

DRAFT MINUTES
of the Meeting of
RIVER BLADNOCH DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

held at

The Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart on Tuesday 3rd September 2019 at 5pm

Present:

Colin Richardson (Chairman)
Johnathon Haley
Mark Godfrey
Andrew Gladstone
Charlie McNeil

Also in attendance:

Peter Murray (Clerk)
Jamie Ribbens GFT

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Sir Michael Wigan, John Haley, Mark Davies, Richard Scott and Roddy Fairley (SNH).

2. The Minutes of meeting held on 7th May 2019 having been previously circulated were approved and signed.

3. Matters arising Therefrom

1. Mink- other than one caught ^{by} Jamie Ribbens shortly after the last meeting none had been seen.

2. SNH – The Chairman advised that he had contacted Roddy Fairley and asked him to come along. Roddy however had sent his apologies and emailed the Chairman regarding the question raised in the difference between the two rivers, The Bladnoch and The Cree which he put down principally to water quality issues. He also referred in his email to the Chairman, the importance of trying to obtain funding and in particular from AECS (Note the Board felt this was extremely difficult and probably a red herring) he did however also say in his email that he was raising the plight of the river with others in SNH. The Board would be interested to hear what these discussions were and whether anything came of them.

4. Barlay

Jamie advised that the river had been blocked off and there ^{was} still some sandbags in the river along with a lot of other rubbish which required to be cleared out. They were chasing the contractors to do this.

GFT also carried out a fish rescue on this site and also on a site just further on towards Stranraer where further works were being carried out.

5. The Two Rivers

The Fishpal Website showed many more fish being caught in The Cree ^{than} and on The Bladnoch and it was felt this was understandable as it was a bigger river and was much more heavily fished than The Bladnoch. It was suggested that The Bladnoch suffered particularly in a dry spell during the smolt run. The Board felt that The Bladnoch was in a cash 22 position in that there are less salmon which meant fewer anglers which in turn meant ^{fewer} were salmon caught. It was noted the Atlantic Salmon Trust were carrying out tagging programs elsewhere but there ^{was} no results through yet and it was not felt feasible for The Bladnoch. It was noted that habitat improvement was already going on at The Bladnoch which was a long term plan but that predation should be given a priority ranking and by predation ^{was} were mainly meaning pike.

6. Pike

Discussion took place regarding the Board Rules and it was agreed these should be reconsidered and after further discussion ~~have~~ decided that any reference to pike should be removed altogether.

The GFT were disappointed in the number of pike that had been handed into them and ~~it~~ encouraged everybody to encourage their anglers to keep handing these in.

It was agreed that the most important areas were the Tarff ^{and} in the upper Bladnoch and that GFT will identify these areas as part of their study. The Board should consider encouraging children to fish for pike where and whenever possible. It would ~~however~~ be up to each individual ^{as} be at ~~earner~~ to grant the necessary permissions and the Chairman asked Mark Godfrey to consider getting a subcommittee together to look into this.

7. Galloway Fishery Trust Report

Jamie Ribbens then reported on the restoration plan, the smolt run electro fishing, the fishing competition and the ~~model~~ stock as follows:-

1. Note – Jamie to insert abbreviated report or reference to plans or studies already on the website.
2. Fish counter – The Chairman advised that he had received a reply back from Craig Robertson, the effect that nobody was prepared to commit money to anything at the moment but that The Bladnoch should be fairly high up on the list given its SAC rating.

8. AOCB

1. Chairman advised the status was ~~currently~~ Grade 3 for next year but for 2020¹ it may well go down to Grade 2.

2. Jamie advised that the Sargeol peatland restoration plan had now been agreed and this would eventually cover up to 300 hectares but in the first year, which has started, would cover 22 hectares and with the whole project taking five years.

3. The Chairman thanked Jamie for attending to the Minutes and Reports being logged on the website.

9. **AGM**

It was noted this was fixed for the 26th November 2019 and the Clerk was asked to check the time (time checked 6.30pm).

10. **Levy for 2020**

The Clerk advised that there would a small surplus at the end of the current year and accordingly recommended the Levy be kept the same at a pound in the pound. This was agreed.

B. Richardson.