

CAITHNESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 30 AUGUST 2013

Present:	Viscount Thurso (Chair) Anson MacAuslan Sir Richard Dunbar Roddy Willis	John Mackay (Vice Chair) Tertius Threipland Simon Laird Tom Stitt
In attendance:	Eddie McCarthy Alan Youngson	Eleanor Constable
Observers:	James Fleming	Hamish Sutherland
Apologies:	The Earl of Caithness, Ian Cormack	

The meeting opened with a talk from Dr Roxane Andersen, Peatlands Researcher at the Environmental Research Institute, focussing on her work on the Flow Country.

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Matters Arising

- Halladale River

The Chairman updated the Board on the current situation.

- Wind Farms

There was further discussion on the number of wind farms proposed close to rivers and tributaries within the district and the cumulative effect of multiple sites on habitat. The consultant gave assurance that cumulative aspects were always considered when evaluating individual applications. It was agreed that current procedures for assessing developments were appropriate for the Board's purpose.

Finance

The expenditure for the first half of the year was noted and was in line with expectation.

Admin

The Clerk's report highlighting the new website and new format warrant cards for the bailiffs was noted, together with the list of consultation requests and responses over the past 3 months.

Consultant's Report

- Renewables

The Consultant reported on meetings attended in connection with renewables:

- 1) a Crown Estate initiative to consider salmon and renewables in the Pentland Firth, resulting in a PFOW Enabling Actions Report (Wave and Tidal Stream Projects and Migratory Salmonids)
- 2) a Marine Science Scotland stakeholder meeting to discuss their developing programme for future research on Anadromous Fish and Marine Renewables Energy (also attended by Mr MacAuslan).

He had been approached by Pelamis Wave Power Ltd to join a salmon liaison group to address the specific site and technology concerns arising from development of a wave power farm at Farr Point. The Board indicated that it would appreciate his being involved.

- Genetic Studies

The project on genetic tools to aid salmonid stock management, in which the Board was involved, had been put on hold. The UHI application for EU funding for this year had been unsuccessful and further work was needed to develop a new submission. The Board reiterated its considerable interest in the programme.

Inspector's Report

Mr McCarthy reported that the season had gone smoothly. The rivers had been very low but there had been plenty of fish out at sea waiting to come in. A boat had been leased to assist the bailiffs in carrying out their duties.

Electrofishing Survey

The 2013 electric fishing programme intended to provide a baseline prior to proposed marine renewables development in the Pentland Firth had been progressed in discussion with the Crown Estate as joint funders and arrangements were in place for work to start on 2 September. Details were discussed with Mr Youngson, project director. The question was asked as to whether this survey would be scientifically valid and also valid as independent. The meeting was assured on both counts that it would be. SFCC protocols would be used and fully observed and a new body of staff would be trained up to the highest standards for electrofishing in future years.

Flow Country Rivers Trust

Mr Mackay updated the Board on the formation of the new Rivers Trust. The draft Memorandum and Articles were due to be circulated to CDSFB members shortly for their views and it was agreed that comments would be dealt with by email. With regard to the separate MoU proposed between the Board and the Trust, it was decided that a special meeting should be arranged to discuss this when drafted within the next few weeks.

AOB

The Board was informed of the retirement of the Chairman of the ASFB.

It was mentioned that there had been an informal suggestion from the Northern Board of possible liaison with the Caithness Board. The Chairman recommended that they write to him if they wished to follow this up.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Board will take place on Friday 29 November 2013.