

## MINUTES OF WRASFB BOARD MEETING

|                                 |                          |                              |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>HARBOUR CENTRE, GAIRLOCH</b> |                          | <b>PRESENT:</b>              |                          |
| <b>DATE:</b>                    | <b>06 April 2018</b>     | <b>Bill Whyte (BW) Chair</b> | <b>Hugh Whittle (HW)</b> |
| <b>OPENED AT:</b>               | <b>11.30</b>             | <b>CLOSED AT:</b>            | <b>15.30</b>             |
| <b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>           | <b>Peter Jarosz (PJ)</b> | <b>Peter Cunningham (PC)</b> |                          |
|                                 | <b>Dave Barclay (DB)</b> |                              |                          |
|                                 |                          | <b>APOLOGIES:</b>            |                          |
|                                 |                          | <b>Gordon Crawford (GC)</b>  |                          |

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Gordon Crawford.

### 2. Approval of the minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 Meeting

The minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting (proposed by SB and seconded by HW) – with one issue from **9. Community Relations – Education and Young Fishers' Projects** raised by HW requiring further clarification. This will be fully addressed during the meeting.

### 3. Matters Arising

- Fisheries Management Scotland.  
BW sits on both the FMS Board and the FMS Enforcement Committee. This puts a West Coast input into forming FMS policies at all levels including carrying out the required enforcement duties without full time bailiffs. For the record, WRASFB has four bailiffs that are authorized, but not employed, by the board.
- BW (WRASFB) and PJ (SWRFT) sit on the Fish Farm Committee that is made up from representatives from all the Boards and Trusts in the Aquaculture Zone. The idea is that all these bodies inform the FMS policy on Aquaculture and present a united front. FMS advised by the committee has responded to the ECCLR committee on the Environment Impacts of Salmon Farming and is finalising the draft for the response to the RAC Committee due in by the 27<sup>th</sup> of this month.
- Atlantic Salmon Trust  
AST has initiated a new project (The Missing Salmon Project) for tracking salmon smolts on the East Coast. The east coast was chosen as circa 20% of all UK salmon start their migration to sea through the Moray Firth. AST are looking for £100,000,000 from crowdfunding to purchase the arrays and tags for this project. In reality, they stand a better chance of raising this amount from east Coast assets. Once the project is completed AST will own the arrays for potential follow up projects on the West Coast. This would involve arrays in Galloway, Mull of Kintyre to Ireland, West Skye to Uist and Cape Wrath to the Butt of Lewis. Smolts would be tagged from all over the West Coast and tracked throughout all the north through the aquaculture zone. FMS funding streams are being sought to cover the costs of tags for the future West Coast tracking project (not for this year).
- Scottish Government Funding  
ScotGov have announced a fund of £500,000 for research and activities (electro-fishing etc) as well as a £200,000 fund for voluntary merging of DSFBs (we will not need any of this fund).

#### **4. Initial Draft 2017-18 Accounts**

PJ reported that the WRASFB accounts are completed now (up to the end of March 2018 – our year-end) and pointed out that we usually wait for the month of April to “pan out” before sending them to Graham Bell (GC’s accountant) for completion. So the accounts should go to GB by early May.

#### **5. New Rateable Values**

At this moment, appeals are still being dealt with by the Valuation Officer and we have had no feedback from any of the proprietor’s appeals as yet. This leaves 2 options:

Option 1- retain levy at 90p in the £

or

Option 2 - reduce to a lower figure.

Old rateable value as a whole was £34,370.00pa. The £0.90p levy rate reduced this to £30,937.75p as an income for the board.

The new rateable value for 2017/2018, levied at £0.90p would realize £41,152.50 as an income for the Board.

Although this would be nice to have for increasing our reserves, this increase might hurt proprietors and their businesses. Costs would have to be passed on to clients - which could result in fewer lets, less income etc and a resulting downward spiral.

The Board has no influence over the rateable values but we do have the power to set the levy.

At the new rateable value, reducing the levy to £0.75p in the £ will realize £34,293.75 as an income for the Board.

We need to wait until the final valuations come in from the District Valuation office before agreeing a levy rate. The only thing certain is that new rateable values will not mean an increase in the total of proprietors’ levy payments to the Board.

#### **6. Financies**

PJ reported that our 2017-18 budget/forecast that had predicted a near neutral outcome with little change to the holding reserve being realised. The half-year document, produced for our October 2017 meeting, that had showed we started the year with some £20K in the bank (with some £9K of outstanding liabilities), predicted that with the levy income of £31K and the anticipated total yearly expenditure of £39K we should see a closing bank balance of circa £13K.

The reality was that for the past financial year our core expenses were £10,279 along with £22,600 spent on research and improvement work, while our levy income reverted back to £30,926 bringing our year-end bank balance (after the deduction of known immediate liabilities of £8,659) to £11,571.

For the coming year’s financial appraisal, a document, entitled WRASFB budget 2018-19, was passed around the meeting that predicted the levy income of £31K together with our anticipated bank account balance of £14.4K (at the end of April) less our expected expenditure of £35.6K should result in our “contingency” fund remaining at £9.7K.

