

Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board

Minutes of the Board Meeting held at the Loch Fyne Hotel, Inveraray on 23rd October 2013 at 1pm

Present

Roger Brook (Chair) (Awe) **RB**
Alan Wells (ASFB) **AW**
David Stewart (Creran) **DS**
Tuggy Delap (Fyne)
Andrew Montgomery (Fyne)
Stephen Gibbs (Arran) **SG**
Caroline Fleming (Arran) **CF**
Andrew Barker (Ruel)
Patrick Campbell-Preston
Tom Turnbull **TT**
Jane Wright **JW**
Richard Hammond

David Milburn
Keith Miller
Bob Younger (SIFT)
Russell Buchanan (DDAC) **RBu**
Bill Duff (DDAC) **BD**
David Lilley (DDAC) **DL**
Jimmy Middleton (Tenant netsmen's rep)
Stephen Austin (SNH) **SA**
Craig MacIntyre (Clerk/AFT) **CM**
Alan Kettle-White (AFT) **AKW**
Daniel Brazier (AFT)
Helen MacIntyre (Administrator)

Apologies

Michael Handley (Nell & Euchar)
Beth Nicholson (Nell & Euchar)
Patrick Bowlby (Ruel)
Willie Shaw (Salmon angling rep)

Sandy Robertson
Jon Strickland
Marina Curran-Coltart (A&B Council)

1. Apologies

The above apologies were given. Patrick Bowlby has stepped down as a representative for the Ruel. RB gave his thanks for all Patrick's work for the Board.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the AGM on 17th April 2013 were accepted.

3. Matters Arising

Stocking of salmon rivers – The Board needs to be more formal when giving permissions for stocking now as a result of the new Aquaculture and Fisheries Act. We will require more information on stocking purposes and its effects. There is a conference on stocking in a month that Alan Kettle-White and Roger Brook will be attending.

FishPal – CM described that we are getting more bookings through FishPal, particularly on the Awe/Orchy. Inverawe has taken on more and the Ruel has also had some FishPal bookings. It has been found to be quite time consuming. RB noted that we have started with FishPal in a small way and it has worked smoothly. The main benefit is that when fishing tickets are booked in advance through FishPal the money is paid in advance, so this avoids loss of income from cancellations or no-shows.

Genetic testing of broodstock – DS asked if there have been any advances in getting broodstock tested. RB said he didn't think there are currently any facilities to do the testing, and that Marine Scotland has a lab but no employees for testing. AW thought there might be a new employee so RB said we will investigate this. JW said she has a contact, Eric Verspoor, who can do the testing.

Delisting of small rivers – SG asked what is happening with potential delisting of small rivers (removal from the valuation roll and therefore no annual levy charged). RB said we tried to set up a small rivers committee but had no volunteers other than DS. No-one else volunteered. CM said AFT will draw up a set of criteria for delisting and will email out a proposal for comments. DDAC, TT, SG, CF and DS agreed to be consulted.

4. ADSFB Executive Committee Report

How the Board deals with complaints from now on will need to follow a formal procedure, due to the new Aquaculture and Fisheries Act. We received a complaint from MP Mike Russell this summer on behalf of a constituent who refused to pay his levy as he believed the Board did nothing for the money. Our reply

pointed out that his river had been extensively surveyed and we had got a bridge altered to protect the river. He then paid the levy.

5. Clerk's Report

CM gave the Clerk's report, which is available on our website at <http://argyll.dsfb.org.uk/publications>.

Levy collection this year has been very good, with around 90% of levies paid.

There have been no causes to shoot any seals this or last year in any Argyll rivers.

