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| **MINUTES of MEETING** |

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| **River Luce District Salmon Fisheries Board**  **Note of Matters discussed at Board Annual General Meeting held at**  **Lochinch Stables Courtyard, on Tuesday 27th June 2017, at 10.00 a.m.** |

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| **PRESENT:** | Lord Stair (Chairman); Muriel McCrone (Stair Estates Office); David Bythell (fishing syndicates); Jamie Ribbens (Galloway Fisheries Trust); Martin Lock (Head Bailiff River Luce Voluntary River Watchers); Mrs Mary Nicholson (Galloway Fisheries Trust/fishing syndicates); Jackie Graham (Galloway Fisheries Trust); Billy Parker (Stranraer and District Angling Association); John Grierson (Stranraer and District Angling Association); Robert Greenhill (Stranraer Salmon Fishing Association); Hugh McFadzean (Martin Lock Syndicate Member). |

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| ITEM | NOTES | ACTION BY |
| 1. | **Apologies**  Apologies were received from Jim McColm (Councillor); Scottish Natural Heritage; Katie Hagmann (Councillor); David Inglis (Councillor); Graham Nichol (Councillor). John Gorman (SEPA); Dr Sir Nicholas Spicer.  Lord Stair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting had been delayed due to David Greer’s resignation leaving us with no Clerk to the Board or Estate Factor. |  |
| 2. | **Minutes of Last Meeting**  LS – hopes that all sites have been repaired & grass cut.  ML- Confirmed that the banks have been cut.  MN asked if the bridge has been repaired – LS confirmed that it has been repaired. The deck should have been re-netted and wire put on the side. ML said that the netting has not been put on the sides but there is thick cable on side at hand height.  MN – Will notify Estates Office if there are any problems.  B Greenhill proposed the Minutes of the last meeting and D Bythell approved. |  |
| 3. | **Chairman’s Report** – See Attached.  B Greenhill asked what grade 2 implies. LS explained that it requires careful conservation. Kill occasional fish but don’t overkill. JR – Grade 2 responsibility comes back to Board to ensure people are responsible. JR – Board needs to have clear rules. No scale readings for returned fish required but are interesting. Rowan keen to have rules from the Board. These should be included with the minutes. JG confirmed that the Bladnoch and Urr have set rules- anything over 8lb to be returned. If fish are bleeding they can keep them. ML expressed concern that this would be used an excuse to kill a fish. BG said that they behave responsibly but would want to kill an occasional fish. Concern was expressed that if too many fish were killed it would be likely that the Luce would be returned to category 3, by Scottish Government. ML problem could be with visiting anglers. LS said we could have different rules for day tickets and syndicates. |  |
| 4. | **Head Bailiff’s Report**  Good few salmon in the last 3 weeks.  Maintenance underway  Gabsnout – whole corner gone.  Abbey flats – bank on field side gone.  Swing bridge at Galdenoch Battery – big tree stuck  Poaching – 4 incidents – family below Boreland Bridge on a Sunday  JS Any questions? –  John Gr – said that if there was any involvement with police they should speak to the Wildlife Officers to give advice. LS agreed that it is useful to have a relationship with the police and it would be useful to have a direct number. ML said that they very rarely get information on something happening and they usually just stumble across incidents. |  |
| 5. | **Financial Report** – see attached  The financial report was circulated and LS asked if there were any questions. |  |
| 5. | **Galloway Fisheries Trust Report**  Jamie Ribbens and Jackie Graham provided a GFT report:  Jackie Graham presented the electrofishing results from last year and 2015 and spoke about timed electrofishing. JG explained that it’s a very good method to hit a lot of sites and target the best areas. A map was circulated showing red dots where the 5 minute fishing was carried out. JG explained that the base line won’t mean too much at the moment but will do in years to come. GFT didn’t go right up Cross Water as habitat changes and not many salmon. LS stated that when JR first started the Cross Water was a significant worry so Galloway Fisheries Trust work has worked. The figures recorded are the number of salmon fry caught per minute. If agreeable to the Board the GFT will change sites by a few feet. It is a quick approach to give whole river data. Same location every year gives comparables. Target salmon fry areas as interested in spawning. All done in Summer (normal eletrofishing season). No national standard to compare to at the moment. BG asked how much influence the work has on re-categorising. JR said that it didn’t have much influence at moment. GFT will target areas for re stocking, habitat work, etc. and perhaps add sites at top of river (Cross Water) to show what is happening. Targeting ideal salmon habitat. JR said that at Lagafater the Luce is narrow and not a natural salmon spawning habitat. ML asked if GFT electrofish at Lagafater house and they confirmed that they don’t do the Laggie Burn as they didn’t fish any burns but they can add in site. If in agreement they will go ahead again this summer. The meeting agreed that they should go ahead. DB asked how long it takes to do the river? It was confirmed that it would take 3 days to do the river on 5 minute basis. BG thinks that the Cross Water looks healthier than rest of river.  JG as if it was correct that there was no stocking last year and ML confirmed that was correct.  MN asked if there would be stocking in the future and ML said it would be a Board decision.  