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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 Monday, 6th June 2016, at 10.00 a.m.** |

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| **PRESENT:** | Lord Stair (Chairman); 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); Hans Topping (Stranraer and District Angling Association); John Gorman (SEPA); Robert Greenhill (Stranraer Salmon Fishing Association);. |

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| ITEM | NOTES | ACTION BY |
| 1. | **Apologies**  Apologies were received from David Greer (Clerk); Robert McCreadie (Dunragit Angling Association); Jim McClung (Dumfries & Galloway Council); Dr Sir Nicholas Spicer (River Luce proprietor) Jackie Graham (Galloway Fisheries Trust); Scottish Natural Heritage; Grahame Foster (Councillor); Mrs Roberta Tuckfield (Councillor); Jim McClung (Councillor).  Lord Stair welcomed Bill Cheeseman and Allistair Dickson (Members of A Begg’s Syndicate on the Cross Water of Luce). |  |
| 2. | **Minutes of Last Meeting**  The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting; the following matters arising:   1. For the 2nd year in succession there has been a prolonged dry spell. 2. GFT Report – Wild Fisheries Review – Conservation data is flawed as it is based on unscientific catch records. The review should be based on scientific evidence and the GFT are trying to persuade Marine Scotland to use electrofishing results. No information is available at present on when this will be reviewed but GFT are still fighting for it.   There being no other comments, the minutes of the meeting on 23rd November 2015 were approved. |  |
| 3. | **Chairman’s Report** – see attached. |  |
| 4. | **Head Bailiff’s Report**  No H.B Report due to season closed.  Cross water issues – nothing to report.  Over winter River Nith training courses. Pushing for zero tolerance by Bailiffs on catch and return. Martin Lock questioned if anyone caught on black and white loch should be prosecuted, and queried how to police poaching, obstruction, breaking law. M.N said it should be a police function rather than bailiffs function. River Luce has a Gentleman’s Agreement. Day ticket changed. On the findhorn someone who hooked fish, pre 15th May, was seen putting them on bank and a dog walker reported them – 3 Bailiffs kicked the door of fish hut down.  M.L suggested that worm fishing should be banned. |  |
| 5. | **Galloway Fisheries Trust Report**  Jamie Ribbens and Jackie Graham provided a GFT report:  JR distributed an Electrofishing map. Prepare electrofishing for conservation limits. Main stem look at natural spawner JS asked how effective electrofishing is on adult fish. JR confirmed it depends on how close you get to them. It should be noted that electrofishing doesn’t work in deeper water.  JS asked for results to be compared against a grade 1 river (Luce grade 3). It was noted that the River Doon is grade 1 and the River Stinchar grade 2. The Scottish Government working group is to be contacted to ascertain how data can be put into it. Standard protocol will need to be produced. Compare with Ireland (Electrofishing records) there is always a risk they will close as they do in Ireland. M.L will keep up to date and Include JS in emails. Cross Water fishermen indicated that they are interested in going out too.  Invasion of plant control- Neil Dalrymple left to become an ambulance technician and Victoria Semple replaced him on a one year contract. Re-look at doing Re-survey prior to spraying in September.  Himalayan Balsam – GFT will look at this but control won’t be started at the moment. Grants should be coming through.  Conservation limits- GFT in touch with the Board Chairmen of the Luce & Urr, as they should not be category 3. The Piltanton Burn is 1/3 the length of the Luce. Remove Piltanton Catchment to lift catches. 4 beats on the Bladnoch never put in fish return.  JS queried when calculations were made who decided on area. JR confirmed Marine Scotland mapped. The Innermessan burn falls into the Stinchar area – Records were by district and the Stinchar flows nearly to Portpatrick. Richard Lochhead changed it from area to district.  Grilse Error- 40% of salmon turned into Grilse. New scale packets - data will be looked at if ? 200 scales per season are collected. Anglers must clearly say what 5lb fish are as anything under 6lb has been recorded as a grilse. Guidance sheet has been printed. It was queried if removing scales could introduce infection. JR confirmed that fish welfare comes first. Scales regrow as it is natural for them to be knocked off. 6-10 scales should be collected and the biggest problem will be with back end fish as they are solid. Unless this is done we won’t be able to question the grilse error. JR has 200 tape measures and anglers will get a pack including a tape measure. Again there were concerns that the fish will be stressed. JS said that we have to do it to get sensible legislation. Can use average size of fish but not accurate. The leaflets will be back from the printers by end of week and have been approved by marine Scotland. There is a lack of information from the west of Scotland from June onwards. Samples need to be back by the 1st Week of the following month and data will start to be included for next season.  