Aquaculture escapes – some halibut escaped in Loch Melfort; one salmon was reported escaped at Dunstaffnage; rainbow trout have been caught in the River Awe but Dawnfresh deny it is from their farms in Loch Etive. Overall, escapes are much lower than they were 5-10 years ago. RMcK asked if the camera on the barrage can pick up rainbows. RB replied that they would only be picked up going upstream and only as a by-product of the camera being triggered by large fish. AKW said a group of small fish could trigger the camera, and he will be reviewing the barrage photos at the end of the year and will check for rainbows. RB said Dawnfresh accused the Board of fabricating the escape of rainbows this year but we didn't have any evidence as no fishermen took photos or kept samples of the rainbows they caught.

Planning applications – the Board have lots of consultations for planning applications this year, mostly for aquaculture and hydro electric schemes, but also some wind farms. You can find details on the Board website <http://argyll.dsfb.org.uk/consultations>, including our formal responses to some of them. We use the RAFTS mapping software on sea lice sensitivity when assessing aquaculture planning applications, apart from in Loch Etive as this is brackish water.

6. Aquaculture & Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013 – Implications for District Salmon Fishery Boards

Alan Wells from ASFB gave a talk on the main issues for DSFBs that arise from the new Act. The presentation is available to download from our website (<http://argyll.dsfb.org.uk/publications>). Points of interest included:

- The power for Scottish Ministers to determine a lower treatment threshold for sea lice did not make it into the final version of the Act as they believe that this can be achieved through existing powers. The Scottish Aquaculture Research Forum (SARF) are currently putting together a proposal for lowering of sea lice limits for fish farms.
- DSFBs must send an annual report and accounts to the Government, along with minutes of Board and public meetings.
- The First Minister has stated that there will be a fisheries management review of all fisheries in Scotland, not just salmon, conducted independently of Government.

RB thanked Alan for his excellent work in representing all our interests during the consultation of this Act. There is a requirement for a new annual public meeting for all DSFBs. The public can add to the agenda and also speak at the meeting (with prior notice). The Act recommends that the meeting be separate from other meetings. However this would mean a third meeting a year, so RB suggests we try holding it on the same day as the AGM. The new annual report requires information on the Board's plans for the coming year, which we have not done previously. There is also a section on declaring Board members' interests e.g. aquaculture or energy generation on land owned by a Board member that may impact a wild fishery. A Board member with an interest would be excluded from any decisions about a particular fishery.

One important difference is regarding the role of River Improvement Associations (RIAs). Previously, we have encouraged RIAs and decision-making has been devolved to them. However, they have no standing in law so they cannot be seen to make decisions that are the role of the Board. They will need to be more of a consultation body than a decision-making one. RIAs must let the Clerk know of relevant meetings so that he can attend.

BD asked about the methods for publication of public meetings. RB said we will use our website, emails to proprietors and angling associations, and put posters up in libraries, post offices, tackle shops etc. We are happy for the public to come to our meetings as we have nothing to hide. However, we cannot afford to put adverts in the press as this would cost £1000s. AW reminded us we also need to tell Scottish ministers the date of our annual public meeting.

7. Any Other Business

DS described Creran RIA's recent challenge to permanent planning permission for Creran fish farms. Both SNH and SEPA had no objection to the farm so their challenge failed. They asked the Information Commissioner about it and the IC has upheld the complaint from Creran RIA against SNH and SEPA for failing their environmental obligations. SA pointed out that if SNH doesn't object it doesn't mean they support it. RB disagreed, saying this was tacit support. SA said maybe SNH should reword their responses to aquaculture planning applications so that they don't imply support just because there are no specific objections.

DL said he had been at the Loch Striven planning hearing and ADSFB didn't object to it. RB explained that if we object to every farm we will be ignored, so we have to pick which are the worst and object to those and then we are more likely to be listened to.

RBu asked if there was enough information for canoeists about sterilising equipment to prevent spread of diseases between waters. RB said the Scottish Canoe Association is very good at supporting sterilisation and informing members.

8. Date of next meeting

The date of Wednesday 9th April 2014 was proposed for the next meeting.

9. Argyll Fisheries Trust Biologist's Report

Daniel Brazier gave the AFT report. This is available on our website at <http://argyll.dsfb.org.uk/publications>.