LS said that for the last 2 years it had not been advisable and asked JR what the current position was. JR said it makes sense to review periodically but it is now much harder to get stocking licence. JS, ML, & JR to meet and review guidance as best practice needs to be followed. There has been over stocking over last 20 -30 years and the true genetics of Cross Water fish for example have changed. JR – Board needs to have policy on stock. ML – if gathering broodstock it is certain they will spawn there as they may migrate down river. JR said the quicker they are put in the better and there is no point in stocking areas of high density. ML queried why if fish are that far up the River already you would take them out and put through stress. DB asked if it would be good to have some fish in the hatchery in case there is a disaster that causes a major problem in the River and kills fish. ML expressed concern that last year there were a few 12 foot floods where fry were stuck to fences. JR said that the main justification for the Galloway Fisheries Trust is acidification. He also commented that hatchery fish may knock out wild fish as they are stronger and healthier. Dry autumns have huge impact on how far fish get up River.  Conservation limits – The Scottish Government have scaled back and are going to keep Boards. They are still pushing forward DFBs to produce Salmon Plans to be approved by Marine Scotland. If Salmon Plans are not followed Marine Scotland could run river and remove the Board.  Pike conservation – Simon Drystone going to visit GFT shortly. Pike are to be protected – can’t kill over 6lb and bag limit of 1-2 per day.  Full Board Coverage – All Rives to have Boards. Amalgamations of Boards encouraged although JR confirmed that there will be no requirement to amalgamate.  Gill netting on coast will potentially be banned.  River Luce Category 2 – Changes in model – look at river flows. Dry season affects catches, late run of fish after season close. Wetted areas had been overestimated. JG spent a lot of time going through model and removing areas eg Piltanton Burn. More accurate scale data.  Estimation:  2011 – 2,000 adult salmon into river  2012 – 2,000 adult salmon into river  2013 – 1,200 adult salmon into river  2014 – 193 rod catches  2015 – 1,400 adult salmon into river  Late run of fish in 2014 – 135 salmon coming in after season closed altjough JR thinks the total will be higher. Season close date affected how many were added on. Egg estimation 2014 – 500,000. Better years, 3-4 million eggs. 2011 best year with 6,000,000 eggs.  There will be a big problem next season when we lose the 2011 data. 2016 was a dry year so we will lose a good year and bring in bad year. JR – likely to drop back to a category 3 as a result of this. This will potentially carry through until lose 2014 that was a very dry year. However if decent numbers of fish are caught in the last 2 months of the season they will add more late numbers. Every effort should be made to keep fish catches up.  Update Fish Galloway regularly to encourage more anglers to take day tickets.  Marine Scotland  Marine Scotland have distributed receivers for tagged fish to try and provide more evidence. Tagged fish have obvious external tags on their dorsal fish. There is only one receiver for the whole of Galloway. This is going in to the Cree, the GFT have asked for one for the Luce but are waiting to hear if there are any spare. They will be starting to tag fish next week. The tagging of the fish is taking place in Armadale, they will head down coast but may not get to this area.  GFT think the way the Luce is fished is not giving correct information. More information is required for the model to make them understand how light the fishing pressure is on the Luce  Desktop exercise – catchability of fish. When the Luce is really low catches are really low as people don’t even go fishing. Some of board contribution would go towards this. Would like Bailiffs to help if possible with netting. JG – last summer trying to refine model – Grilse error. To refine Grilse error – scales were to be collected and anglers were to say whether salmon or grilse. Thanks to all who assisted with the gathering of scales.  19 sets of scales read by professional reader – 100% correct one angler caught 2 but didn’t guess whether salmon or grilse. Largest 18lb salmon. Largest Grilse 8lb Smallest salmon 8lb All correctly identified.  No major grilse error on River Luce. Scottish Government made an incorrect assumption that anglers were getting it wrong. ML – A lot of salmon & grilse are about 8lb so unfortunate overlap. JR – interesting some beats, eg the Minnoch, just taking weight rather than anglers judgement.  Stick with same method of sending returns based on anglers return. LS have we still got scale envelopes. JG advised that this is not a strategy they are going for this year. JR to send to ML for fish hut. It was agreed that fishing effort should be recorded. JR – Model doesn’t accept that info but GFT working on getting them to accept this. ML – 2016 – fishing effort very low. JR – Need something to argue against 2014 effort. Recognition of exceptional circumstances in some years.  David Bythell left meeting at 11.35 am.  It would be useful if fishing effort was recorded for 2017 year. JG to speak to all anglers to see what can be done to record useful data.  Encourage as much fishing as possible in last 2 months of the season to increase percentage added although this goes against best practice.  Scottish Government has a precautionary approach and are not bothered if a river is a category 3 when it should be a category 2.  It was noted that the Luce is very honest in its reporting. |  |
| 6. | **Any Other Business**  BG – Cross Water of Luce – Quarter fencing has been renewed. A couple of stiles will be required as the bank is too dangerous. As it is not accessible at present BG will do without Estates.  GFT – Fish rescues – were Network Rail working on the River summer? The Estate did not receive any notification. JR will pass on info to Stair Estates. GFT no concerns about what was done but they couldn’t do what they wanted. Pool approx. 2-3 meters with slopping sand bank. General maintenance work required. |  |
| 7. | **Date of Next Meeting**  Post season – Date to be fixed for end of November and notified – Preferably a Tuesday or Thursday. |  |