

# MINUTES of MEETING

## River Luce District Salmon Fisheries Board Note of Matters discussed at Board Business Meeting held at Lochinch Stables Courtyard, on Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014, at 10.00 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Lord Stair (Chairman); David Greer (Clerk); Jamie Ribbens (Galloway Fisheries Trust); Jackie Graham (Galloway Fisheries Trust); Robert Greenhill (Stranraer Salmon Fishing Association); Hans Topping (Stranraer and District Angling Association); Jim McClung (Dumfries & Galloway Council); David Bythell (fishing syndicates)

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION BY
1.	<p><b><u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Dr Sir Nicholas Spicer (River Luce proprietor); Angus McLean (Dunragit Angling Association); John Gorman (SEPA). Mrs Mary Nicholson (Galloway Fisheries Trust/fishing syndicates); Martin Lock (Head Bailiff River Luce Voluntary River Watchers)</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Minutes of Last Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting. He went on to explain that the meeting would have two distinct parts – the first session would be a general Board business meeting; and this would be followed by a formal Annual General Meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting and dealt with any matters arising that would not be covered in the agenda.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014 were approved.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Chairman's Report</u></b></p> <p>The past season was characterised by the distinctly dry summer and virtually no fresh water until the start of October.</p> <p>Aside from removal of fallen or obstructing trees and cutting back bankside vegetation, no other significant or structural works were carried out in 2014.</p> <p>The work programme for 2015 will be reassessed in spring after the winter floods. It is likely that there will be bank reinstatement works required at the Red Brew; and there is an ongoing concern about erosion between River Cottage and the fishing hut.</p> <p>Catch and release policy for the Luce had been reviewed and the requirement put to all day ticket and syndicate anglers was all anglers were <i>“limited to 12 fish per week. A policy of catch and release is encouraged, and notwithstanding the total permitted per week, a release rate of 50%, and all fish over 10lbs should be achieved. As many sea trout as possible and all herling are to be returned. A maximum of 2 sea trout per rod per day may be killed.”</i></p> <p>The Board continues to work closely with GFT with ongoing annual electrofishing surveys; and liaison on wind farm impacts and other issues such as the Penwhirn Dam improvement works, potential drought orders and the current Wild Fisheries Review.</p> <p>The Board recruited 3 new volunteer river watchers this season and the intention for next year is to continue with the scheme. Head Bailiff Martin Lock will give a report later in the meeting.</p>	

<p>4.</p>	<p><b><u>Head Bailiff's Report</u></b></p> <p>The Clerk noted that Martin Lock had been called away on business at short notice and that a full report would be circulated with the meeting minute.</p> <p>ML asked that the Board be aware that there were currently 6 hen fish in the hatchery and additional hens would have to be taken under an out of season licence if previous years' stocking was to be repeated.</p> <p>Jamie Ribbens noted that there was an increasing view that stocking does nothing to improve catches and if there were adequate numbers of wild fish, they should be left to spawn naturally. Where fry are being stocked they should be placed in the same location from where the brood stock were removed.</p> <p>It was agreed that GFT would undertake a survey to lamp fish currently spawning in redds and report on whether stocking was advisable and, if so, what locations should be targeted. Also agreed that the Clerk would submit an application for a licence to catch broodstock out of season as a contingency.</p>	<p>GFT DG</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b><u>Galloway Fisheries Trust Report</u></b></p> <p>Jamie Ribbens and Jackie Graham provided a GFT report – a summary is attached to the meeting minute.</p> <p>The CIRB project conference to review its progress over the past 4 years is taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> &amp; 26<sup>th</sup> November in Stranraer and all board members, tenants and angling club members are welcome to attend.</p> <p>JG presented the results from electrofishing surveys undertaken on the Main Water and Water of Luce in July 2014 between Strabracken and Boreland Bridge. With the exception of the Strabracken location, the densities of salmon fry and parr were either high or very high relative to other Solway rivers. Over the same sampling locations brown trout fry and parr densities were inverse to juvenile salmon and were highest in the furthest upstream locations.</p> <p>Electrofishing on the Piltanton Burn returned low numbers of salmon but high to very high populations of brown trout fry and parr.</p> <p>One of the key messages in the presentation was that the 2014 electrofishing locations were sites not stocked in 2014 and the results are therefore wholly attributable to wild fish spawning.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would be desirable to have a similar baseline for the Cross Water and this should be the focus for electrofishing in 2015. Consequently there would be no stocking of fry in this water in 2015.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>1. <u>Piltanton Burn</u> Jim McClung raised concerns he had with SEPA licencing of bank works in the Piltanton Burn upstream of Lochans. JMcC has further enquiries to make but bank works carried out in 2014 do not appear to have been carried out in accordance with the SEPA licence and the concern was that it was contributing to erosion on the opposite bank with potential implications for adjacent housing.</p> <p>The Chairman asked JMcC to keep the Board informed and if appropriate the Board would support a call to resolve the issue.</p>	

