

# Fisheries Management Scotland

## Meeting of Directors – Minutes

### 15 September 2022

By Videoconference

#### Present

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

Alexa MacAuslan  
Jamie Ribbens  
Alexander Scott  
Jamie Stewart  
David Summers

#### In attendance

Alan Wells  
Brian Davidson  
Sean Robertson

#### 1. Apologies for absence and welcome to new directors

No apologies for absence were received. The Chairman extended a warm welcome to new Director, Jamie Stewart from the River Tweed Commission.

#### 2. Declaration of Interests

The register of interest was circulated prior to the meeting. A number of updates were made to the register to incorporate some recent changes.

#### 3. Actions arising from the June Board meeting

The majority of actions were delivered or discussed later in the agenda. The following updates were provided on specific action points:

- **Health and safety (H&S)** – BD advised that all staff have been consulted about first aid competency and training needs were identified. In terms of broader health and safety matters, the Institute of Occupational Safety & Health resources will help inform our processes and feed into our staff discussions and policy. Staff will convene an annual H&S review meeting and H&S will form part of regular staff discussions as required.

**ACTION: BD**

- **Funding support for training films** – BD reported positive discussions with Marine Scotland about potential financial support. Further discussions will take place and an update will be provided. **ACTION: BD**

#### 4. Staffing matters

The Board considered the 2022 staff appraisal process, and remuneration for the next financial year in private. An update on these matters would be provided to staff after the meeting via AW.

**ACTION: AW**

#### 5. Financial & Administrative

##### 5.1. Monthly reporting

The Board welcomed the regular monthly financial updates. It was suggested that a useful inclusion would be the closing bank balance for each month to be reflected on the cashflow report. This would be added to future reports. **ACTION: BD**

## **5.2. Draft annual accounts**

The Board recognised that the latest draft accounts looked healthy, and there were no substantive comments or discussion. It was agreed to alter the naming convention for the directors (remove titles) and ensure that the accounts clearly show the reserve held separately for SFCC. **ACTION: BD**

## **5.3. Draft 2023-24 budget & member subscriptions**

The Board were content with the draft budget and proposed membership subscriptions to be presented to the AGM for approval in November. The Board understood that flexibility had been built into the budget with regard to a potential new post and expected ongoing support from the Missing Salmon Alliance.

## **5.4. Reserve policy**

The financial reserves policy was circulated for information. It was emphasised that the policy is designed to cover core costs (and not externally funded posts). It was noted that the reserve policy for FMS (six months operating costs held in reserve) has now been met.

## **5.5. Vehicle mileage rate**

The Board approved an increase in the staff private vehicle mileage rate from £0.43 to £0.45.

# **6. Staff updates & current issues**

## **6.1. Missing Salmon Alliance**

The Missing Salmon Alliance continues to work well and after the first three years it is reviewing its strategy, with external input to this process. This will include consideration of future funding priorities, and discussions are underway about how funding might support further salmon conservation activity in Scotland through a potential new role. There is confidence that the Alliance has progressed significantly and is moving in a very positive direction.

## **6.2. Catchment scale biodiversity improvement**

PL provided an update on the discussions around improving biodiversity at river catchment scale. COP26 and Salmon School have provided impetus for these discussions and the workshop held in Banchory more recently illustrated that there is enthusiasm to take things forward and achieve large scale improvements. Through the workshop and associated discussions, good connections have been made with Scottish Government and NatureScot. There has since been extensive engagement with NatureScot with a view to working with other sectors, NGOs and FMS members to pilot catchment scale projects and assess what resources will be needed to make these 'investment ready'. A meeting is planned with the Scottish Government in October and an update to members will be provided at the AGM. **ACTION: PL/AW**

## **6.3. Working relationship with The Rivers Trust**

AW provided an update on recent discussions with the Rivers Trust with a view to working collaboratively to make our role of supporting our respective members as impactful and effective as possible. This will look at collaborative opportunities in a range of operational areas including strategic and advocacy activity, shared events, health & safety, finance and insurance etc. This was warmly welcomed by the Board and will be discussed further at the FMS AGM in November.

#### **6.4. Aquaculture**

AW reported that the Scottish Aquaculture Council is now established and has met for the first time. Fisheries Management Scotland are the only representative of wild fish interests on the Council. AW advised that the drive for effective regulation of the industry, through the recommendations of the Salmon Interaction Working Group and the sea lice risk assessment framework are within the Terms of Reference for the group.

An analysis of consultation responses on the SEPA sea lice risk assessment has been published and despite strong opposition from the industry, remains on track. AW provided an update on the newly published Programme for Government (see below).

