

Fisheries Management Scotland

Meeting of Directors – Minutes

13 September 2021

By Videoconference

Present

Richard Sankey (Chairman)
Alison Baker
Roger Brook
Lorraine Hawkins
Alasdair Laing

Peter Landale
David Summers
Mary Nicholson
Hugh Younger

Apologies

Chris Conroy
Alexander Scott
Bill Whyte

In attendance

Alan Wells
Brian Davidson

1. Actions arising from the March Board meeting

The majority of actions were discharged or discussed later in the agenda. BD provided an update on organisational resilience in relation to IT and health and safety. Microsoft has a security analytics service for 365 which is a tool which helps users understand what is done to reduce risks to data and provides a secure score. This will be investigated further. In terms of health and safety, staff are considering training options and these will be taken forward. **ACTION: BD/AW**

2. Board Directorships

The Chairman thanked the outgoing Directors Mary Nicholson, Bill Whyte and Chris Conroy for their significant contributions to the Board and for helping to make the organisation increasingly influential. The Board considered a paper on resignations and vacancies which will arise.

It was agreed that we should strive to ensure the Board is diverse and inclusive, with a good blend of skills and geographic coverage from across Scotland. To assist with the process, it was agreed that a director on the Board should be identified to advise on succession planning. The Chairman will discuss this with AW with a view to putting arrangements in place, and to assist with the process for filling the current vacancies. **ACTION: AW/RS**

3. Communications

3.1. Members' meetings

Several Directors had attended the two recent members' meetings and the overall view was that these were positive, well-structured meetings which facilitated positive discussion with members. It was felt that it would be positive to encourage broader attendance at future meetings, with an emphasis on more involvement from DSFB

members, trustees and proprietors. To achieve this, more targeted communications will be used when planning future meetings and the respective DSFB and Trust Chairmen will be asked to encourage participation from their local areas. **ACTION: BD**

3.2. Annual conference

Options for delivering future events were discussed. Given current uncertainty with the pandemic, and cost and resourcing considerations, it was agreed that, for 2022, an online event would be planned. Ideas for delivery will be developed further for the Board to consider. **ACTION: AW/BD**

3.3. Annual review

The Board felt that the 2021 review in digital only format, which had been designed in-house, was excellent and represented good value for money. However, the production of a hard copy was also felt to have merit, particularly in reaching a much broader network and for retaining specific audiences – this could include placement in fishing huts for wider pick-up. The Board agreed that key to the success of a hard copy is dependent on demand and distribution cost/logistics. It was agreed to ask the membership in the end-year survey for their views on this, with reference to anticipated numbers required and an efficient means of local distribution. **ACTION: BD**

3.4. Website

BD provided an update on the new website. The overall design of the site is now complete, and page content is now in place. Work is underway on the final stages to get the navigation right, and some minor adjustments to the style. Staff are refining the page content and it is hoped that the new site can be launched in October.

4. Financial and administrative

4.1. Draft annual accounts

The draft accounts and an explanatory paper were circulated for discussion. There were no substantive queries. AL sought clarity on the detail relating to creditors and debtors and a breakdown of these will be provided. **ACTION: BD**

4.2. Draft 2022-23 budget

The draft 2022-23 budget and an explanatory paper were circulated for discussion. The budget recognises the continuing financial challenges and in light of this it is proposed that the members subscriptions should be frozen at the current year's level. AW reported that the SFCC Manager is planning to take shared parental leave between May-July 2022, and scope for a secondment is being considered to cover this period and provide an opportunity for someone from our membership early in their career to gain experience. AW mooted the possibility of securing part-time administrative support through separate financial assistance being provided by the Missing Salmon Alliance. The Board welcomed this, and AW and BD would scope this out in more detail once the MSA budget is confirmed. **ACTION: AW/BD**

5. Staff updates and current issues

5.1. Missing Salmon Alliance

AW reported that the partnership with the Missing Salmon Alliance (MSA) is working well. The MSA have provided financial support to Fisheries Management Scotland to support our advocacy work in Scotland, and discussions are underway to extend this

support into other areas of work, including a new staff member as discussed at the 2020 AGM. Work is also underway to ensure clarity about the *Likely Suspects Framework* and what it can deliver. PL provided a short update on the proposal for the *Salmon School* installation at COP26. If the bid is successful, this will provide an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the conservation of salmon and the challenges facing the aquatic environment as a result of climate change.

