**CAITHNESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 11 March 2022**

**Present**

Chairman: Lord Thurso (LT)

Members: SWM Threipland (TT), M Newton(MN), I Cormack(IC), J Mackay(JM),

 R Dunbar(RD).

Officers: EC McCarthy(EM), A Youngson(AY), M Blackwood (MB)

Observer:

**1.Register of Interests**

No new interests to be registered.

**2.Apologies**

D Mackay(DM), SWD Laird(SL), A Macauslan (AM)

**3.Minutes of the last meeting**

 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 December were approved. All actions are ongoing.

4. **Matters arising**

There were no new matters arising

**5.Finance and Admin**

**a)** Consider draft Accounts for year ended 31 December 2021

The draft Expenditure & Income accounts and the Balance Sheet were approved and are to be formally presented at the Proprietors’ AGM in June.

b) Consider Expenditure Estimates for 2022

The draft Estimates were considered and approved in principle. It was recommended that the assessment rate remain at 17p in the £, as per previous year.

c) Consultation activity

A table of correspondence was circulated to and viewed by the board, there was nothing urgent arising or to be questioned.

**6.Consultant’s Report**

a)The 2021 electric-fishing survey report

The 2021 report had been completed and circulated to the Board members. No comments had been received and the Board is content, it was agreed the report would be finalised and posted on the Board’s website in due course. **Board agreed.**

b)Proposed 2022 EF Programme

It is proposed that, the full programme for board will be in accordance with the board normal programme for all the rivers, which will be presented at the June meeting. In addition, with there being a particular problem on the wick river, it is proposed that a small extra survey would be carried out beforehand. **Board Agreed**

c) Necleus and the Caithness Archive

 Board has accumulated a considerable body of information on salmon and trout densities for all the Caithness rivers. The annual reports are available on the Board’s website and individuals have all the original Excel files containing all the raw source data. There are also extensive physical descriptions of all the sites visited, although this may be in need of an update. The Trust has accumulated matching sets of complementary data such as pH and electrical conductivity across the Caithness and Northern Board areas; there are reports on the Trust website. The Northern Board is collecting good quality information on fish densities. Overall, therefore, we jointly have command of relatively long time series of extensive and high-quality data for the northern rivers that increases in volume each year. There are some notes and reports for the Board and the Trust that are not on the respective websites. There are also a number of hard copy reports that Tom Stitt passed on to AY that pre-date his involvement with the Board. Indeed, some of them totally under-pinned discussions with Scot Water and SEPA around Shurrery Dam. All this data and knowledge is of potential interest on a relatively long time-scale - say 50 to 100 years. AY has been looking at, how to make sure that it is not inadvertently lost or mislaid. As a result, AY made contact with Nucleus the Dounreay file repository in Wick which doubles as the Caithness Archive. <https://www.highlifehighland.com/nucleus-nuclear-caithness-archives/>. The staff were extremely helpful and keen to be in receipt of our material – digital or hard copy - which they would curate to the highest standards without time limit. If the Board agrees, AY can pursue this idea further with Nucleus and also approach the Trust and the Northern Board to find out if they will be interested in ensuring that the package is as comprehensive as we can make it. If anyone else has hard copy reports from before 2013 that they feel should be archived AY can deal with these, too. **Board Agreed**

**7.Flow Country Rivers Trust**

 JM reported that their newsletter is being prepared and would be published in due course with some good articles included in it.

FCRT have also had 10 representative people selected from various rivers doing insect recognition training, which was very interesting.

**8.Bailiff’s Report**

The Bailiff did not have anything major to report, but is hoping to continue as last year with their oversights of the coast.

**9.Any other business**

None have been notified

**10.Meeting dates**

The next meetings of the board will take place as stated below;

Annual Proprietors meeting followed by board meeting Friday 17th June 2022 at 2pm - Ulbster

Annual Public meeting followed by board meeting Thursday 18th August 2022 at 2pm - Ulbster

Board meeting Friday 9th December at 2pm via Zoom