

COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday 17th June 2020, 10:30-12:00

By Video Conference

Note of meeting

1. 10:30 – Welcome, apologies for absence and general catchup

Present:

Jo Girvan – Forth Rivers Trust
Sean Dugan - SFCC
James Hunt – The Tweed Foundation
Kjersti Birkeland - SEPA
Sean Robertson – Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Alan Wells – Fisheries Management Scotland
Marcus Walters – Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust
John Armstrong – Marine Scotland Science (joined meeting but connection problems prevented attendance)

Apologies:

Jackie Graham – Galloway Fisheries Trust
Antje Branding – Marine Scotland

2. 10:40 - Review of April meeting minutes

The note of the April meeting was agreed as accurate and was approved in advance by correspondence. Action carried forward:

ACTION: SD to circulate a table setting out potential options for integrating both websites including pros and cons for each option.

3. 10:45 – Data collection activities as the lockdown eases –guidance to members

Committee discussed the implications of Covid-19 for the current field data collection season and shared experiences of field working activities where social distancing guidelines can be adhered. In addition to Marine Scotland, some SFCC members have been developing guidance procedures and risk assessments locally. In some catchments smolt data collection and electrofishing for fish rescues has gone ahead, taking into account Government guidance.

Committee discussed whether SFCC should provide specific guidance to members and agreed that beyond circulating links to Government guidance, or putting SFCC member's in touch with each other to share good practice, it is largely the role of individual employers to develop safe operating procedures and risk assessments.

ACTION: SD to contact JA about safe operating procedures for electrofishing.

ACTION: SD to organise a video conference slot open to members to catch up and discuss the field data collection season.

ACTION: JG/SD to draft an agenda for this meeting and JG/SD to facilitate.

National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) was also discussed with some members intending to fish NEPS repeat sites this year and/or new sample designs which utilising the same approach as NEPS.

4. 11:00 – Finances

SD reported that there has been minimal financial activity for SFCC and that reporting is moving over to a new automated system. Cashflow reports will be provided to committee in the coming weeks.

14 out of 25 members (including SEPA) have so far paid subscriptions. 2 members have taken up the offer of making a partial payment of £500.

ACTION: Committee to assess the state of play at the August committee meeting and progress discussions with any outstanding members from there.

5. 11:15 – Progress on database hosting transition

SD reported significant progress in securing a new hosting solution for the SFCC Database. However, SFCC's database provider, EMIS Health has been slow to respond about the transition process. This is likely exacerbated by Covid-19 as EMIS runs the majority of GP practice IT systems and also numerous social care IT services.

In parallel, SD has been developing new hosting options with the SFCC database developer. The developer was instrumental in the original design and build of our database from 2008 and has continued to provide support including delivery of updates in 2018. He has offered to facilitate the transition to a new hosting provider, and thereafter to provide ongoing support and maintenance as required. 3 different costing options with Microsoft Azure and OVHCloud were provided for consideration by committee.

ACTION: SD to provide further detail to committee and a decision to be taken by August committee meeting.

ACTION: SD to ask developer about provisions for resilience and hand-over during a worst-case scenario

6. 11:30 – SFCC member communication

See agenda item 3 for related actions.

ACTION: JH to convene a video call get-together for SFCC members who operate fish counters by November committee meeting.

7. 11:45 - Fish Monitoring Accreditation Scheme

SD circulated a draft proposal from Institute of Fisheries Management shortly before the meeting. The key driver for this scheme is the growing need for robust data collection and the fact that freshwater fisheries monitoring is one of the few environmental monitoring disciplines without an overarching industry standard accreditation. This initiative seeks to address these needs through development of an accreditation scheme.

Rather than focus on a specific type of survey (such as electrofishing) this initiative would pull together broad principals for all types of fisheries survey and cover aspects such as survey design, survey purpose, legal requirements, fish welfare, health and safety and the principals of good data recording and archiving.

Paul Coulson, director of IFM invited SD to attend meetings to develop early thinking and terms of reference for this initiative. The group comprises government, academic and IFM representatives from England and Wales.

SFCC committee queried the target audience for this initiative and whether this initiative would replicate SFCC's unique selling point in Scotland. It was agreed that wider input from different bodies in Scotland was required to ensure that any developing accreditation would take account of the specific landscape and established processes in Scotland which differ from England and Wales.

ACTION: SFCC committee to comment on the draft proposal by correspondence

ACTION: SD to keep committee informed as the proposals develop
ACTION: SD to invite wider Scottish input, for example from Marine Scotland and SEPA
ACTION: SD to liaise directly with Keith Williams (IFM Scottish Branch Chair)
ACTION: KB to act as the first point of contact for SEPA

8. 12:00 – AOB

ACTION: SD to contact SFCC members about plans for team leader refresher.

JH enquired about progress on the salmon pressures mapping project. SD and AW have been working with members to ensure broad consistency of data entry across Scotland and have put together a suite of web pages and 'Storymaps' to communicate the project. Outputs will be made available to all contributors in the coming weeks before a wider consideration by Marine Scotland.

Date of next meetings:

August 31st

November 25th