

Fisheries Management Scotland
Meeting minutes
22 January 2020



Directors present

Richard Sankey (Chairman)
Alison Baker
Roger Brook
Brian Doran
Alasdair Laing
Mary Nicholson
Bill Whyte

In attendance

Alan Wells, Chief Executive
Brian Davidson, Director of Communications & Administration

Apologies for absence

Chris Conroy
Douglas Dobie
Lorraine Hawkins
Peter Landale
David Summers

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and noted the apologies.

2. Governance

1.1 Members' interests – declaration

The register of interests and declaration form had been circulated prior to the meeting and the directors were asked to consider interests they should declare. It was agreed that consistency is important, and even a marginal interest should be notified.

ACTION: Directors to consider and update their declarations if required

3. Actions arising from September board meeting

Actions arising from the last Board meeting were discussed. All actions were either completed or were addressed later in the agenda.

4. Financial & administrative

4.1 Scheduling of Board meetings and 2020 AGM

The following meetings for 2020 were agreed: a meeting prior to the conference on 31 March, 25 June (possibly Pitlochry) and 9 September. The annual general meeting date was agreed as 4 November 2020.

4.2 Review of accountancy requirements and financial reporting

It was recognised that additional costs had been incurred this financial year arising from registration at company house and assessing associated tax implications. Whilst these were largely one-off expenses, the costs of the core accountancy service had risen. Following a review of our requirements and costs, the Board agreed that we should move to a new provider. **ACTION: BD/AB/AL**

4.3 Aquaculture Liaison Officer post

It was reported that Marine Scotland and Crown Estate Scotland have agreed to fund a post in Fisheries Management Scotland to support members in casework relating to aquaculture for a period three years. The Board agreed that this was an excellent and much needed opportunity to provide additional capacity for our members in the aquaculture zone to ensure the protection of wild fish under a reformed aquaculture regulatory regime. The Board discussed how the governance of the post would function and was assured that the funding mechanism would not compromise Fisheries Management Scotland's ongoing role in issues relating to finfish farming.

The management of the post will lie solely with Fisheries Management Scotland and the focus for the post is the protection of wild fish and supporting our members particularly in relation to the planning process and resulting monitoring requirements. It was agreed that the Board will support AW in the recruitment process with a view to making an appointment in spring 2020.

ACTION:AW/BD

4.4 Fisheries Management Scotland – financial sub-committee

The financial sub-committee met in early January and AL provided a summary. This is a complex subject, and the initial focus of the group was to establish the wider principles that will be examined in more detail. The group was established in recognition that that all members, and Fisheries Management Scotland are currently under-resourced, and the purpose of the group is to find solutions that will provide long-term sustainable funding for the sector. The Board agreed that funding for the core activities of Fisheries Management Scotland should continue to be raised from the membership in recognition of our representative role. These core activities would be defined and agreed with the membership in due course and the board discussed and agreed some key principles to be used to steer the process. The sub-committee will keep the Board apprised of progress.

ACTION: AW

4.5 Community interest companies (CIC)

The consideration of Fisheries Management Scotland becoming a CIC was suggested at the last Board meeting in light of uncertainty about potential tax liabilities. These had now been resolved. Notwithstanding this, it was agreed to remain open to consider the pros and cons of CIC as a structure. The benefits included some parallels with charitable status, but with less onerous requirements. It was agreed to look at potential costs.

ACTION: AW/BD

5. Policy

5.1 Staff update

Salmon Interactions Working Group

AW and RB continue to work hard to make tangible and meaningful progress with a view to developing a regulatory regime which meets the need of wild salmon and sea trout. This has been a challenging process and there is frustration at the length of time that it has taken to date. However, it was agreed that a continued concerted effort to bring the process to a satisfactory conclusion was important.

Atlantic salmon pressures tool

There has been an excellent response from Fisheries Management Scotland members in relation to the salmon pressures tool. Sean Dugan has been fielding a range of questions and providing technical support, including the development of a range of resources such as a Q&A on the Fisheries Management Scotland website. Input is being closely monitored with guidance to members as appropriate and we expect to start the payment process soon.

Marine Scotland Salmon Strategy

The Programme for Government is due to be published in September 2020, and the roundtable discussion in the Scottish Parliament has helped to inform early thinking on this process. It is likely that a steering group will be established to help develop the strategy and AW will engage with Marine Scotland on this.