#### **7. Update on Events since the last Board Meeting**

Update on Aquaculture events since last Board meeting (BW):

- (SSF) Tanera Scoping and Screening Application submitted but for now put on the back burner for now by SSF - they appear to be doing one at a time.

- (SSF) Horse Island Scoping and Screening Application submitted with the planning application likely to be submitted late April or May
- (MHS) Bottle Island, no change.
- (MHS) Loch Ewe has had various treatments - August EMB, September Azemethiphos, October deltamethiron and freshwater treatment, November and December EMB and H202 and January H202.
- (WRF) Ardessie B - work started on Wednesday to install moorings. HC have been informed. BW talked with them last Thursday informing HC that the pens are attached. We also sent HC the WRF EMFF funding package which shows that the moorings grant was for £71,169.60, hardly the cost of attaching the pens to the old in situ moorings. It's firmly in the hands of HC now.
- BW also made them aware of the anomalies at Kaniard viz. WRF notified HC that the development was initiated in November 2016 but it wasn't because there is no moorings in place. The boat doing currently working at Ardessie is going to Kanaird afterwards.
- (TSSC) Sgeir Dughall remains as it was with no attempt by TSSC to develop an EMP to satisfy the condition of the permission granted for their S42 application.
- The Board is effectively shut out of the environmental issues whilst the Highland Council Planning Department do nothing.

## **8. Biologist's Report**

Peter C had previously emailed round a copy of his biologist's report and used a PowerPoint presentation to talk the meeting through some of the detail from his report.

## **9. Recap on Board's Work Plan for 2017-18**

- The board has continued with its pursuance for positive outcomes for both the Sgeir Dughall and the Ardessie fish farm issues. But has to report that, to date, responses to questions posed by the Board to the Highland Council Planning Department have not been met with any positive answers.
- As reported in item 7 we are seeing more fish farm expansion applications albeit at the screening and scoping stages. It is the board's proven policy to request EIAs at this stage and only respond to the full planning applications with accurate data, reasoned presentation of the wild fish perspective and insistence of rigorous EMPs being placed on any applications that are approved.

## **10. Board's Work Plan for 2018-19**

- Loch Maree Management Project (BW)  
This was discussed at the last meeting and deferred until my meeting with BH (which was reported via email).  
This project was originally envisaged to take advantage of the possible closure of the Isle Ewe fish farm following its biomass being reduced to 770 tonnes. It was originally thought that this reduction would make the farm financially non-viable but basic arithmetic shows this is not the case.  
A 770 tonnes biomass ceiling effectively means 1000 tonnes at the farm gate and 1000 tonnes = 1 million kilograms.  
With the current price of salmon at the farm gate at £5.00/kilogram there is a potential gross income of £5 million (less working costs) for 18 months.  
MHS obviously did the same calculation and have restocked.  
MHS are likely to apply for an S42 to have the 10-year condition removed.

Reports are coming in about sea lice issues relating to contaminated well boats, but, as yet, these are unconfirmed.

- The Loch Maree project is to be in 2 parts:
  - 1) Loch Maree - all the science and practical work to increase smolt production (see October 2017 minutes for more information).
  - and
  - 2) Loch Ewe – sea-bed surveys and telemetry tracking (see October 2017 minutes for more information).
- We will look to start talks with the Loch Maree Hotel about taking on the boats from them in an attempt to increase fishing effort on Loch Maree. It is important to note that NONE OF THIS HAS HAPPENED – it is only being looked at.

#### **11. Community Relations – Education and Young Fishers’ Projects**

- The Young Fishers’ Project that was envisaged as a fishing competition between the Gairloch and Ullapool High School pupils has not been met with any enthusiasm from the high schools – so further thought on a change more towards tuition (rather than competition) needs to take place.

#### **12. Anglers’ Representative’s Report**

- As reported above the Young Fishers’ Project requires a change in its direction and CB has not been able to progress this much further so far. The main reason for this stall seems to relate to the departure of the head-teacher and the temporary appointment of a “stand in” head-teacher at the Gairloch High School.
- CB had previously reported on issues between the Poolewe Angling Club and the River Ewe bailiff. Although fishing opportunities are being offered by the estate for fishing on the River Ewe the Club has not been taken up these offers. HW was able to clarify this situation with an offer for members of both the Poolewe and the Gairloch Angling Clubs to fish the river Ewe on

#### **13. AOCB**

- **Report on Proprietors’ and Public Meetings**

This year’s Proprietors’ and Public meeting along with the Triennial Elections will take place this October (at a date to be decided). At the Proprietors’ and Public meeting the prepared accounts and the chairman’s report will be put to those present for their approval. The Triennial election will then follow for the formation of a new board. A board meeting will follow the election process when a chairman will be elected and an angling representative co-opted.

- **Catch Returns**

The Board still does not receive catch returns from all proprietors. At some time in the future catch returns made to Marine Scotland will be accessible digitally but for the present it is important that the Board receives the information directly.

- **Stocking consents**

It is also important, as well as a legal requirement, that the Board receives requests for any stocking of salmonids into rivers. Information that stocking may be occurring in rivers within the board's area, for which we do not appear to have stocking request forms, will be followed up.

#### **14. Date of Next Meeting**

**The suggested date for the next board meeting is w/c 15<sup>th</sup> October - so the actual date in that week will be determined after the results of a doodle poll.**