

**RIVER BLADNOCH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

**MINUTES**

**of the Meeting of the Board**

**held at**

**The Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart  
on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

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1. **Present**

Andrew Gladstone  
Dick Scott  
Colin Richardson  
Mark Davies  
Jonathan Haley

**Also in Attendance**

Peter Murray (Clerk)  
Jamie Ribbens (Galloway Fisheries Trust)  
Mark Godfrey (Proprietor)

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from John Haley and Sir Michael Wigan, who had requested the Clerk to chair the meeting.

The Board then welcomed the new Board Member Mark Davies.

3. **Minutes**

Minutes of the last meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016 having been circulated, were approved, subject to the Clerk checking appropriate revisions by Galloway Fisheries Trust.

4. **Matters Arising**

All matters arising were individually listed on the Agenda and dealt with later.

5. **River Classification**

The proposal to move the Bladnoch from Category 3 to Category 2 was generally welcomed. The Board through its chairman had responded favourably to this possible uplift. However, it was explained that this was still in consultation and/

and not yet an official classification. It was also noted that it was very borderline, and in 2018 the river may well go back to Classification 3 as the year 2011 catches would drop out of the equation.

It was agreed that the Board should look to amend its rules for the 2017 season, and this should be flagged up at the AGM and discussed in detail at the Board Meeting in February.

## 6. **GFT Electro Fishing Surveys**

Jamie Ribbens produced and spoke to a handout which will be attached to these Minutes.

Jonathan Haley wondered whether anything could be done in the stretch below Loch Maberry as the problems may not be simply acidification, it may be a problem with the gravel.

Jamie then went through the rest of the handout, commenting on the renewable energy schemes, confirming that the Trust were heavily involved with giving advice and guidance on these.

### Bladnoch Distillery

Again, GFT were heavily involved in giving guidance and advice, and Mark Davies advised regarding screening the lade with post and netting, which, if correctly sited, would be self cleaning. Jonathan Haley expressed concern at any extraction of water from the river during a very dry period, and it was suggested that the SEPA Consent/Licence would have cut off points below which no extraction was allowed.

Jamie Ribbens stated that it was imperative that both the Board and the Trust responded to the abstraction application by the Distillery when it was lodged.

Next on the handout was the water quality monitoring, which was ongoing, and it was noted that the peat restoration project which had been blocked was now going ahead, with two hundred and fifty hectares having been approved in the Forestry Commission Land Management Plan. This indicated that the SAC listing was finally showing benefit and having an impact with forestry restructuring work. It was noted however that the Forestry Commission would be looking to find funding to block the drains, which was the crucial work so far as the water quality is concerned.

The Polbae fish pass had been checked and kept clear.

The Bladnoch was part of the Marine Scotland Science temperature logging project which required GFT to download the loggers every six months. It was noted that the depletion of summer flows had a strong influence on high water temperature.

Jonathan Haley enquired whether anything could be done regarding inserting a dam to increase water level to help smolts. Jamie Ribbens explained that Sir Michael had looked into this years ago and found all sorts of impact surveys that required to be done, and accordingly, unless one did it in the name of flood prevention, it would probably be a non-starter. It was noted in any event that the smolts run tended to be at a time of the year when the water level was not particularly low.

With regard to renewable schemes, Colin pointed out that there would be a lot of money coming into the local communities and going into a central fund which was available for outside projects. He thought it might be as much as £160,000, and the Board should look into the possibility of claiming funds from that source.

#### New Planting Applications

The Clerk reported that he had received a favourable response from the Forestry Commission and he would liaise with Jamie Ribbens regarding who the Commission should send details to.

#### 7. **Brood Stock**

Jamie advised that the Application for the Licence had been submitted, with a proposal to catch fish on the Tarff and in the fish trap.

#### 8. **Wild Fisheries Bill Review**

Mark Davies explained the Galloway Fisheries Trust position was that they very much favoured an FMO based on the Galloway rivers, with a secondary possibility being Galloway & Ayrshire. They did not think an FMO based on the Solway rivers would be practical given the size of the Nith and the Annan. It was noted that this was the same position adopted by the Bladnoch Board, and it should accordingly be formally minuted that that is the case. Mark urged the Chairman of all Boards to keep in touch with the Chairman of the Trust regarding this matter.

#### 9. **Conservation Plan**

Jamie explained that the Fisheries Trust was in the process of preparing a brief plan for the BDSFB and GFT and he gave a draft handout to members requesting a response by e-mail. This could then be put to the AGM. This draft plan is different from the formal Conservation Plan which needs to be submitted to the Scottish Government. GFT agreed to fill in the Conservation Plan in liaison with board members.

#### 10. **Board Levy for 2017**

It was agreed that this should remain the same as last year, namely 77.2p in the £.

11. **AOCB**

1. Date for AGM and for next meeting in February

The Clerk was asked to speak to the Chairman first and try and arrange a suitable date for the AGM in November and in early February for the Board. (Note AGM fixed for Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016), Cairnsmore Suite, Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart at 6:30pm).

2. The Board approved the appointment of Colin Richardson to act as mandatory for the Chairman Sir Michael Wigan in respect of any meeting of Chairman of Boards and Trusts convene to discuss the Governments proposals.

3. Mark Godfrey then raised the importance of the Fishing Returns being sent to Marine Scotland, and all proprietors should be strongly urged to do this. The Clerk was asked to send a copy of the rateable value list to Marine Scotland so they could check this against the Returns.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.15pm.