M.N has slight concerns with doubt to veracity of electrofishing returns – link up with ML. JR confirmed that the River Girvan is a category 2 but the Luce is healthier.  Scales should be collected for 1 year and then stop and there should be a hard push by the Estate and all beats. Any change in category may not be back dated and only change going forward. M.L was concerned that they haven’t taken into consideration the number of fishing days on spate rivers. Only 3 Rivers west coast of Scotland haven’t failed. Penalised for light fishing.  GFT want to pass to syndicates to help.  Windfarms Kilgallioch being constructed. Monitoring continuing to take place.  Piltanton Burn – Dunragit Angling Club struggling (less than 10 members) arrangement stopping.  GFT have suggested a way out using windfarm money, Kirkcowan set up 35 members within 2 weeks. They met Angus McLean and shown blueprint, they will have to prove that the community want the club. This can be achieved by public meeting, posters etc.  DB – Any trends on opinion of use of hatcheries hasn’t changed in two years, RAFTS produced review – caution if too big. It was confirmed that the Luce followed best practices. A big concern with regard to Sea Trout is that if they are fed up they convert to brown trout. It is getting harder to obtain a licence to fish for broodstock.  JS – There will be a meeting to explain packs as soon as possible, with as many people attending as possible. GFT would rather know if people don’t want to participate. Meeting to be arranged for an evening in 7-10 days’ time. All bailiffs should be present so that they can be introduced to fishermen.  Car sign’s should be produced and given to syndicate members so that bailiffs know who they are.  Agency Report  The SEPA office in Newton Stewart has been closed and they have moved in with SNH. This is very much an experiment at the moment.  Farming – 2013 and 2014 detailed inspections of Piltanton Galloway Coastal Project are finished. Data concerning livestock in water courses, pollution, etc. given to Scottish Government to feed in to grant system. (NVZ 1st January 2016 Piltanton) elevated levels.  SAC Stranraer - £12 million spent in Piltanton area to upgrade. In NVZ areas – No slurry applications from 1st October – 31st March and farmers will be reported if caught spreading slurry during these times. There is a NVZ map on the Scottish Government website.  During the hot days last summer the temperature was between 20-30°C in some water courses and vegetation was not shading. Some fish will be stressed if temperatures continue. If there is a thunderclap all surfaces will be washed off and should be reported if seen.  Killgalioch – Miltonise and Pultadie. Access tracks touching water bodies. Warning letters issued. Communication breakdowns. March 2017 connection deadline for feed in tariffs.  GFT – 3 Culverts on the Luce catchment site. Over Christmas, Glenapp – Borrow pit drains in to penwhirn. Scottish Water doesn’t want dirty water. Still at planning stage for the app. Will be full on when starts.  American signal crayfish – lots of machinery coming to windfarms from all areas. If working in the Ken catchment area there is a risk they can bring something in. All machinery must be very clean i.e. showroom clean. Wildlife Crime officer will monitor and all mud should be off on to grass.  Engineering – Contact SEPA as soon as possible to ensure good practice. Fixed penalties are in play and the Regulatory review act is now live. £300, £600, £900 spot fines can be issued. Although you don’t get a lot of success through courts. SEPA have used their own legal team for the first few. Variable fines range from £1 - £40,000 if there is a big environmental impact which kills fish. SEPA can go to developers who have to pay costs to resolve problem.  JR asked if fixed spot fines will be publicised to get the word out. John Gorman confirmed there will be a public launch. Public to be more proactive. GPS on mobile phone app to report issues.  Bill Cheeseman reported that at Camrie Farm (Peter Bailey) there is a big problem with slurry effluent from the silage clamp. Unless changed in a big way will still be a problem. |  |
| 6. | **Any Other Business**  JR – link with Stranraer Angling Association to pilot Atlantic Salmon Trust Project to highlight polluted burns. This is a quick way of picking up inverts and a cheaper way than River fly.  D. Bythell confirmed that although he no longer has a rod he is happy to still come along to meetings however he completely understands if the board wish to replace him.  Hans Topping stated that in Dindinnie algae has appeared again. They are not stocking but are able to fish. While scum around the sides of the main dam are very bad there are triploids but no diploids. Knockquhassen appears to be very good at the moment.  MN- From the Rods point of view the grass is a problem. The intention was to strim once although MN is keen for strimming to be done twice. Will repairs and maintenance of stiles be carried out JS confirmed it is on the list. All H&S issues should be reported to the office and dealt with timeously.  Mary Nicholson on behalf of all present asked for their good wishes to be passed to Lesley Greer following her accident. |  |
| 7. | **Date of Next Meeting**  The next Meeting will be held at Lochinch Stables Courtyard at 9.30 a.m. on Monday 28th November 2016. |  |