



SFCC Member's Meeting Draft Minutes

Wednesday 23rd February 2022,
10:00 – 11:15

Attendees:

Alan Wells	Fisheries Management Scotland*
Antje Branding	Marine Scotland*
Ben Seaman	Cromarty Firth Fishery Board
Brian Davidson	Fisheries Management Scotland
Brian Shaw	Ness District Salmon Fishery Board
Chris Daphne	Ness District Salmon Fishery Board
Craig MacIntyre	Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust
Debbie Parke	Nith Catchment Fisheries Trust
Graeme Anderson	Argyll Fisheries Trust
Isabel Moore	Skye & Lochalsh Rivers Trust
James Hunt	Tweed Foundation*
Jamie Ribbens	Galloway Fisheries Trust
Joanna Girvan	Forth Rivers Trust*
John Armstrong	Marine Scotland Science*
Keith Williams	Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Kjersti Birkeland	Scottish Environment Protection Agency*
Leanne Munro	Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre/ Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries trust
Marcus Walters	Deveron, Bogie, Isla Fisheries Trust (Chair)*
Pamela Esson	River Dee Trust
Robert Laughton	Findhorn, Nairn, Lossie Rivers Trust
Rowan McLeary	Galloway Fisheries Trust*
Ruth Watts	Beaully District Salmon Fishery Board
Sean Dugan	Scottish Fisheries Co-ordination Centre
Sean Robertson	Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries*
Shona Marshall	West Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Stuart Brabbs	Ayrshire Rivers Trust

Apologies:

Al Reeve	River Dee Trust
Alexa MacAuslan	Northern District Salmon Fishery Board
Lorraine Hawkins	River Dee Trust
Peter Jarosz	Wester Ross Fisheries Trust

*Denotes members of SFCC Management Committee

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

MW welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies.

2. Minutes of March 2021 meeting & matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as accurate and were approved. There were two action points in the minutes, both of which have been progressed: the new electrofishing manuals have been distributed within SFCC's Data Collection Protocols Inventory and the first version of the Invertebrate Protocol has also been distributed.

3. Election of Management Committee

In spring, MW agreed to stand in as acting chair. MW agreed to continue as chair with the appointment proposed by RL and seconded by SB. Rowan McCleary was proposed by JG and seconded by SR to stand in place of JR.

There were no members wishing to step down from the management committee. It was noted that the current constitution does not include a limited term for committee members and it was agreed that this should be considered further. **ACTION: MW to consider adding a note on management committee member terms within SFCC's Terms of Reference.**

The committee have all agreed to continue for a further year.

4. Achievements during the past year - Sean Dugan

SD summarised the highlights from the past year and thanked all 26 SFCC members, Marine Scotland and SEPA for their continued support. A total of 4 mapping courses were delivered during the year and the electrofishing database service continues to be well-utilised by members. SFCC were successful in recruiting Leanne Munro (LM) on secondment from the Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust in January.

LM was introduced to the meeting and highlighted her achievements so far during her first 5 weeks, including the launch of the Data Transformation Tool and the circulation of the Data Collection Protocols Inventory.

SR then followed with an update on SFCC's new Invertebrate Sampling Protocol. Developed by Craig Macadam from Buglife, a first version has been released to members to trial before making any necessary amendments. It is hoped that a training course (both online and field) will be made available for SFCC members.

SD continued his update by acknowledging the effort of JR, RM, RL and CD for updating training materials and delivering the electrofishing training courses in 2021 featuring a blend of online and practical assessments. A total of 48 candidates were successful across 4 different venues.

It was reported that the electrofishing database has been successfully deployed within Microsoft cloud providing a more secure, resilient and adaptable solution for members. The database continues to be operated by the original developers, now called Rockpool Solutions, who are providing suggestions on making the

database more efficient for members. In parallel, positive discussions have begun with MSS to scope out potential options for SFCC to implement a shared solution with MSS utilising the FishObs database or a separate deployment to enable access for SFCC members.

The 'toolbox' of web-based data collection tools is coming together with the intention to provide a central hub in future for SFCC members to collect data. Positive feedback was received from BS who trialled the redd counting tool, noting that a similar approach for recording locations of egg planting would be very helpful.

