

# Fisheries Management Scotland

## Meeting of Directors – Minutes

### 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023

By Videoconference

#### Present

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

Alexa MacAuslan  
Jamie Ribbens  
Alexander Scott  
Jamie Stewart  
David Summers

#### In attendance

Alan Wells  
Brian Davidson  
Charlotte Middleton  
Jenny McNeill  
Sean Robertson

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

Apologies were received from Alasdair Laing, Alexander Scott and Jamie Ribbens.

#### 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, including PL new role as chairman of the Atlantic Salmon Trust. **ACTION: BD**

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

The following updates were provided on specific action points:

- **H&S** – BD advised that staff convened an annual Health and Safety (H&S) review meeting in December and H&S will form part of regular staff discussions as required. A meeting with Greens of Haddington consultants has been arranged to assist in reviewing FMS operations, with a key focus on specific provisions including but not limited to homeworking, first aid, appliance testing and risk assessments for a range of activities including travel and training courses. **ACTION: BD**
- **Enforcement training** - BD provided an update on funding - no immediate funding is likely, however BD will continue to liaise with Scottish Government regarding support that may become available in future. **ACTION: BD**
- **Staff appraisals** – Following consideration from the remuneration sub-group, the 2022 staff appraisal process was signed off.
- **Financial reports** – The required updates to the cashflow reports have now been implemented. There were no further comments.
- **Draft accounts** - BD confirmed the requested actions were completed. There were no further comments.
- **Catchment-scale restoration projects** - An update to members was provided at the AGM in November, following a meeting with Scottish Government in October.
- **Environmental Management Plans** - An update on discussions regarding capacity relating to EMPs was provided by AB and RB. A meeting is scheduled with the West Coast Trusts and an update will be provided at the next meeting **ACTION: AB/RB**
- **Annual Conference 2023** – An update was provided under item 9.
- **Annual Review 2023** – An update on the 2023 Annual Review was provided under item 9.

#### **4. Directorships & Succession Planning**

A paper was circulated prior to the meeting, which provided context about the process and made a series of recommendations. Feedback was invited on the recommendations of the group, including those detailed below.

##### **4.1 Nominations Committee**

It was agreed that a Nominations Committee would be formed to make recommendations about Board appointments and develop the process to identify the next Chair. The Board agreed that the following members would join the committee Sandy Scott (chair), Richard Sankey, Pedro Landale and Alison Baker. Jamie Stewart would also join with a view to replacing PL in the medium term.

##### **4.2 Skills Register**

A draft skills register was circulated in advance of the meeting. This will support the nominations committee in identifying future Board appointments. It was agreed that this is a useful process and all Board members were asked to complete the template. **ACTION ALL.**

##### **4.3 Risk Register**

A draft risk register was circulated in advance of the meeting. It was agreed that this was a useful process, and all Board members were asked to consider the register with a view to reviewing this at the next meeting. **ACTION: ALL**

##### **4.4 Director Vacancy**

It was agreed that the nominations committee should meet with some urgency to consider the outstanding position for an appointed Board member. **ACTION: NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

#### **5. Recruitment Update**

AW provided an update on resources secured to host a new Fisheries Management Scotland post to help the member network identify opportunities to attract investment into projects that deliver biodiversity improvement for Scotland's rivers. The recruitment process has now started, and interviews will be held in late February.

#### **6. Delivery of National Projects**

The Board discussed various ideas on how Fisheries Management Scotland could provide support to members to assist with delivery of catchment-scale projects. This support could include assisting with fundraising, building capacity, governance, co-ordinating resources and facilitating collaboration with other organisations. It was agreed that a future support role might help provide some value and security for members who are engaging in this work and that Fisheries Management Scotland would be well placed to assist. It was agreed that the Board members will consider this idea further with a view to discussing at the next meeting in March. **ACTION: ALL**

## 7. Fisheries Management Scotland – Priorities for 2023

A draft paper setting out the proposed 2023 priorities for Fisheries Management Scotland was circulated prior to the meeting. AW led a discussion on key areas, including the wild salmon and biodiversity strategies and a range of other policy priorities for the coming year. The Board discussed about the range of areas covered, including how progress can be measured and success evaluated. The Board felt that the priorities set out are comprehensive and sensible. It was also recognised that achieving success in all the areas set out was not necessarily within the power of Fisheries Management Scotland, and that there should be a way to provide some context around expectations for delivery, where appropriate. It was agreed that risks and challenges to delivery would be highlighted in the paper. The Board agreed to consider the paper further and provide feedback within 14 days. **ACTION: ALL**

