**CAITHNESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 16th of August 2023**

**Present**

Chairman: Lord Thurso (LT)

Members: J Mackay(JM), D Mackay(DM), I Cormack(IC)

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

Observer:

At the start of the meeting the chairman addressed the sad loss of Tertius Threipland and appreciation of his long service to the board.

**1.Register of Interests**

Nothing new to register.

**2.Apologies**

R Dunbar(RD), M Newton(MN), SWD Laird(SL), A Macauslan (AM

**3.Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th June were approved.

**4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising not on the Agenda.

**5.Finance and Admin**

1. Clerk’s report. The table of correspondence and other activity by the Clerk was duly noted.
2. Expenditure to 30th June 2023. The spreadsheet was circulated to and viewed by the board. It could be seen that expenditure was on track to the final estimated budget of 31 December 2023. The Assessment rates had been sent out.

**6.Consultant’s Report**

The board received the consultants report and noted the following:

1. Pink salmon. It was noted that pink salon have not been as invasive as expected or compared to 2021. FMS are carrying out EDNA sampling and the consultant can submit these via their testing kits.
2. Forss Recovery Plan. A CAR license had been applied for and was awaiting final sign-oof by SEPA. A public consultation from SEPA re Barrier removal had just come out. Shurrery dam was not on it. Consultant was to respond to consultation.
3. Saprolegnia. Consultant noted that, after a poor start to the season when mortality due to *Saprolegni*a was again an issue on both Forss and Berriedale/ Langwell, the summer situation appears more favourable than for recent years. Local assessments are available from Eddy McCarthy and Anson MacAuslan.
4. Fishery Management Plan. The first part of the plan had been complete and can be viewed via the following link; <https://arcg.is/SODCj1>
5. Toxic Algae in Wick River. There extreme levels of toxic algae are being flushed from Loch Watten into Wick River especially during north-westerly winds. SEPA are monitoring the situation and Environmental Health have now become involved regarding public exposure to toxins which may be present in fish captured from the river. The situation is unresolved to date.
6. Roach in Wick River. Roach have been confirmed and can be seen in large numbers in the river itself below Watten loch. NatureScot have been informed. It is intended to electric fish the site once the H&S hazards of the toxic algae are clarified by SEPA and Environmental Health and it is deemed safe to work in the river.
7. National Electrofishing programme for Scotland. The NEPS23 programme had got underway with most sites completed in the Wick catchment. The Board’s own survey is scheduled for the end of the month when the state of stocks in all the rivers of the Board’s area will become clear.
8. River Gradings. The river gradings had just come out, they were all as expected. Dunbeath had been moved to Grade 2, Forss Grade 3 and everyone else staying at Grade 1.

**7.Flow Country Rivers Trust**

1. Smart river data had been circulated and JM gave a discussion to explain what work had been done and their findings.

**8.Bailiff’s Report**

Bailiff reported that things had been very quiet, with remarkable changes since the end of netting.

**9.Any other business**

Nothing to note.

**10.Meeting dates**

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

Friday 8th December 2023