

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SPEY DISTRICT FISHERY BOARD IN OPEN SESSION held at the Craigellachie Hotel, Craigellachie commencing at 9.30 a. m. on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2014

**Present:-**

<b>Chairman</b>	Brian Doran	Craigellachie Fishings
<b>Proprietors</b>	Peter Graham Angus Gordon Lennox Toby Metcalfe Sir Edward Mountain, Bt Oliver Russell Dr CMH Wills Alan Williams	Roths and Aikenway Brae Water Trust Crown Estate Delfur Fishings Ballindalloch Knockando Carron Fishings
<b>Co-Optees</b>	Grant Mortimer  Mel McDonald	Strathspey Angling Improvement Association  River Spey Angling Association
<b>In Attendance</b>	Roger Knight Anne Elliot Brian Shaw Grahame Newman William Cowie	Director SNH Biologist SEPA Clerk
<b>Public Attendees</b>	Warren Gain Tim Betts	River Spey Anglers Association River Spey Anglers Association

**1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

Apologies were noted from James Carr, Peter Millar and Gavin Clark of SNH (who was represented at the meeting by Anne Elliot).

**2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

2.1 Minutes of Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.

Grahame Newman indicated that it was not within SEPA'S remit to carry out audits of infrastructure in connection with pollution issues as reported at Clause

4.5.2 of the previous Minute. Other than this correction, the Minute was proposed by Dr CMH Wills and seconded by Angus Gordon Lennox as being an accurate record.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

3.1 There were no additional matters arising, other than covered in the Agenda.

### **4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Director's Report was as annexed to the Minute but the following issues arose:-

#### **4.1 Seal management**

Angus Gordon Lennox enquired how the Moray Firth Seal Management Plan had been rated as successful. In response, the Director indicated this was in the sense of a joined-up approach with all agencies and Boards acting together, which enabled co-ordinated action.

Brian Doran enquired who was overall in charge. In response, Sir Edward Mountain indicated that at the start this had been individual rivers, but as time went on the control of submitting the licence applications and subsequent returns had fallen to the Director of the Kyle of Sutherland Board and subsequently the Director of the Spey Board. The Director explained that a co-ordination and review meeting would now be arranged which would address issues such as the fulfilment of the quota throughout the region. He added that Marine Scotland would not increase the quota until the existing quotas were fulfilled, so the issue of co-ordinated action and participation was vitally important to ensure proper implementation.

As an aside, Alan Williams indicated that the Wild Fisheries Review may result in the implementation of a national framework for seal management.

#### **4.2 Spey Catchment Initiative**

Toby Metcalfe enquired how monitoring of the Initiative's projects was working in practice. In response, Brian Shaw confirmed that they had good baseline data for the project areas, which would be updated annually following the conduct of regular evaluation. Alan Williams also stressed the need to highlight the value of the private sector element of the Initiative's funding in light of the Wild Fisheries Review.

#### 4.3 Spey Dam

Alan Williams enquired whether the SEPA were reducing the status of the river above the Spey Dam from moderate to poor and, if so, on what timescale. In response, Grahame Newman advised that he was not personally involved, but he was aware discussions were ongoing and would report to the Board on progress as much as he was able. The Director reported that he had been informed that all Water Framework Directive issues on the Spey were being brought forward from the third River Basin Management Plan to the second and Brian Shaw said that confirmation of the revised status was expected to be received shortly.

#### 4.4 SSE

Angus Gordon Lennox recorded his and all of the Board's thanks to the Director and to Alan Williams for all their hard work, which had seen the withdrawal of the SSE application in its current form.

### **5. Spey Foundation Report**

5.1 Peter Graham presented a brief summary of the discussions of the Spey Foundation Meeting held the previous day. These included discussions on the following:-

- Overall review of budget and projects.
- Continuation of monitoring on the Avon.
- Lengthy discussions on pre- and post-spate monitoring.
- Presentation of a report by the Biologist on smolt trapping which had been well received and was now to be peer reviewed.
- The Ghillies' view on targeting funding towards specific projects in the Spey valley and the possibility of involving a PR Consultant to look at areas which might attract private funding.
- Discussion on the relationship between the Foundation and the Board and the need to become more independent to allow separate employment etc.
- Discussion of off-shore Wind Farm developments which resulted in the suggestion of a meeting with the Atlantic Salmon Trust to coordinate work, including a possible smolt tagging project near the mouth of the Spey. Brian Shaw indicated, however, that this was unlikely to happen until 2016.

In summary, Peter Graham indicated that whilst there was a lot of ongoing work, the main issue was to maintain external funding, particularly if Board funding was reduced as a result of the Wild Fishery Review. He then invited questions:-

Toby Metcalfe enquired whether it would be possible to have a note of the key points from the Foundation Committee Meeting to be available at the Board Meeting, so as to inform Board Members.

Alan Williams also enquired whether the Minutes of the Foundation Meeting should be published on the Board's website. After discussion, it was agreed to do so, with the exception of the Biologist's Report, which was a record of ongoing work rather than a summary of decisions taken. A full Minute, however, would be circulated to Board Members.

## **6. Board Nominees and Co-optees to Foundation.**

6.1 Following a review of the Memorandum and Articles of the Foundation, it was noted that there was a power of Nomination and Co-option, as well as provisions regarding the retirement of Directors. Nominated and Co-opted Directors were not required to step down in rotation and, after discussion, it was recommended to appoint Peter Graham and Brian Doran as the Boards' Nominee Directors and to Co-opt Roger Knight and Brian Shaw as Directors also.

This proposal was unanimously agreed and proposed by Oliver Russell and seconded by Toby Metcalfe.

## **7 Publicity**

7.1 This was covered within the Director's Report attached.

## **8. Association of Salmon Fishery Boards**

### **8.1 Wild Fisheries Review**

The Director reported that the AGM of the ASFB had taken place two weeks before the meeting and had been well attended. It had been followed by a joint workshop between ASFB Members and RAFTS Members to discuss the Wild Fisheries Review. In summary it was felt that some aspects of the Review were positive and some negative, and considerable concern had been expressed by members from the Tweed. In addition, the finance provisions were of particular concern, given the central collection of a national levy and it was considered that the new system could be unworkable.

At the moment this was a report with a series of recommendations, but Board Members recognised that if the proposed system of financing was implemented it could significantly affect the current Spey operation.

### **8.2 Offshore Wind Farms**

Sir Edward Mountain expressed concern that the ASFB were dealing with the negotiation of Offshore Wind Farms rather than the local Fishery Boards directly

involved. He felt strongly that the Association should be serving the interests of the Boards' rather than the other way round. Peter Graham agreed that if there was a disconnect between the Boards and the ASFB then this was an issue and they should be challenged to demonstrate that they were representing the Boards' interests appropriately.

Brian Shaw sought to reassure Board Members that he had been involved in a number of meetings of Wild Fish interests and the Directors of developments of offshore Wind Farms. These had included a two-day meeting in Thurso with Berridale Offshore Windfarm Limited (BOWL) and Moray Offshore Renewables Limited (MORL). He had also been involved in a lot of related activity on behalf of the Spey and so he did not feel that the Board were inadequately or inappropriately represented in discussions relating to offshore Wind Farms.

**9. AOCB**

None.

**10. Dates of next meeting.**

- Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February (Board and AGM)
- Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May
- Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August
- Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November

Foundation Committee Meetings would all be held on the previous day.

The Open Session then closed at 10.30 a.m.