith/Annan meeting – JH reported on the Nith/Annan board meeting and had been tasked to present a financial budget for the FMO. The assets of the Board and Trust are very healthy in comparison with the Annan. It was decided that an additional £250,000 would be required to run an FMO. SG agreed in principle to run a shadow FMO and provide the additional funding. This was discussed in light of it not being forthcoming. It was agreed that if the additional funds were not forthcoming then we would prefer to stay separate until we know what is happening. It was generally agreed that the Trust was not in favour of continuing down the FMO route at this time but that if it has to happen then a Nith/Annan organisation would be the best option.

5. Quarterly Report and project updates

Debbie Parke referred to the Quarterly Report which had been circulated and spoke about some of the activities for the last quarter.

Invasive Non-Native Species – DP provided an update on the status of progress of the INNS project. All the JK along the riparian zones of the Nith catchment had been treated successfully.

Fishing for the Future project – DP updated the Directors on the funding progress to date. Funding has been extremely difficult to get this year but we have been offered 2 years of fund from Holywood Trust on provision that we get in kind funding. We have applied to the Misses Robertson's Trust and been awarded £7000 towards the project. Along with the Nithsdale Area Committee Funding and private funding, we have re-worked the figures as they are less than previously anticipated and put a new proposal to the Holywood Trust. We are waiting to hear back but are hopeful that the Fishing for the Future project will start in October 2016.

Nith Fish Counter project – A presentation was given by Jim Henderson and Debbie Parke about resistivity counters. After being charged with looking in to counters on the Nith, a visit to Ireland was organised as Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) had a counter network of 40 counters throughout the Republic of Ireland. The majority of the counters had been constructed by IFI themselves and they had a vast wealth of knowledge which they were happy to discuss with us. The presentation outlined the trip and details of the counters involved, the construction process and potential costs associated.

It was agreed that the JH and DP should look in detail at potential counter sites on the Nith and speak to Inland Fisheries Ireland and Marine Scotland to establish costs.

6. A.O.B

No items were raised.

Actions resulting from Trust Meeting No. 30

Action points	Action by	Action completed
None		

Signed.....

Date.....

EPK Weatherall, Chair