**DRAFT MINUTES**

**of the Meeting of**

**RIVER BLADNOCH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

**held at**

**The Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart on Tuesday 4th September 2018 at 5pm**

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**Present:**

Colin Richardson (Chairman)

Jonathan Haley

Mark Davies

Mark Godfrey

Andrew Gladstone
Charlie McNeill

**Also in attendance:**

Peter Murray – Clerk

Jamie Ribbens – GFT

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were intimated for Sir Michael Wigan, Dick Scott and John Haley.

1. Minutes of the meeting of 8th May had been circulated and were approved and signed.
2. **Matters Arising**

1. Distillery – the Chairman advised that he had sent a letter to the Distillery thanking them for putting the screen in the lade on time but received no response. Also when the water levels were very low, he had contacted SEPA as the water was still going down the lade at Waulkmill, Kirkcowan, when it was only just creeping over the weir. SEPA did send somebody out to check and also advised that the Distillery had in fact stopped distilling in the low warm water. It was noted Mark Davies had also contacted SEPA regarding the low flow.

2. Insurance – the Clerk advised that investigations had been made regarding changing the insurance but at the end of the day we had stayed with the insurance provided by the broker Lycetts.

3. Catch Return 2017 – the Chairman explained that he has written to the Manager of the Three Lochs, saying that the Board expected all proprietors to lodge their catch return each year.

4. GDPR - The Clerk confirmed that this had been done and Jamie Ribbens advised that it was waiting to go on the updated webpage on the GFT Site which was presently being upgraded.

5. The Angling Competition - The Chairman read out a report given by Rowan which will be attached to the Minutes.

6. Website - It was noted this was in progress and would be updated shortly.

7. Fishing Tackle - Jonathan and Paul Greasley had gone to the tackle shop with the money raised at Malcolm’s funeral and purchased fishing tackle and given it to the Kirkcowan Angling Club for distribution to youngsters. The Chairman advised that the club still had the equipment as it was being held for youngsters who did not have any of their own.

4. **Feasibility Study Report**

1. This had been circulated and was tabled and a copy lodged with the Clerk. This was a report which the Angling Club had asked GFT to prepare and was welcomed warmly by the Board who thought it was an excellent report. It was noted that the core of the report had been changed from simply liming to restoration.

2. It was noted that peat restoration was seen in the report as key to recover water quality and that the Board should put pressure on SNH and SEPA to get this going now. It was noted that SNH should be support these actions due to the SAC status but do not appear to be doing anything active to support the Bladnoch at the moment. To date nothing seemed to have been done by SNH regarding the rivers SAC status.

3. The GFT had been in discussions with Forestry and SEPA regarding the restoration project and Forest Enterprise have suggested that in the future they could be looking at up to restoring twenty thousand hectares across Scotland as they now realise they may be losing money replanting conifers on deep peatland areas. They had agreed that Emily Taylor from Peatland Action could help to get the Kilquhockadale Peatland project designed and costed out so it can start soon.

4. It was suggested that the Trust should push for the Bladnoch to be a test case or demonstration model for large scale peatland restoration and this was agreed.

5. It was agreed that the Chairman would draft up a letter to be sent to Andrew Jarrett at the Forest Enterprise detailing the urgency of getting the peatland restoration project . Finally it was agreed that the Board would have to prioritise the works which they could do straight away and then those for which they should target funding. These would include limestone gravel, restoration work and gravel loosening.

6. It was noted that the MSP Emma Harper had shown an interest and this should be encouraged. It was agreed that the Chairman would meet with Jamie within the next two weeks and prepare a list of priority works which would then be circulated to board members for their comments.

5. **Pike Conservation Consultation**

1. Considerable discussion took place regarding this and it was noted that 90% of the responses to the consultation would have come from Pike Fishers and accordingly the most important thing from the Board’s point of view would be for there to be an “opt out “ provision from any new rules promulgated so that the Board would be in a position to properly manage the river.

2. It was noted that the Board’s existing policy was that any pike under 5lbs should be removed and killed with the larger ones returned. Everyone should be encouraged to carry out pike fishing in the upper waters and main salmon nursery areas.

6. **Galloway Fishery Trust Report**

Jamie reported that:

1. Transerv were requiring to undertake bridge repairs at the A75 Barlae road bridge over the Tarf which would dam the river for up to 2 weeks. He was concerned about this stopping salmon migrating up the river just before spawning. SEPA were also involved and requiring the work must be finished quickly.
2. He and Colin have had meetings with SEPA to discuss various recommendations in the Feasibility study which SEPA could help fund or would require licensing e.g. limestone gravel addition, gravel loosening, restoring the diverted burn and woody debris addition. Report also discussed with Fisheries Management Scotland Director Alan Wells.
3. A key area around Polbae Burn that should be clear ground has been raised with Forest Enterprise as a lot of conifer regeneration has now become established and needs removed.
4. Angling effort project and the salmon exploitation project are progressing but the netting and tagging salmon is behind schedule due to it being too hot to net in the summer and few fish in the pool at present. This work is funded by EMFF.
5. GFT will a lot of electrofishing across the Bladnoch catchment this year for the BDSFB, national survey and monitoring wind farms – 34 in total. Results to be discussed at next BDSFB meeting in more detail once all finished.
6. GFT been asked to trial a Fisheries Management Plan Template by Scottish Government. GFT planning to use the Bladnoch as one of 2 river catchments to be used in Galloway.
7. GFT are submitting a funding bid titled ‘Partnership Delivery of Prioritised Salmon Habitat Restoration’ and are asking the BDSFB if they could send a letter of support. Jamie discussed the project in detail and it was agreed the BDSFB would offer support to the application.

7. **Broodtock License**

It was agreed that this should be applied for again and the Chairman would look into this with a view to submitting the Application before the end of September.

8. **Low Malzie Rateable Value**

The Clerk reported that the Dalreagle Beat had its rateable value lowered from £600 to £450 but the assessor was only able to make that effective from this April 2018 as there had been an error in the original appeal but the Board agreed that for Levy purposes they would back date it to 2017.

9. **Finance Financial Report**

1. The Clerk reported that in Mid-August there had been eight proprietors who had not paid and reminders had been sent out to all of them. Since then, one had paid but there was in the region of £800.00 still outstanding. The sum at credit, at the moment, was just over £4,000.00 which was sufficient to meet the next payment due to GFT and the Clerk’s retainer.

2. It was agreed that the question of the levy for next year would be discussed at the proprietors open meeting to be held on the 20th November in The Bruce Hotel at 6.30pm with a view to the Board setting the levy at their February Meeting.

10. **AOCB**

1. Mink – Jamie Ribbens intimated that he had noted a lot of mink in the area and encouraged everybody to carry out trapping where possible.

2. The meeting closed at 6.45pm following which the Clerk booked the upstairs function room for 20th November at 6.30pm