

**NITH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**ON**  
**30 JUNE 2021**  
**THE TRAINING SUITE, DRUMLANRIG CASTLE**

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**PRESENT**

Percy Weatherall – Chairman  
Robbie Cowan – Caerlaverock Estate  
David Kempself - Dumfries & Galloway Angling Association  
Raymond Mundle – Dumfries & Galloway Angling Association  
Peter Hutchison – Douglas Hall Fisheries  
Richard Gladwin – Blackwood  
John Charteris – D&G Council Burgh Water  
Nick Wright - Closeburn Castle Fishings  
Anna Ferguson – Buccleuch Estate  
Freja Grant – Buccleuch Estate

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Roderick Styles – Clerk  
James Henderson – Fishery Director (FD)  
Deborah Parke – Nith Catchment Fishery Trust (FB)

The Chairman welcomed all present.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Thomas Florey  
Peter Landale

**2. TRIENNIAL ELECTIONS**

The Chairman asked the Clerk to advise of the requirement to hold Triennial Elections of Board Members.

The Clerk advised that in terms of the relevant legislation the Board members had to demit office. Elections would then take place from among Upper Proprietors for representation of Upper Proprietors on the Board and from among Lower Proprietors for representation of Lower Proprietors on the Board. When this business was concluded then angling representatives and tenant netsmen would be co-opted to the Board. Finally, a Chairman or Convener would be chosen from among the Proprietors to fulfil that capacity on the Board.

Wally Wright had resigned mid-term in the previous triennium and Mike Makin advised the Clerk that he would not stand for co-opting again.

It was noted that Peter Landale had indicated that he would not be present at the meeting, but was prepared to stand as an Upper Proprietor if asked and elected.

Thomas Florey had also advised that he would not be able to attend, but in his absence had offered himself as a co-opted angler.

The election procedures were undertaken.

Upper Proprietors elected are:-

Percy Weatherall – Cowhill and Rosehill mandatory  
Anna Ferguson – Buccleuch Estates mandatory  
Nick Wright – Closeburn Castle Fishings mandatory  
David Kempself – Dumfries & Galloway Angling Association mandatory  
Peter Landale – Dalswinton Fishings mandatory  
Richard Gladwin – Blackwood co proprietor.

Lower Proprietors elected are:-

Robbie Cowan – Caerlaverock Estate mandatory  
John Charteris – Dumfries & Galloway Council mandatory  
Peter Hutchison – Douglas Hall Fishery mandatory  
Tom Brown – Drumburn Estate mandatory.

Co-opted anglers are:-

Thomas Florey  
Raymond Mundle

There were no tenant netsmen who offered themselves election.

Percy Weatherall was asked to accept the position of Chairman, which he accepted.

### **3. DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL INTERESTS**

Anna Ferguson declared the matter of Buccleuch Estate's interest in the Pumped Storage Hydro Scheme, a subject that would be discussed later in the meeting.

### **4. BOARD MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 30 MARCH 2021**

The Chairman asked if there were any issues arising or if they were a fair record of the proceedings. There was unanimous approval of the Minutes.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

FD reported that all repairs to the Crawick Water Habitat Scheme at Corsebank had been completed.

FD had met with Mrs Dickie at Spango who was supportive of the idea of repairing the fence.. Independently, BEL will speak to Mrs Dickie.

FD reported that BEL were providing additional information regarding Pumped Storage Hydro Scheme at Glenmuckloch. FD had been heavily involved. Positive discussions with BEL and their consultants had taken place. A contract was being drafted to permit the Board to carry out 10 years' worth of monitoring with potential for future monitoring over the lifespan of the project. BEL had expressed a desire to

retain the monitoring obligation even in the event that there is a change in ownership of the Glenmuckloch PSH.

Peter Hutchison asked for the Board to have a presentation on the Glenmuckloch PSH. FD will speak to BEL to arrange for a presentation. Meantime, FD will start the monitoring programme.

## **6. RIVER REPORT**

FD referred to the Quarterly Report. FD advised on a large amount of consultancy work taking place within the River System. Hogweed had been very bad this year and treatment was ongoing.

Railway maintenance was ongoing involving the Board for environmental reports. Maintenance of bridges and other infrastructure was the primary focus of work. Fish rescues were being carried out in these areas of operation.

FD asked for questions on the Report.

The Chairman asked if there are a lot of new planning operations for windfarms likely to be coming forward.

FD replied affirmatively and referred to the Quarterly Report. The applications take a long time to deal with. Planning takes a long time to process and then there are environmental consultations.

Richard Gladwin referred to the Bio-Security Section and the matter of crayfish being trapped. He had seen a social media article of their presence in Dumfries.

