

CAITHNESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 30 AUGUST 2018

Present

Chairman: The Viscount Thurso PC
Members: Sir Richard Dunbar, SWM Threipland, A MacAuslan, M Newton, J Mackay, SWD Laird,
I Cormack, R. Willis
Officers: EC McCarthy, A Youngson, E Constable
Observer: Ms M Blackwood

1. Register of Interests

No changes

2. Apologies

N/A - all members present.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Approval

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June were approved. All actions had been completed.

b) Matters arising

Following the chairman's letter to FMS regarding future subscription, Alan Wells (CEO of FMS) had offered to address the board at its next meeting in November. The visit was approved.

Actions:

- Chairman to confirm invitation.
- Clerk to circulate FMS correspondence received between now and then to all board members.
- Proprietors to submit queries for FMS to CDSFB chairman to coordinate in advance of the meeting.

4. Finance and Admin

a) Expenditure update

The Estimates had been updated to take account of additions since the June meeting with total anticipated expenditure increasing to £37,900. The predicted shortfall of £4140 after assessment income would come out of reserves.

b) Stocking/hatchery requests

Requests were received from Wick Angling Association (WAA) and Dunbeath River to continue hatchery operations in the coming year. Both were approved.

c) Admin and correspondence

The board was updated on actions and exchanges with other organisations since the last meeting.

d) Clerk

The clerk had handed in her notice and would be leaving at the end of the year. Meghan Blackwood was appointed as her replacement and would shadow Eleanor in the role until then.

5. Consultant's Report

a) MSS 2018 national EF survey programme

The MSS programme had been underway for the last month and was expected to be completed by mid-September.

b) CDSFB 2018 annual EF survey

Fieldwork had begun the previous week on these sites in accordance with the schedule agreed at the June board meeting.

The team was expected to survey sites on the Dunbeath and Berriedale/Langwell Rivers in the coming week or so. In light of the current low water levels and the reported prevalence of *Saprolegnia* fungus among adult fish it was agreed that no scales would be taken this year's survey for the Dunbeath and Berriedale/Langwell Rivers to minimise any risk to fish welfare.

Action: Consultant/Team Leader

c) Water conductivity

The results of the FCRT conductivity survey, initially focussed on Berriedale and then extended across all the rivers of the Flow Country, had been published (see CDSFB website). A repeat exercise was proposed for the winter period when river flow levels will have returned to normal.

The consultant provided a brief report explaining the contexts in which the conductivity values are expected to prove useful to the board.

6. Flow Country Rivers Trust

Trust activity relevant to the board was covered within the Consultant's report.

7. Bailiff's Report

The low water levels of the summer had resulted in unusually large numbers of fish around the coast awaiting access to rivers. This had drawn members of the public to the tidal waters of rivers and the bailiffs had been kept busy monitoring individuals fishing in estuaries to ensure no salmon or sea trout were landed. The police Wildlife Crime Unit had been called on to assist and have been most helpful.

8. Any other business

The board was informed that the Assessor's 2017 valuation for the Dunbeath River had been reduced following appeal.

Proprietors on the River Forss registered an interest in research that may become possible if the LEADER programme application by ERI is successful.

9. Meeting dates

The next meeting of the board will take place at 2.30 pm on Friday 23 November at the Ulbster Arms.