**DEE (KIRKCUDBRIGHT) DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

Chairman Treasurer Clerk Legal Adviser

J.P.H. Ingall Mrs. P. Campbell Mr.T.Ewing Gavin Scott,

Airds House, 12a The Crofts, Wayside, Townhead Messrs. Gillespie,Gifford

Parton, Kirkcudbright. of Greenlaw , & Brown, Kirkcudbright Castle Douglas Castle Douglas

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**Minutes of the DDSFB AGM held on 08.04.2016 at 2.00pm in the Crossmichael Church Hall.**

In attendance- Mr J Ingall (JI), Mrs P Campbell (PC), Mr T Ewing(TE), Mr.R Agnew (RA) , Mr W Forbes (WF) , Colin (CC) Scottish Power., Mr. J Ribbens (JR) & Ms. R Armstrong (R Arm) from the Galloway Fisheries Trust, Apologies- Sir Malcolm Ross , Mr. R. Ade. Mr. Karl Monday Threave Estates/NTS

1. **Chairmans welcome & annual report.** JI welcomed all attendees, reported that there had been no complaints against the board. It has been another very poor year for fishing and for salmon stocks on the river and nationally partly due to the low summer flows combined with heavy flooding later in the season. Adding to this was fungal infections on many of the early run fish. Work has continued with the GFT on the fish pass and ladder despite the fish counter being out of action for a period therefor only recording 200 fish up the river for the season. The ongoing project to secure better compensation flows/freshets for the area below Tongland Dam is progressing. The hatchery has continued to be productive as well as providing stock for the Salmon in the classroom project (SITC). The hatchery sustained considerable damage during the winter floods which will need repaired. There has also been a positive result in bailiffing with the confiscation of several coastal gill nets and subsequent reporting to the police. The new Bass fishing regulations are likely to help with coastal netting issues.

The Wild Fisheries Review (WFR) is progressing with a continued need for the board to be engaged with the process and supply inputs and comments to the consultations. The board is as yet unsure of its future status and unsure as yet in what way the new FMO’s will take shape, be it a Galloway and SW Ayrshire FMO or a

Solway wide FMO and indeed it is not clear under which structure the Dee would benefit most. It is key that we understand which model will suit us best but this may not matter as the FMO could be imposed on us by the Government. All anglers need to be aware of the ban on killing of salmon imposed Solway wide. It looks likely that with our low stock numbers that the killing of Salmon on the Dee will be banned until such time as stocks permit exploitation which will not be in the foreseeable future.

JI closed by hoping that there is a better season on the river for stock numbers and angling effort and that we should all keep up to date with and input to the WFR

1. **Treasurers Report-**  PC stated that there was one ongoing outstanding account. The finances were general healthy with outgoing expenses all at a manageable level, the accounts showing a slight loss but this was due to the timing of payments within the accounting period.

Ongoing problems were still being experienced with overcharging by Scottish Power for the electricity supply of the hatchery. A fee of £15.20/month was being charged regardless of usage and the overcharged sum had still not yet been returned to the board. The rateable value was to remain at 80%.

1. **Tongland Fish Counter/Pass (GFT)-** R.Arm reported a series of issues at the ladder and with the counter. In April the camera was removed to be cleaned, in May a very positive run of 49 large spring fish was followed by the appearance in the ladder of numbers of fungused fish both dying and in a state of distress which became easy prey for an otter. Working with TE the area was secured from the otter. Marine Scotland came to inspect the fungused fish. No unusual pathogens were found and it was thought the unseasonably cold water temperatures were the cause. Numbers of salmon and sea trout were rescued and moved upstream from the ladder above the dam. In July the Vaki counter ran into problems and was taken away for repair until August when it came back on line giving a count of 40 fish (a very poor result for that month which typically sees our highest summer run). In November electrofishing in the ladder procured 22 fish in total for the hatchery which were in part used for the Salmon in the Classroom project. The proposed freshet trials on the compensation turbine were held up due to the lack of a functioning counter, these trials are now set to run this season.

R**.**A noted that an angler had been delighted to catch one of these early salmon on the river Ken above loch Ken. The first reported in that area for many a year.