#### **6.5. Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre (SFCC)**

SR provided an update on the activities of the SFCC, including recent training course delivery. There has been high demand for training across several areas, including electrofishing, freshwater pearl mussel surveying and habitat surveying. All courses have been fully subscribed and were delivered in partnership with a SFCC members. A range of winter courses are planned, including mapping, GIS and the use of 'R' software for statistical analysis.

Work is ongoing with management of the adult salmon sampling programme, and Leanne Munro has developed a number of apps to support members, and the wider public, in data collection.

The SFCC Management Committee met in September and agreed to extend Leanne Munro's part-time secondment until the calendar year-end.

#### **6.6. SEPA**

Water scarcity issues dominated for much of the spring and summer and this topic has been a priority feature for engagement with SEPA. Fisheries Management Scotland has been working with members to discuss and record issues related to water scarcity. The Programme for Government also includes objectives relating to how we learn from the current water scarcity processes moving forward, given that this is likely to be a recurring issue. It was agreed that there is lots to learn and adapt into future management of this issue. This included the demonstration of what impacts water scarcity has on the environment, including the effect on invertebrate life. It was also felt that the threshold for regulatory action during scarcity is too weak.

AW provided a short update on the Programme for Government which included the following commitments:

- *Launch our Biodiversity Strategy and continue supporting people and projects across Scotland to restore and enhance our natural environment through the £13 million Nature Restoration Fund, completing the establishment of the peatland restoration programme, and take action to stimulate responsible private investment in the restoration of nature and enhancement of Scotland's natural capital.*
- *Enhance the Forestry Grant Scheme to deliver better community engagement, improved biodiversity and increased value for money, including improved support for tree planting around rivers and streams.*

- *Develop a framework to deliver our commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030, including the development of Nature Networks.*
- *Work with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), abstractors and others to ensure the right strategic approach to water scarcity is in place to build on the lessons from our experiences this summer.*
- *Take steps to introduce Highly Protected Marine Areas covering at least 10% of our waters by 2026 and consult on fisheries management measures for both offshore and inshore Marine Protected Areas and on Priority Marine Features.*
- *Start the process of developing a new National Marine Plan, to address the global climate and nature crises by carefully managing increasing competition for space and resources in the marine environment.*
- *Develop a Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture with enhanced emphasis on environment and community benefit and continue to progress the regulatory review of aquaculture and measures to tackle environmental impacts associated with aquaculture, including SEPA's implementation of a new sea lice risk assessment framework. and support for local authorities to guide development to the right places through spatial planning.*
- *Align behind our Vision for Agriculture, including consulting on a future Agriculture Bill, rolling out the National Test programme and moving towards shifting 50% of direct payments to climate action and funding for on-farm nature restoration and enhancement by 2025.*

#### **6.7. Consultancy activities by members**

AB raised an important issue relating to consultancy work and how opportunities for this activity should, where possible, be delivered by the member network for the benefit of wild fish and fisheries. This includes several activities, including the development of environmental management plans (EMPs) relating to aquaculture planning, renewables and other advisory services relating to fish and habitats. It was agreed that AB and RB will discuss what is involved in the EMP process and how we can support members to ensure that they have the capacity and expertise to take full advantage of such opportunities. **ACTION AB/RB.**

### **7. Communications**

#### **7.1. Annual conference 2023**

It was agreed that a face-to-face event should be planned for 2023. It was felt that the conference is a very valuable opportunity to bring people together and to discuss the important issues facing our rivers, wild salmon and freshwater fish. Whilst a hybrid event is an option, it was felt that there may be challenges in making this work seamlessly. It was agreed that there would still be an option to bring in remote speakers, to ensure broader input. Options for venues and date will be developed with a further update provided to the Board. **ACTION: AW/BD**

It was agreed to retain the 2022 AGM on 3 November as an online meeting for this year.

#### **7.2. 2023 Annual Review**

A number of options for the 2023 review were discussed. These included retaining the current format, removing the catch data element or else referencing the official Marine Scotland catch data and providing a narrative to accompany that. There was some debate

about the value of the data in the review, particularly as the official data was published a month or so later and given the real-time catch data provided by websites such as FishPal. It was agreed to analyse the various options and seek Board approval for a publication plan.

**ACTION: AW/BD**

**8. AOB**

DS sought clarity on progress with the wild salmon strategy. AW reported that the process is on track, but the next meeting of the advisory group is still to be scheduled. There is an opportunity to feed in ideas via the Fisheries Management Scotland representatives on the strategy advisory group (Alan Wells, Alison Baker and Roger Knight).

**9. 2022 meetings**

AGM 3 November

**2023 meetings** – proposed dates to be circulated. **ACTION BD**