



Member's Meeting - Minutes
Tuesday 9th March 2021, 10:00 – 11:00

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Apologies - James Hunt, Kenny Galt, Lorraine Hawkins, Richard Davies, Jamie Urquhart, John Armstrong

JG explained that a lower than usual turn-out was expected this year due to furlough, leave, the smolt season, the SEPA cyber-attack, end of year reporting and because the AGM was not held as part of the Annual Biologists Meeting this year. However, quorum (10 people) was easily exceeded.

Attendees:

Jo Girvan - Forth Rivers Trust*
Sean Dugan - Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre*
Marcus Walters - Deveron, Bogie, Isla Fisheries Trust
Brian Shaw Spey Foundation
Jamie Ribbens - Galloway Fisheries Trust
Ben Seaman – Cromarty Firth Fishery Board
Ross Glover – Cromarty Firth Fishery Board
Debbie Parke - Nith Catchment Fisheries Trust
Alan Wells - Fisheries Management Scotland*
Craig MacIntyre - Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust
Lucy Ballantyne – Lochaber Fisheries Trust
Alan Kettle-White - Argyll Fisheries Trust
Sean Robertson - Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries
Bob Laughton - Findhorn, Nairn, Lossie Rivers Trust
Isabel Moore – Skye & Lochalsh Rivers Trust
Reuben Sweeting – Strath Halladale Partnership
Stuart Brabbs – Ayrshire Rivers Trust
Keith Williams – Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Al Reeve – River Dee Trust
Shona Marshall – West Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Ruth Watts – Beaully District Salmon Fishery Board

2. Minutes of February 2020 meeting & matters arising

There were four action points in the minutes, all of which have been progressed. JG added that for PVG scheme members can refer to the Volunteer Scotland website which details a range of free online courses. The minutes were proposed by Jamie Ribbens and seconded by Sean Robertson.

3. Election of Management Committee

There were no members wishing to step down from the management committee. Debbie Parke proposed that the committee and chairperson continue, and Bob Loughton seconded this proposal.

4. Update from Joanna Girvan

JG summarised some of the highlights from the past year including; continued support from all 25 SFCC members, mapping pressures on Atlantic salmon, communication with members, online delivery of electrofishing training and engagement at the biologists' meeting.

It was highlighted that it has been a difficult year for most people due to Covid, but that for members reporting at the Annual Biologists meeting, the outlook was very positive. It was commented that the SFCC is making good progress and remains relevant, up to date and future-proof, with excellent member support. SFCC is hoping to gain two new members this year. The member subscriptions are reduced by 50% this year to support those in financial difficulties due to the pandemic. It was also noted that MSS are working very hard to find funding for NEPS for the coming year.

5. Update from Sean including planned training courses and proposed objectives

Proposed SFCC objectives were circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.

Intro and team leader refresher electrofishing training will be delivered online in May to meet significant demand. It is proposed that a team leader (or equivalent) would then sign off the practical aspects in the field.

ACTION: SD to circulate updated electrofishing manuals to all SFCC members in a secure way.

Members also reported demand for training in invertebrate survey, drone river survey, river habitat restoration, barrier assessment, FWPM survey, IT/Microsoft skills and oral presentation skills. The following points were raised during a discussion:

- [Training & CPD Matrix](#) available on the Fisheries Management Scotland website.
- Demand was raised for R statistics training.
- GDPR rules may have changed due to Brexit and members should be aware.
- River morphology training could be revisited as was previously delivered by SEPA/SNH.

- A proposal for an SFCC invertebrate sampling protocol to be developed by Craig Macadam from Buglife was outlined for comment and well received by attendees. A number of discussion points were raised including; timing of invertebrate surveys, how scores are to be interpreted, application in low versus high water quality areas, relationship to existing SEPA sampling networks, potential utility for schools projects, limitations of inverts and the need for robust evidence, issues around uptake across Scotland and use as an early warning tool to flag the need for more detailed survey.

ACTION: SD to communicate feedback to Craig and arrange a Teams call as required.

To be taken forward as an SFCC priority, SD shared plans for the development of mobile field data collection templates for members including eg. pink salmon, fish health, redd counting, riparian habitat, predator observations, pollution, enforcement, INNS, pollution,

Members took the opportunity to ask for a progress update on the salmon pressures project, while noting that it has been several months since contributions were made by members. SD/AW described the importance of the current work to reach an accepted view between fisheries managers, government and agencies on the pressures facing salmon. The final outputs will be available for use in local fisheries management plans and will inform the wild salmon strategy. Marine Scotland are working on summary tools which will allow the outputs of this project to be summarised and ranked at catchment, regional and national scales. In developing these tools, a number of technical hurdles specific to the data compilation process have become apparent. Grant funding from Marine Scotland is being explored which will provide additional funding for members to check and assess certain aspects of the pressures tool process.

6. Financial statement

Members sought reassurance that SFCC can afford the ongoing database costs and enquired how they are spread between the financial years. SD reported that the transition costs have been absorbed within the current financial year by using unspent money from other budget lines. Next financial year (2021-22), the total cost of running the database under new arrangements may be substantially more than the current annual cost but efforts are being made to negotiate this cost down.

7. Proposed SFCC budget for 2021-22

The SFCC budget was presented to the FMS board in September and to the FMS members meeting. Given the financial challenges many SFCC members are under, SFCC agreed to use reserves to half the cost of SFCC membership for 2021-22. Due to unexpected ongoing licence costs and the increase related to Microsoft cloud hosting, SFCC expect to spend up to £10,000 in total on the database during 2021-22. There are three budget lines where SFCC expect to spend less than originally proposed due to online delivery of training potentially at the next biologists' meeting. Taken together, overall planned use of reserves is likely to be as proposed.

8. AOB

There were no items of outstanding business. Dates for SFCC management committee meetings in 2021 are April 21, September 1 and December 1.