ACTION: SD/ LM to create an egg planting record tool.

In collaboration with FMS and Marine Scotland, the National Adult Salmon Sampling Project was facilitated by SFCC utilising web-based data collection with over 300 contributions submitted by SFCC members.

SR and Richard Davies were thanked for delivering presentations as part of the drone river survey user group.

ACTION: SR to develop a drone user guide for SFCC members to include options for processing drone imagery.

SD acknowledged the large amount of work members contributed in 2021 to produce the map of Atlantic Salmon Pressures. The collated information will be made available to members to allow them to integrate the information into their fisheries management plans. AB apologised on behalf of MS for the delay in finalising the salmon pressures mapping resource for use by members.

5. Financial statement

SD presented the cashflow report to end January and projections for February and March. SFCC budgeted to use reserves of approx. 15K, in part, due to the provision of SFCC members with a 50% membership discount. The projected figures also take account of the SFCC secondment position.

6. Proposed SFCC budget for 2022-23

The budget was drafted in September and agreed at the Fisheries Management Scotland AGM.

JH noted that the electrofishing database is the second largest expense and efforts should be made to negotiate this down or to develop an alternative solution in the long-term. A FishObs-related solution would reduce that cost in the long-term after up-front costs.

7. Priorities for the coming year – Marcus Walters

MW outlined the priorities of SFCC for the coming year. Firstly, the recruitment of a new Manager for SFCC is underway with interviews to be held late March. The Salmon Pressures Project is to be finalised and released for integration within local Fisheries Management Plans.

Creation of "a toolbox" of mobile field data collection tools that is readily accessible for members and covers a range of relevant matters was reported as an immediate priority. SFCC Members took the opportunity to discuss the value

of having the data collection tools noting that there is a demand for these tools to be produced, especially the predator reporting tool. SD described that the predator tool was imminently ready to launch for members to utilise.

ACTION: SD to launch the web-based predator recording tool in consultation with AW.

Additionally, JH noted that the licensing department of NatureScot, is trialling a new survey method for piscivorous bird counts with a final report expected in April. Members expressed their concern around the new method and agreed to continue with the current process for bird counts. AW also mentioned that the predation group will be scheduling a meeting before the FMS conference and noted that this would be discussed further.

MW stressed the need to develop a long-term plan for SFCC's electrofishing database service and to investigate integration and compatibility with FishObs. It was suggested that a small working group should take forward an appraisal based on the following options:

1. Modify the current database.
2. Adopt Marine Scotland Science FishObs database.
3. Create a new database similar to Marine Scotland Science's FishObs.

The benefits of the third option were discussed and how it would have the capability of hosting invertebrate data as well as PIT tagging data.

ACTION: MW / New manager to form database working group.

Development of the annual training programme was discussed as a further priority, where possible to include demand raised by SFCC members for; electrofishing training, invertebrate sampling, drone survey, habitat restoration, mapping, freshwater pearl mussels, fish counting barrier assessment and geomorphology. It was acknowledged that SFCC does not have the capacity to deliver all these courses and that electrofishing, invertebrates and mapping should be the focus. The other topics could be delivered through SFCC workshops or via external providers.

Members took the opportunity to discuss electrofishing training and related SVQ accreditation and the pros and cons of running the courses via colleges.

ACTION: RM and JG to report back to management committee regarding discussions with SQA.

ACTION: Management committee to discuss options for electrofishing course delivery for this year and a long-term approach.

Regarding drone river survey, changing legal guidelines were noted by SB. The drone survey user group would continue and run workshops for members in relation to drone use specific to river surveys.

ACTION: SR to create a workflow/guidance resource for members

ACTION: CD to update NatureScot's freshwater pearl mussel survey training course and to deliver in August.

8. AOB

On behalf of the members, MW recognised SD's outstanding contribution over 9 years as manager of SFCC and wished him all the best for his new job. SD was

presented with an engraved fly box and fishing flies contributed by SFCC members.
Meeting closed at 11:20