5.2. Aquaculture

AW provided an update on aquaculture and summarised several key areas. The Programme for Government states that the Scottish Government will publish its response to the Salmon Interactions Working Group (SIWG) shortly. The sea-lice risk assessment framework is also due for consultation before the end of 2021. Marine Scotland Science are also finalising work on a report on genetic introgression of farmed fish in wild populations and the final report is due to be published alongside the response to the SIWG.

CM has been focussing on engaging with Fisheries Management Scotland members, officials and key staff in the aquaculture sector. She has been contributing extensively to a review of local environmental management plans which are used by local authorities to manage wider environmental considerations.

AW was recently invited to meet Professor Russel Griggs, who has been appointed to lead a wider strategic review of aquaculture regulation. AW highlighted a number of current shortcomings in regulation from a wild fish perspective and emphasised that there are a number of existing commitments, including the SIWG and sea lice risk assessment framework that need to be progressed in advance of the wider review.

5.3. Enforcement

BD continues to work closely with Police Scotland and Fisheries Management Scotland members as part of the poaching phase of Operation Wingspan. This is providing a focussed opportunity to raise awareness of fish poaching in terms of publicity and practical action.

As part of the operation, Police Scotland are undertaking targeted work and joint patrols with DSFBs resulting in some charges being made. BD has been using this initiative to facilitate information exchange and build closer working relationships with the police. BD helped to support a training event in Ayrshire between local fisheries enforcement personnel and Police Scotland. Options are also being explored to produce a short film featuring Police Scotland to focus on fish crime.

HY enquired about progress in relation to wardens warrant cards to assist in enforcement of the Rivers Tweed & Eye Protection Order. BD had previously raised this with Marine Scotland and emphasised that cards could be produced by Fisheries Management Scotland should this help progress matters. This has not yet been taken up, and it was suggested that it may be worth the RTC pursuing this further.

5.4. SEPA

Frustration with a lack of regulation of issues affecting the water environment was a feature of the recent members' meetings and Fisheries Management Scotland receive regular reports of local issues from members – this includes compliance with Controlled Activities Regulations, hydro and fish passage issues, point source pollution and a lack of

consultation with Fisheries Management Scotland members. AW is exploring a number of routes to help address some of the concerns raised. The Board agreed that the salmon strategy stakeholder group was a good forum in which to raise these issues, in addition to direct engagement with SEPA. **ACTION: AW**

5.5. *Projects & funding*

AW summarised the financial support that has been secured on behalf of members to help deliver strategic data collection and monitoring projects. These included the national electrofishing programme, adult sampling project, sea lice monitoring and support from the Missing Salmon Alliance.

5.6. *Other water users*

BD summarised the content of a draft advice note that had been prepared in response to concerns about potential conflict between fishery owners/anglers and other water users. The advice is framed in the context of the Land Reform Scotland Act and Outdoor Access Code. In particular, it was felt that clear guidance on the role of DSFBs, as opposed to individual proprietors was required.

It was noted that long term issues associated with shared use of the upper River Tay were resolved through access agreements and the role of local access officers was emphasised. It was also noted that further discussion with Scottish Land and Estates would be useful. AW and BD were asked to refine the advice and circulate to affected members with suitable context. **ACTION: BD/AW**

6. AOB

- AW summarised an invitation from NatureScot to Fisheries Management Scotland to sign the Edinburgh Declaration. The Declaration calls on Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to take strong and bold action to halt biodiversity loss. It was agreed to circulate the invitation to the Board with a view to Fisheries Management Scotland signing it. **ACTION: AW**
- LH expressed concern about recent determination of a licence application for predation control which cited a key reason for refusal being the conservation status of the river. This was felt to be illogical and sent a conflicting message about salmon conservation. AW will convene a meeting of relevant rivers, with a view to coordinating a response. **ACTION: AW**

7. 2022 meetings

Date options for 2022 meetings will be circulated. **ACTION: BD**