## MINUTES OF MEETING (continued)

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION BY
	<p>2. Angus McLean – Angus McLean has decided to retire from representing Dunragit Angling Club at Board meetings. The Chairman expressed his appreciation for Angus’ contributions and regular attendance in the past. Robert McCreadie will be the Angling Club contact in the meantime and the Club will elect a new Board representative at their AGM in December 2014.</p> <p>3. Dindinnie Loch – although outwith the Luce catchment, Hans Topping gave a cautionary note on the dangers of blue/green algal blooms. As a result of hot, bright weather, lack of surrounding shade and a relatively low depth of water, the whole of Dindinnie became deoxygenated almost overnight after a bloom and the Club lost almost all of their stocked brown and rainbow trout. One of the consequences of the bloom was that Scottish Water prohibited all fishing to avoid the risk to anglers, however the danger has now passed and the Club were finding it difficult to reach the appropriate person in Scottish Water to lift the fishing ban.</p>	

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

	<p>The Chairman closed the business section of the meeting and introduced the Annual General Meeting</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Confirmation of Board Membership</u></b></p> <p>The Chairman reviewed the current status of Board members. The Luce DSFB was one of the first fishery boards to proactively encourage representative of the river users and statutory agencies to attend board meetings.</p> <p>Under the provisions of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 there are 5 Qualified Proprietors - Dr Sir Nicholas Spicer (Luce, Upper); Stair Estates (x2) (Luce, Upper &amp; Lower); Stair Estates (Piltanton Burn, Upper); Dunragit Angling Association (Piltanton Burn, Lower).</p> <p>The Qualified Proprietors all directly represent themselves on the Board and are joined by co-opted members - Robert Greenhill (Stranraer Salmon Fishing Association); Hans Topping (Stranraer and District Angling Association); David Bythell and Mary Nicholson (Luce fishing syndicates).</p> <p>Board membership would follow a triennial reconfirmation as per the 2003 Act.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Financial Report</u></b></p> <p>The Clerk provided an income and expenditure report for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years.</p> <p>Historically, given Stair Estates’ significant interest in the salmon rights and the catchment, the Fishery Board administration is entirely funded by the Estate and no election has been made to apply a levy to other proprietors. The only external monies collected were contributions received from River Luce fishing syndicates towards the Estates’ subscription to Galloway Fisheries Trust.</p>	

## MINUTES OF MEETING (continued)

ITEM	NOTES	ACTION BY
9.	<p><b><u>Complaints Procedure</u></b></p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that a formal complaints procedure has been adopted by the Board and was posted together with contact details on the GFT website. The procedure is a direct legal requirement to comply with the 2013 Aquaculture and Fisheries Act.</p> <p>To date, no complaints have been received.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Date &amp; Venue for Spring Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Spring Meeting to be held at Lochinch Stables Courtyard at 10 a.m. on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015.</p>	