## 8. Staff Updates

### 8.1. Working with the Rivers Trust

AW provided an update on the support secured for the Head of Natural Capital Investment role at Fisheries Management Scotland, which has been facilitated through the Rivers Trust as part of a larger funding bid to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and through the Missing Salmon Alliance. The evolving collaboration with the Rivers Trust is proving very positive, and this relationship will be set out in a Memorandum of Understanding. It is envisaged that there will be a range of mutual benefits from this closer working relationship, including sharing expertise on a range of areas, including GIS, best practice, insurance, financial governance and many other areas.

### 8.2. Aquaculture

CM provided an update on SEPA's forthcoming sea lice risk assessment framework, ongoing industry engagement on a range of areas, and current challenges. CM highlighted the recent Fisheries Management Scotland statement on changes to the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Standards which received recent media coverage. Further discussions will be held with ASC in February. A workshop has been organised in late January to discuss resource and capacity building, reviewing the SFCC sea lice protocol and exploring means of assessing and monitoring gill health in wild sea trout.

### 8.3. Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre

SR provided an update on various workstreams, including the adult sampling project, the Fisheries Management Planning process, and ongoing discussions with ESRI about supporting people who will be involved in the *working with rivers* scheme. Various training courses have been delivered since the last meeting, including two Introduction to GIS courses, scale and otolith reading and Introduction to R, with other courses in the planning process. The SFCC Annual Conference will be held in February, with the programme for this almost finalised. DS queried whether the adult sampling project data offered scope to establish the proportion of fresh-run salmon being encountered in the project? SR felt that the scope to do this is limited, given that the number of images of fish was not comprehensive. DS It felt that this is something that Marine Scotland should consider for future sampling.

### 8.4. Scotland Government Strategies Wild Salmon/Biodiversity: Next Steps

The Wild Salmon Strategy Implementation Plan is now in the final stages of completion and will be published soon. There have been two meetings of the advisory group since December and AW has met with officials on several occasions to press for inclusion of, or greater emphasis on, key issues.

The Biodiversity Strategy was published in December and contains a number of references to wild salmon and associated issues, which will help support wider advocacy work. Within the strategy there is an excellent case study of landscape scale catchment restoration by the River Dee Trust and the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board which showcases efforts to re-naturalise one of the major upland tributaries of the River Dee. There will be a further consultation on the strategy and delivery plan in the spring.

#### **8.5. Offshore Wind**

AW provided an update on the Scottish Marine Energy Research (ScotMER) process. The latest version of the diadromous fish evidence map is due to be published soon (subsequently published [here](#)). AW and Keith Williams provided extensive input to the draft and a number of prioritisations were changed as a result. AW is due to meet with Marine Scotland Licensing Operations Team and policy officials to discuss how this process will influence the consenting process for new farms coming forward through the next leasing round.

#### **8.6. Enforcement**

BD provided a brief report of ongoing actions. Police Scotland are now using the FMS 'Crimes Against Salmon' film as part of the formal content for their training programme for wildlife crime. This is encouraging and will help ensure that trainee officers will be well briefed on the nature of fish poaching.

A draft impact statement on fish poaching have been shared with both Police Scotland and the Crown Office and they have agreed to review the statement and provide feedback. This will be a useful tool in helping to improve the way poaching cases are presented in court.

Discussions are underway with several DSFBs to consider a training framework which will help set priorities for training delivery and target resources. A short paper on this will be available soon and this will be discussed with the FMS Enforcement Committee before being shared more widely.

### **9. Communications**

#### **9.1 Annual Conference 2023**

A draft programme was circulated prior to the meeting. AW expanded on the theme of this year's Annual Conference, which will have a key focus on green finance and exploring options for restoring river catchments at scale as well as addressing existing and future pressures.

#### **9.2 Annual Review 2023**

Planning has begun for the content of this year's publication. Following previous discussions with the Board, it has been decided that catch statistics/river reports will not be included in the 2023 review. AW will continue discussions with Scottish Government about options for future presentation of statistics.

### **10. AOB**

None.

### **11. 2023 meetings**

30 March (Aviemore), 21 June, 13 September