

MINUTES OF WRASFB ANNUAL PROPRIETORS' & PUBLIC MEETINGS

HARBOUR CENTRE, GAIRLOCH	PRESENT: Bill Whyte (BW) Chair Mark Lorimer (ML) Neil Morrison (NM) – Mandatory for Iain Russell Peter Cunningham (PC) Peter Jarosz (PJ) Clerk	John Mackenzie (JM) Rosie Nicoll (RN) Dave Barclay (DB) Mary Gibson (MG)
DATE: 02 July 2015		
OPENED AT:14.00 CLOSED AT:16.30		

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Donald Rice, Stephen Bate, Gordon Crawford and Hugh Whittle.

2. Comments

There were only three proprietors attending the annual meeting, two invitees and no members of the public.

3. Accounts 2013-4

PJ reported that copies of the WRASFB accounts (2014-5) had been forwarded to all proprietors by email on 30th June 2015 for their perusal.

In the time between the accounts being sent out and the date of the annual meeting, there were no queries or questions from proprietors regarding the accounts.

PJ then talked through the contents of the accounts, highlighting the fact that the Board had had an exceptional cost in the 2014-15 accounts that had not been budgeted for. The Scottish Salmon Company (TSSC) lodged a S42 planning application as a method of circumnavigating their ten-year condition for their Sgeir Dughall fish farm and legal costs had been incurred when the Board sought advice for specific planning regulations guidance from a legal specialist in planning law. The S42 planning application was refused by Highland Council and TSSC then appealed that decision to DPEA. So further specialist legal guidance was sought by the Board in order to respond to the DPEA appeal. The reporter (appointed by Scottish Ministers) upheld the decision of the Highland Council planning department. Moreover, in the reporter's decision notice the role of Marine Scotland Science (MSS) regarding sea lice was emphasized as applying only to the fish within the fish farm and the reporter noted that MSS's role did not include a remit for sea lice infestation on wild salmonids. The reporter specifically stated that the role for sea lice infestation on wild salmonids was the sole remit of the WRASFB in this case. TSSC have now further appealed the reporter's decision to the Court of Sessions and that should be heard on 24th July 2015. The legal costs for this specialist guidance amounted to a total of £2331.00. Apart from this amount, all other costs for the year ending 31st March 2015 were on budget targets set at the beginning of the year.

Those present at the meeting did not raise any queries and pronounced their approval of the accounts.

4. Annual Report 2013-4

PJ reported to the meeting that copies of the WRASFB Annual Report (2014-5) had also been forwarded to all proprietors by email on 30th June 2015.

In the time between the Annual Report being sent out and the date of the annual meeting, there had been no queries raised by email from any proprietor.

BW then talked through the rest of the annual report and gave some background information on a number of the items from within the report:

- The Board now has four bailiffs.
- The MH fish farm in Loch Ewe is still operating on an 18 month cycle – historically sea lice numbers have been low. But they were up in March 2015 when tonnage was 1300 tonnes.
- More rivers are to be sampled in order to build up a picture though, so far, reported SSPO lice numbers are low north of Loch Ewe.
- The Scottish Salmon Company's site at Meonach (West Strome) is currently at the screening stage in the TSSC's attempt to bring this site into production – although this is outwith the board area it is of concern to the board.
- RN attended the ASFB meeting on the Wild Fisheries Review and gave a précis of the discussions that had taken place in the meeting:
 1. There were differing views on what the future structures and functions of Fishery Management Organizations (FMOs) might be.
 2. Funding of these FMOs was unclear - particularly with their broader role and public interest involvement. Will SG also part fund?
 3. FMOs will have both "Approved Body Status" and charitable status.
 4. Fishery Trusts (FTs) could apply to be a FMO – with or without elements of the board.
 5. There were discussions about which Trusts/Boards should come together with a view to be eligible for possible FMO application – which groupings could be helpful?
 6. Conversely, the question was posed "is this actually the way for FTs to go? They could remain independent charities with a role/remit for the protection of wild fisheries – a view all proprietors of the Board support.
- There is a "drop in" session on the Wild Fisheries Review in Inverness on 30th July 2015 which the Board will be attending.
- WRASFB has been offering assistance with both planning matters and surveys to both the Skye Fisheries Trust and the Skye District Fishery Board.
- In order to formally protect the new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) the Scottish Government has proposed a Marine Conservation Order to ban scallop dredging in the Wester Ross MPA and this is currently in its consultation stage. As a result there are petitions both for and against this order circulating prior to the response date of 12th July 2015.
- Such a ban would help to retain the habitat for a range of species.

All those present expressed their approval of the report and of the work that the board had achieved within the year.

PC gave a presentation of the scientific work that WRFT had done on behalf of the board in 2014-5 and mentioned some of the priorities for this year's field work including:

- Electro-fishing on the Ullapool, Broom, Low Gruinard, Little Gruinard, Kerry, Badachro and Applecross rivers – the Applecross river is now part of Marine Scotland Science's extended salmon smolt tracking project.
- Habitat restoration priorities starting with a Japanese Knotweed eradication project in the river Broom catchment area.
- There are also riparian areas for potential improvement on the Upper Gruinard river and on some burns flowing into Loch Maree.

Signed by the Clerk to the Board:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter James", is positioned to the right of the text "Signed by the Clerk to the Board".

Dated: 09 July 2015