FD reported on trapping on the Lochfoot Burn. The traps were full. The landowner where the traps are set is suffering damage and dyke collapse as a consequence of crayfish burrowing. Monitoring showed that no further downstream movement of crayfish in the Cargen Water had been detected. Traps have been put in at Academy Bridge on the Nith to determine whether or not they were present but nothing had been found.

The Chairman asked for more questions on FD's Report. There were none.

FD reported on large numbers of fish at the bottom of the River System up as far as Nunholm Road and from there downstream. Water was badly needed to lift the river to allow these fish to pass.

## **7. NITH CATCHMENT FISHERY TRUST**

The Chairman reported on the meeting of the evening of 29 June 2021, which had been a good meeting.

FD had reported on the Smolt Tracking Project. Fishing for Future continues with good external funding for it. The National Electrofishing Scotland Programme has

been arranged by Marine Scotland and administered by FMS and the Board supplying data from Nith sites from July onwards. This is important work which provides information on the state of our salmon stocks within our river. Non-native invasive species were discussed. Finances for the Trust were in good order.

Peter Hutchison commented on the remarkable amount of work carried out by both FD and FB on all areas covered.

## **8. WEST COAST SMOLT TRACKING PROJECT**

FD reminded of the training undertaken to tag smolts. The work is part of the West Coast Smolt Tracking Project. One hundred smolts were to be fitted with tags. NCFT applied for additional funding to permit a further fifty smolts to be tagged and tracked within the river system. The smolts were taken from the Crawick and Mennock Waters with cooperation of landowners. The smolts were tagged and data then recorded at monitoring stations. Information will be available from the monitoring devices Within the river.

Preliminary data indicated the speed, times of day and the number of smolts migrating. The devices can monitor three hundred yards upstream and downstream from the monitoring position. Data collected from this is still being analysed. FD will produce a demonstration and graphics for future discussion.

In the second such project a rotary screw trap had been set up at Blackwood. Five hundred smolts had been caught in the trap on the day that the media attended to report on the operation. The operation to lift the smolts and tag them had gone so smoothly that Atlantic Salmon Trust who were in attendance gave an additional thirty tags, having been sufficiently impressed by the manner in which the tagging operations had gone.

The lower monitors are at Kingholm Quay, St Michael's Bridge, Nunholm Road and Cowhill. These were lifted on 28 June. The data will be analysed by Glasgow University and Atlantic Salmon Trust.

The project went very smoothly and it is hoped that it will continue next year.

The Chairman advised that AST were impressed by the numbers and size of the smolts.

FD advised that observers were present from AST who have thus far monitored all sites in Scotland where such operations are ongoing. They were pleased and impressed by the numbers and size of smolts and the efficiency with which they were operated on to insert the tags and had produced extra tags as a result.

There are listening devices stationed from Ireland to Campbelltown and then up the Scottish Coast through the Minch and then to Cape Wrath. FD was asked when the data would be available for the whole scheme.

FD advised the Board, as a participating party, will get the data from the whole Scheme and from the Nith from AST as and when it is analysed.

Nick Wright asked how this will benefit the River System.

FD replied that it will be of interest from Scottish Government downwards through the Board to determine what might be affecting the passage of fish, both in river and sea. The Board would use its in-river data to identify problems in parts of the river and bring action to bear accordingly.

Peter Hutchison asked if Glenmuckloch Pumped Storage Scheme took water out of the Catchment. FD advised on how a pump storage scheme worked. There will be losses of water. However, FD will want to monitor the intake of water in order that the aquatic environment is not degraded. FD wants to have input on where abstraction points and screening might take place.

Richard Gladwin asked what happens to the receivers. FD replied that we own four of the receivers and AST own the other four. There is no way to recover tags from the fish after they have been deployed. New tags would be required for future research.

#### **9. UPPER NITHSDALE RESTORATION PROJECT/SEPA**

The Chairman advised that this was a project which should be of direct interest to the river. He had gone to Blackwood Farm at Cumnock. Luke Cummings, Roy Richardson and Charlie Perfect from SEPA had been present. The upper river in this area had failed for geomorphological reasons. SEPA had applied for funding to improve the river by lowering flood banks and replacing them further back from the river. The Board had asked for the meeting because last year's project overrun and escape of equipment from the site due to flooding. Representations had been made about this at the meeting and it was to be hoped that the Board would be permitted to carry out electrofishing survey work to obtain baseline statistics in connection with any future problems that might arise from the site.

#### **10. AOB**

FD reported that Friars Carse would like to host an opening event next season.

It was noted that there had been an application to introduce beavers into the Doune Catchment. This could have an impact upon the Nith Catchment.

It was observed that thought might be given to examining the Annual Report to update and improve its presentation.

The meeting thereafter closed.