NASCO

The 2020 meeting will be held in Edinburgh. AW has been asked to help co-ordinate field trips to wrap up the week's meetings. Possible trips that were discussed included the River Almond, the River Garry re-watering project, and upper Dee habitat work. AW invited other suggestions with a view to liaising with NASCO and Marine Scotland.

ACTION: ALL

SNH

SNH have launched the biodiversity challenge fund, and this might lend itself to project proposals for wider scale catchment work. Fisheries Management Scotland members have been advised of the funding programme. AW met with SNH to discuss opportunities for taking forward catchment scale work to benefit the aquatic environment.

SEPA

Engagement continues with SEPA on a range of ongoing issues for the sector. AW and BD recently met with SEPA's head of enforcement and explored the potential for better collaboration between water bailiffs and SEPA enforcement staff on issues of mutual interest. SEPA and the Ayrshire Rivers Trust are collaborating on a workshop to look at riparian habitat improvements which have been put into practice in Ayrshire. Information on this event has been circulated to the membership.

Enforcement

The Fisheries Management Scotland Enforcement Seminar was convened in December and input was provided by Fisheries Management Scotland members, Police Scotland, Crown Office, Marine Scotland and SEPA. A number of workshops were delivered, on topics including conflict management training, use of technology, prosecutions and continuous professional development (CPD). There is a possibility that Police Scotland may be able to deliver conflict management training to bailiffs, subject to resources available. Fisheries Management Scotland will assess demand and liaise with Police Scotland on this.

Further discussion is required on a number of other areas identified at the seminar and how Fisheries Management Scotland might be able to facilitate progress on these. These include the use of technology for recording and sharing enforcement data, including intelligence, mapping hotspots for illegal activity, promoting CPD and general consistency in approach across the network. The deliverability of these areas would be discussed further by the Enforcement Committee. **ACTION: BD/AW**

5.2 Discussions with Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (SSPO)

A proposal from the SSPO with regard to a wild salmonid support fund was discussed. The board expressed significant concerns about the proposal as drafted, particularly in relation to governance and allocation of funds, the timing of any announcement in relation to the Salmon Interactions Working Group (which remains the highest priority of Fisheries Management Scotland in relation to aquaculture) and the overall transparency of any future process. Whilst the Board would welcome further constructive engagement to develop a process that both organisations can support it was concluded that the proposed fund could not be supported as currently drafted.

The Board asked AW to relay these concerns to SSPO at a meeting scheduled for 23 January, which would be followed by a written response.

5.3 INNS funding

AB provided an update of a recent meeting with SNH to discuss current and future funding of work to address invasive, non-native species (INNS). INNS are one of 5 identified biodiversity challenges and it is important that fisheries managers have the appropriate resources and capacity to engage with such work. It was noted that INNS are being identified through the Atlantic salmon pressures tool as an important pressure.

6. Communications

6.1 Annual Conference

A draft programme was discussed, and the board approved the overall approach to the conference design and outline programme. The conference will follow a half day seminar being organised by AST on the previous day. Work is also underway to plan an informal evening meal prior to the conference which would be open to delegates for both events.

6.2 Parliamentary event

The staff were congratulated on the delivery of a very successful event which has ensured that the profile on prioritising Atlantic salmon conservation remains high amongst Scottish

Government, Scottish Parliament and related agencies. A draft summary of the proceedings has been produced and this is presently being approved. Fisheries Management Scotland will continue to press key messages with MSPs to keep momentum going on salmon issues.

6.3 International Year of the Salmon (IYS)

BD reported that a funding application to IYS via NASCO has now been approved (€20K) to deliver a range of films to profile the work of Fisheries Management Scotland and members in relation to salmon management and conservation. Craig Sommerville at Castabroad media will be contracted to deliver the project in conjunction with members before the year-end. Progress reports to the Board will be provided. **ACTION: BD/AW**

7. AOB

7.1 Freshwater pearl mussel enforcement – potential extension of bailiffs’ powers

AW reported that the lack of enforcement powers relating to pearl mussel enforcement was raised at the annual enforcement seminar. AW raised the principle of an extension of bailiff’s powers emphasising that such activity would have to be as part of existing bailiff surveillance activity. The Board were content for AW to explore this further with SNH and others and report back at a future meeting. **ACTION:AW/BD**

7.2 Bike to work

The board were content to approve further uptake of the bike to work scheme provided by Green Commute Initiative.

8. Dates of remaining meetings

Board 31 March (Edinburgh)

Board 25 June (possibly Pitlochry)

Board 9 September

AGM 4 November