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1. **GFT business & the Wild Fisheries Review (GFT)-** JR Renewed control of INNS (Invasive non-native species) required to ensure continued control of knotweed and the increasing population of Himalayan Balsam.

It was unlikely that the proposed FMO’s would come into play until 2017 and that the board should continue with its good work. There were various models proposed for the FMO’s and that there would be around 20 nationwide to replace the 46 existing boards. We should be focused on reducing costs while remaining local. At present the Galloway area secures around £300,000 annually for fisheries management with the majority of that funding coming from non- fishery levy sources. JR suggested that the Dee board may be part of a potential Galloway (Urr-Luce) FMO area or a Galloway and West Ayrshire FMO area or a larger South of Scotland FMO area including the Rivers Annan and Nith. It may be in our best interest to be allied to the Galloway and West Ayrshire Rivers as they all have a similar ethos and many comparable issues. RA voiced concerns that any changes in management structure may lose us our ongoing good relations and cooperative works with Scottish Power.

Conservation limits have been set from 1st April with no netting for 3 years and a ban on killing salmon Solway wide until each river can prove it has a sustainable fishery.

Research is ongoing through the Heritage Lottery Fund on Angling and fish stocks in Loch Ken. There is a legal requirement for boards to produce an annual conservation plan. JR stated that although conservation limits are a useful and widely employed method of fishery management it was felt that the legislation had been rushed for political reasons and as such was flawed. The process to calculate ova/fish numbers was questionable due to the flawed grilse error calculations and wetted area calculation as well as inaccurate and incomplete catch return data.

Even taking into account any inaccuracies in estimating stock levels It is likely that under current circumstances the Dee will always fail robustness testing as stock levels remain very low for such a large catchment.

All boards are required to produce an annual Salmon Conservation plan and there may be a XL spreadsheet template produced to facilitate this process.

The GFT has recently changed its status from a Charitable Trust to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

GFT are looking to re-introduce Arctic Char into Loch Grannoch.

GFT is investigating the possibilities of a desktop study on how to improve movement and survival of smolts through the turbines at Tongland Power Station.

GFT encourage all to use and follow their works through the facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Galloway-Fisheries-Trust>,

Twitter <https://twitter.com/Galloway_FT>

and their web site <http://www.gallowayfisheriestrust.org>

1. **Hatchery & Bailiffs Report-** TE reported that despite much effort by anglers and the GFT due to the lack of late running fish it had been difficult to obtain stock for the hatchery. Only 2 hens were taken producing 13,000 ova which survived exceptionally well. Batches of ova were given to schools for the Salmon in the Classroom project run by the GFT and spring saw the successful release of the schools alevins into the Dullarg Burn.

The hatchery stock was put out into 12 manmade redds on the Polharrow Burn above the influence of crayfish.

Next season would need an amended approach to broodstock capture to ensure the hatchery ran.

On the river TE reported that angling had been poor with low numbers of early season fish combined with a poor grilse run that moved upstream quickly frustrating angling efforts. The hot long dry summer resulted in further angling misery and when finally the mid-autumn run arrived in numbers it coincided with heavy flooding that rendered the river unfishable.

In total 18 patrols were carried out as well as regular costal monitoring. Several reports were made of poaching but no persons were apprehended as they were respectively coarse and sea anglers. Thanks to the vigilance of the Tongland Community Council the previous issues with poachers at the Linn pool seems to have been addressed.

Reports of pollution instream (coloured water) at Tongland were investigated by TE and SEPA but no source or evidence was found.

Reports were made to the bailiff and the bailiff witnessed predation (Dabchick, Cormorant, Swans, Trout) on and around the spawning beds at the Loop pool (Bridge of Dee)

1. **A.O.B.-**  .

TE will continue to attend the Loch Ken Management Committee as a representative of the board and keep an ear on developments on the Heritage Lottery Funding being pursued by D&G council.

TE will monitor record, report and respond where necessary to any INNS.

JI thanked all for attending and their inputs, the clerk and board would keep on top of all WFR consultations, that the board should pursue maintaining a local board fit to address local issues with its specific specialist knowledge of the fishery and the system.

WF stated that TE and the GFT should be thanked for all the efforts made on behalf of the board. The next meeting was set for late summer/early autumn 2016, date to be arranged closer to the time.