

River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board

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Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board Meeting

29/08/2022 – 1700 - 2030

Minutes prepared by Struan Candlish; audio recording of meeting available on request.

Present:

Alan Hill, AH (Chairperson)

Iain Walker, IW

Alex Reid, AR

Robin Wilson, RW

Max Stobbs, MS

Gordon Millar, GM

Charles McDade, CMD

Forbes Watson (Clerk), FW

Stuart Brabbs (Ayrshire Rivers Trust), SB

Struan Candlish (Ayrshire Rivers Trust), SC

Jennifer Garland (Ayrshire Rivers Trust), JG

Apologies:

Nick Wright (NW)

Previous Minutes

Proposed by Alex Reid

Seconded by Stuart Brabbs

Signed by Alan Hill

Introduction

AH introduced JG to the Board explaining that she was attending to report on the large amount of work being done behind the scenes collecting outstanding assessments for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Declaration of Interest

Catrine Dam Claim

FW reported that he had emailed George Leslie who replied that they were not prepared to increase their offer. They did ask for the Board's bank details and confirmed that the payment of £200 would be a goodwill payment.

GM thought that Fish Legal should have been involved much sooner.

SB confirmed that the CAR licence has been applied for to do the work at Nessfalls and that George Leslie will be carrying out the work.

Upper and Lower Boundaries

FW confirmed that a letter had been sent to the Scottish Ministers regarding setting a new upper and lower boundary but as yet there had not been a response. The new split asked for would be at the Lugar, above Barskimming.

AH explained to MS how the new votes for the upper and lower beats would work once this change has been approved.

River Management Plan

SB reported to the Board that the Management Plan was almost ready to be sent to them. AH suggested to the Board that as soon as they receive the plan they should meet to discuss the plan and to choose which items they want to pursue. AH added that this would need to be done before the October meeting when they decide on the levy for the coming 2023 season.

ART Report

SB then went through ART's report giving the Board an update on new staff and Trustees, the INNS control of giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed. He added that Himalayan balsam is becoming a bigger problem and recommends that the Board addresses this before the situation becomes irrecoverable.

SB highlighted Stair dam as being a concern for fish passage due to the low height but long slope of the weir, MS agreed that there were large numbers of salmon stuck in the pool below the weir, SB confirmed that wooden baulkes were to be fitted.

SB confirmed that the annual timed survey of the River Ayr had been completed but the results were poor, the data will be reviewed and added to the electrofishing report which will be published later in the year. Semi quantitative surveys have started and this will also be included in the report.

It was reported that an additional series of surveys are being conducted in the upper catchment by Waterside Ecology for a wind farm proposal.

Bogend Burn was discussed again as this issue has not been resolved since it was first reported to SEPA in 2008. AH added that he was extremely disappointed by SEPA's response to SB's last email to them. CMD added that he had recently had a problem with a government body and that by including his local MP in the communication helped considerably. It was agreed that this line of action would be considered for the Board to take however ART will continue to use FMS and regional meetings to raise these issues.

SB reported that bank stabilisation work will be taking place at Nether Wellwood commencing on 12th September and that any help would be greatly appreciated.

The fish counter at Nethermills was then discussed and SB reported that the counter is inaccurate at present and seems to be missing a large percentage of fish. He added that two experts were coming to tune the counter but added that it would be unlikely that we would be able to report an accurate count for this season.

GM then asked if ART had data from the Catrine counter, SB reported that not yet due to changes within ART but that this would be done however with no remuneration for the counter at Nethermills nor Catrine this could only be done if and when time and funds allowed.

The work at Upper and Mid Wellwood was reported on with photographs showing that it was working well with huge changes shown. AR thought that it had not been tested as yet with a spate but SB explained that the bank stabilisation had gone in during the winter months and that the banks stood up to a lot of water shortly after going in.

Financial Report

AH then reported to the Board that the work on outstanding assessments had taken JG a considerable amount of time and effort and that she had to endure abuse on the telephone from some parties, he then handed over to JG to update the Board.

The bank balance as at 23/08/2022 is £25,733.84

Monies in since 30th May 2022 was £9,151.45 and monies out £329.70, being IT and postage and printing.

Outstanding assessments still to be paid were £13,413.30 which would give a total of £39,147.14 in the account with no invoices due to be paid at present.

JG added that she had had communication with all proprietors and tenants who still owed their assessments bar two, both of whom have now received their second reminder by recorded delivery which have been signed for by the proprietors. She added that she is confident that all of the outstanding assessments will be paid. In addition, all new assessment notices going out in November for the 2023 season will be altered, firstly to make it clear what season the assessment notice is for and secondly to change the look of the notice so that it looks more like an invoice than a letter. She added that all paid assessments would be acknowledged with a receipt. CMD added that it was a requirement that fishing clubs should have receipts for all expenditure.

The Board then discussed the new levy with AR adding that clubs are struggling with rising costs. AH reported that he will be writing to Marine Scotland regarding levies, baliffs, river categories and that he would like the Board to meet to write this letter. SB offered the clubs present that they could post fishing details on ART's website as we often get communication asking where people can get permits. CMD added that if we have confidence in the data produced then there may be a case for recategorisation and asked why the Garnock and Irvine were different.

AOCB

AH asked if IW could go to Knockaibe Farm (beats 340 & 350) to see who owns the fishings there as John Tannock had moved.

AH will write to the government about the categorisation of the river, SB added that catch returns were incredibly important and would help with this. He urged all clubs to send their catch returns in when asked for.

AR reported to the Board that Crown Estates had awarded the Tarbolton & Failford a reduction in their levy.

SB reported several poaching issues and had passed the details onto AH who is meeting with Stephen Prendergast to discuss this.

The new assessments fee will be discussed at the next meeting.

DONM

The date of the next meeting will be the Monday 24th October 2022, 1900 at the Kilmarnock Supporters Club, Mauchline.