**DRAFT MINUTES**

**of the Meeting of**

**RIVER BLADNOCH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

**held at**

**The Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart on Tuesday 7th May 2019 at 5pm**

**Present:**

Colin Richardson (Chairman)

Johnathon Haley

Mark Davies

Mark Godfrey

Richard Scott

Andrew Gladstone

**Also in attendance:**

Peter Murray (Clerk)

Jamie Ribbens GFT

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from John Haley.

2. The Minutes of the meeting on 12th February 2019 having been circulated were approved although it was noted that the Clerk still had to forward copies with the Electro Fishing results to Board Members.

3. **Matters arising Therefrom**

1. Data Protection - the Clerk confirmed that he had now agreed the Data Protection Application Form with Marine Scotland however it meant deleted GFT from the note of persons with whom the information could be shared. The Clerk was authorised to sign this and submit it.

2. The Chairman indicated that the total catch for the Bladnoch last year was 70 fish according to published figures.

3. The Levy - the Clerk confirmed that the Levy Notes had gone out and the Levies were now coming in and confirmed the current financial position between the current year and the balance from the previous year giving a current overall credit of approximately £3,850. The main expenditure still to come will be the insurance due in August (£800) the Clerk’s retainer due in September (£1,200) GFT due in November (£2,420).

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4. **Galloway Fishery Trust Report**

Jamie Ribbens then reported to the meeting on the following points.

1. Kilgallioch Windfarm Extension - he confirmed that he had commented on the EIA scoping report but it was at the very first early stages and not out for full consultation yet.

2. National Electrofishing Programme Scotland (NEPS) - he had attended a meeting regarding this on-going electrofishing programme throughout Scotland to determine whether Electro Fishing could be used as a means of categorising the rivers in future. Based on the 2018 data the whole of Galloway would come out as Grade 2. In due course a report will come to the Board.

3. Fish counter - Rowan went to a meeting regarding the proposed Marine Scotland fish counters network throughout Scotland and it was noted this was still on the cards and at the moment they were looking at different types of fish counters as well as potential locations. The Chair asked who had chaired the group meeting and was advised it was John Armstrong and he emailed him to push for the Bladnoch being considered for a suitable site or sites given its SAC designation. He obtained a reply saying the request had been forwarded to Craig Robinson at Marine Scotland to deal with.

4. Biodiversity Challenge Fund - GFT have put in an application in relation to improving habitats on the Malzie Burn.While surveying for the grant application it was noted that the Airriequhillart Plantation replanting is well back from the river and in fact too far back for the Trusts preference with regard to deciduous trees as they would rather see them planted nearer the water to provide strength to the banks and shading. The planting however had been carried out on SEPA’s advice. A question was raised regarding whether enough water was going through the Malzie Burn from the lochs at Old Place of Mochrum as sluices are present to which Jamie Ribbons responded that any time the Trust had been up there it seemed to be running but they would ask Dougal Evans,as relevant factor, for his view.

6. Barlae - The A75 work was to begin in June, weather dependent. A Fish Rescue Team would be in attendance from GFT.

7. Mink - There appear to be an increase in mink in the area of the Dee / Tarff and their Board were having somebody deal with these but the Bladnoch Board should be on the lookout for any increase in mink activity.

8. Pike - GFT is co-ordinating this and as at 6th May 42 pike had been caught in of which 37 were dissected-11 were empty, 7 contained smolts, 2 had salmon parr and others had a vole, invertebrates, roach and lamprey.. Three large pike were tagged and released. There was a fairly good spread from across the catchment of pike handed in but the Trust are still looking for more over the next year.

9. Smolt sampling - Jamie produced a spreadsheet which is attached to the minutes.

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**Management Plans**

The Chairman and Jamie Ribbens met with Roddy Fairley South of Scotland Manager for SNH on the 11th of March. Mr. Fairley had been very enthusiastic regarding the Management Plan and advised he would respond in writing once he had a chance to go through it more carefully in two or three weeks however nothing as yet had been received.

It was noted that no word had been heard by the Board from SNH regarding the SAC in 5 years. It was suggested the Board would sent SNH the draft Agenda and minutes before each meeting so that they could respond or attend. Roddy Fairley agreed to this and was fairly positive particularly regarding the restoration project but as stated nothing had been heard from Mr Fairley and nobody was available at either Dumfries or Newton Stewart SNH. It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate draft Minutes to all Board Members who would respond through the Chairman so these could be lodged on the website and made available to SNH well before he next meeting. It was noted that the Chairman will email Roddy Fairley requesting his written response since at the meeting he had been so positive about all the proposals and to look into Heritage Lottery Funding to deliver them.

It was noted that when dealing with SNH or any other Government Body it was better that specific questions be put to them requiring specific answers rather than simply requesting a response to an overall paper.

Bladnoch Distillery - it was noted there was no update from SEPA however the Chairman advised that he had checked and the smolt screen had been inserted and all seemed to be properly maintained.

**Management Action**

The Trust had met with Robin Phillips owner of Airies Forestry who was very helpful and agreeable in principle for works on his land.

The Trust met with the Forest and Land Management (was forest enterprise) and discussed with them the Management Plan. -They have responded with a note of their various concerns which GFT will review and will either make changes to the mentioned plan or explain to the forestry why they will not. The Board agreed to GFT producing a version 2 of the plan.

**Peat Restoration**

The Peatland Restoration at Dergoal will ultimately restore about 200 hectares which is going ahead butwill be phased over a lengthy period. It will start this year and the overall cost is likely to be in the region of £400,000.

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**AOCB**

1. Mark Godfrey intimated that there are an awful lot of plastic bottles in the river and could the Board encourage anglers to help in removing these. This was approved.

2. The Chairman raised two points

1. He asked how Board Members had got on with the season so far and Jonathan Haley responded that he and others on his beat had caught 5 but pointed out that there had only been a six or seven day window when fishing was practical.

**FISHING COMPETION**

It was agreed this should be held on the 17th of August and the GFT and Mark Godfrey would speak to the pub.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.20 pm.

PMM/ER/RL/RIVEB01-14