

COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 31st August 2020, 10:30-12:00

MINUTES

1. 10:30 – Welcome and apologies for absence

Attendees:

Joanna Girvan – Forth Rivers Trust (Chair)
James Hunt – The Tweed Foundation
Kjersti Birkland - 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
Sean Dugan – SFCC

Apologies:

Jamie Ribbens – Galloway Fisheries Trust
Antje Branding – Marine Scotland

2. 10:40 - Review of April meeting minutes

The June minutes were agreed as accurate and were approved

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

3. 10:50 – Finances

a. Cash flow report

Updated bank summary and budget variance reports were provided in advance. SD reported minimal financial activity for SFCC since lockdown with the salmon pressures project grant being reimbursed in full. SFCC member subscriptions continue to be paid in.

b. Member subscription update

As of 25th August, out of 24 invoices issued, SFCC have received payment for 13 (including 2 partial payments of £500). A further 9 members have confirmed that they will pay in full shortly. Positive phone calls have been had with outstanding members despite several foreseeing a deficit this financial year. In some cases, invoices were misplaced or did not get to the correct staff member for various reasons.

c. Outline budget for 2021-22

2021-22 budgets will be discussed at the Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) September Board meeting. As part of the wider FMS budget, SFCC are required to provide a summary budget in advance of this meeting. A draft SFCC budget was presented for discussion. Due to Covid-19, SFCC forecast several deviations from the proposed budget for the current financial year, the majority of which are likely to result in an underspend. A draft budget for 2021-22 was proposed, based on a scenario where Covid-19 has a minimal impact on SFCC activities, including the delivery of online training courses. Bank balance projections for year-end-2021 and 2022 were provided. To recognise the pressure some members are under and to support members financially during the Covid-19 pandemic, four different subscription scenarios were discussed.

ACTION: To be fair to all members who have already paid in full for the current financial year (2020-21), seek a full subscription (£1000) from all members.

ACTION: Offer subscription at half-price (£500) to all members for 2021-22.

ACTION: SD to ensure that a budget is set aside for delivering new training courses including a joint smolt trapping training course with I.F.M. Scottish Branch.

4. 11:20 - Web communication

Committee reviewed website options for SFCC and discussed the potential for full integration with the FMS website. FMS intend to design a new website within the current financial year. As part of this website SFCC could have a distinct presence.

Pros of integration:

- Time saving for SD if only maintaining one website for SFCC
- Joint website reflects SFCC being part of FMS
- Opportunity to reach a wider audience as FMS website receives more views
- Small annual cost saving through hosting, domain name and SSL certificate

Cons of integration:

- Perceived or real loss of the distinction/identity between SFCC and FMS

Committee emphasised that SFCC should feature prominently if integrated within the new FMS website.

ACTION: New FMS website design concept to be shared at November committee meeting for discussion (if available).

5. 11:30 – SFCC database hosting transition

SFCC/FMS now have a Microsoft Azure subscription and work has started to transition the SFCC database. Positive video conferences have been held and the initial aim is to have a beta version ready by end-September and roll-over to a live version by end-October. SD reported reasonably good input from EMIS (database provider) and excellent input from SFCC's project manager/developer. The most challenging aspect of the transition will be moving over all of SFCC's complex data reporting/exporting functions. SFCC need a secure certificate for hosting our new database solution which will be based on www.fms.scot or www.azurewebsites.net.

6. 11:40 – SFCC Biologists' Meeting

It is likely that SFCC will be unable to bring together its members in person this winter due to Covid-19. As an alternative, committee discussed options for hosting an online meeting to include a series of short themed sessions, perhaps over multiple days. Online delivery also allows for inviting guest speakers from other countries. National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland, Scotland River Temperature Monitoring Network and the proposed Wild Salmon Strategy were suggested as potential topics for discussion.

Committee discussed the importance of bringing together SFCC members from a social point of view and whether smaller meetings could be organised, perhaps in the form of themed field visits. Fish counters, smolt trapping and riparian woodland themes were suggested.

ACTION: SD to investigate potential options for field-based workshops.

ACTION: All of committee to put forward a theme for online delivery at the biologists' meeting in advance of the November committee meeting.

7. 11:50 – AOB

Bob Laughton was thanked for delivering the new online SFCC Team Leader Refresher course which ran successfully with 10 attendees.

SR mentioned the IFM/SFCC smolt trapping course. IFM are keen to run this again in Spring 2021 and are open to collaboration with SFCC.

ACTION: SR to progress with SD.

Date of next meeting:

November 25th