

MINUTES OF SWRFT TRUSTEES' MEETING

Harbour Centre, Gairloch	PRESENT:	
DATE: 30th May 2018	David Barclay (DB) – Chair	Ian Lindsay (IL)
OPENED AT: 11.00 CLOSED AT: 15.35	Alasdair Macdonald (AM)	Mark Williams (MW)
IN ATTENDANCE:	James Close (JC)	Ally Macaskill (AMac)
Peter Cunningham (PC)	Duncan Burd (DBd)	Ian Stewart (IS)
Mary Gibson (MG)	APOLOGIES:	
Veronica Mullaney (VM)	Nigel Pearson (NP)	Melanie Smith (MS)
Peter Jarosz (PJ)	Derek Dowsett (DD)	Bob Kindness (BK)
Isabel Moore (IM)	Ewan Macpherson (EM)	Audrey Sinclair (AS)
Bill Whyte (BW)		

1. Matters Arising from the Minutes of Meeting on 22nd March 2018

- There were no other specific matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.
- The chairman welcomed Ian Stewart (the new chairman of the Portree Anglers Association) and Ian was formally co-opted as a director/trustee of SWRFT – proposed by MW and seconded by AM.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were then approved by IL, seconded by AM and confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Apologies

We have had apologies from Bob Kindness, Melanie Smith, Nigel Pearson, Derek Dowsett and Ewen Macpherson.

4. Meetings and Correspondence (PJ)

Since our last SWRFT meeting, PJ has attended meetings at:

- FMS AGM at Battleby on 4th April – along with DB.
- SDFSB meeting at Portree on 5th April.
- WRASFB meeting at Harbour Centre on 6th April.
- SSMG at Portree on 11th April.
- MHS meeting at Kyle of Lochalsh on 18th April – basically to meet up with Stephen MacIntyre and .
- Meeting with Organic Sea Harvest at Kyle of Lochalsh on 1st May regarding their proposed new fish farms on the east coast of Skye.
- West Coast Aquaculture Group meeting at Inverness on 9th May.

Following the production of a business plan (jointly with IL) and detailed costing with a view to securing possible bridging funding for a permanent biologist post on Skye, PJ has been in correspondence with Ben Hadfield and Grant Cummings by email and 'phone and with Craig Anderson by email.

Further meetings are also arranged with the SSC for next Wednesday 6th June and with MHS on 13th June.

PJ reported that the MoU with Marine Harvest Scotland (MHS) for the Small Isles and Southern Skye has now been signed. This allows for a monitoring programme on a number of significant rivers in the areas of new fish farms to be undertaken by the trust. Although the data collected is jointly owned, the MoU clearly gives the trust absolute discretion on its use as well as it being used to influence the management of the nearby fish farm that is being monitored. Along with the sea lice figures being reported by SSPO on a farm-by-farm basis the monitoring data of the wild fish should become even more significant. There was discussion regarding whether/when the collected data should be put on our web site and made available publicly. If it is put up on our web site there is always the possibility of misinterpretation and use in publications by others though since it is raw data why should it not go up on our website? The trust needs to formulate its policy on the publication of monitoring data.

Any new monitoring programmes/EMPs will be designed scientifically on a site-by-site basis. In taking forward this new work stream we need to be conscious that the trust could be seen to be compromised but the data is important both in terms of improving our scientific knowledge and influencing fish farm management.

Action: Given the issues of potential misunderstanding/misperception, the trust should be pro-active and put out its own information on what is happening and just what the trust hopes to get from this approach to aquaculture for the trustees to consider and agree. The trust should also keep a watching brief and review regularly to ensure that the MoU is working. It is also important that the trust continues to meet and discuss with MHS the working of the MoU.

The trust has received a request from Marine Scotland Science (MSS) to participate in a programme that proposes quantitative electro-fishing on 30 sites in rivers on Skye and Wester Ross as part of a National Project. The trust does not have the equipment or the personnel to deliver on all sites. PJ has also been in touch by email with Simon Dryden regarding the electro-fishing programme and Simon has promised the use of MSS equipment and further finance (if necessary) in the event of as having to outsource the MSS e-fishing on Skye. Some of the Skye rivers are being done by IM as part of her project or as part of the fish farm monitoring programme. But, unfortunately, IM does not hold a team leader certificate for electro-fishing so it is proposed to bring in Matt Curran (the Rivers and Lochs Institute) as team leader on Skye for the MSS programme there - with IM in support. Some of the proposed rivers in Wester Ross are bigger rivers so we will need to procure and use larger bankside electro-fishing equipment – MSS have offered to bring up the equipment, give tuition in its use and test it on one of the sites.

4. Financial Reports

- PJ had not previously circulated the cash projections (April 2018) but was able to report that the latest cash projections continue to reflect a healthy financial situation. A copy of the April cash projections was available for those who wanted a copy.
- The bank account at RBS is now fully operational and has been used for directing debtors' payments into that account though we are waiting approval of its use via the internet.

5. BIOLOGISTS' REPORTS

5.i PC's Report

PC's report had been previously circulated and following PC's further brief on his report the following items were discussed:

- The Biosphere AGM was on 28th May 2018.
- PC has requested visits to a number of fish farms in WR – he visited the WRF farm at Ardmail which he found to be OK and lice free. However the Scottish Sea Farms did not respond to his request and, subsequently, the trust is now aware that there were lice problems on their Summer Isles farms. Similarly the Scottish Salmon Company did not respond to his request for a visit to their farms.
- The trust continues to build relationship links with the Gairloch High School (GHS) and to that end PC has been allocated specific time for education projects – this time amounts to 22 days (10% of his working year). PC had learning days on 24th and 25th May with GHS. Dr Lorna Brown has also been contracted for various educational projects.
- There is an opportunity to develop a wild trout workshop for 30th and 31st October and which could incorporate our AGM.

5.ii IM's Report

IM's report had been previously circulated and following IM's further brief on her report the following items were discussed:

- The Portree Anglers Association's members are interested in the work of the trust and have three requests:
 1. the PAC has fishing rights on the Sligachan river and, historically the river was a very good salmon river but numbers of salmon caught over the past three seasons are 2 (2015); 4 (2016) and 3 (2017). So can the trust demonstrate any positive changes by the

- creation of woodlands in the tributaries of the Sligachan?
- 2. Stocking has occurred on certain beats of the Snizort river – so could the trust look at areas where stocking has occurred and areas where there has been no stocking and compare the results? **AP** IM can conduct a visual survey of the river this year and fully develop the project next year.
- 3. C) Artic Charr in Loch Mealt could also be investigated – they appear to be a unique family of Charr capsulated in Loch Mealt since the last Ice Age
- IM's recently published scientific paper highlights the value of published information but it is not available in the short term to influence day-to-day management.

6. PLANNING AHEAD

Structure and 5-year plan

- BW reported on the potential funding from SSPO – negotiations are ongoing between the chair of FMS and the chair of SSPO. Discussions would envisage £1M per year over 5 years for both personnel (who would be based locally but managed through FMS) and projects on the West Coast and the Outer Isles. The funds will probably be directed through the boards for project driven work by the trusts. The governance of the funding for these projects is still being discussed but is likely to be committee controlled by a reporting process from the trusts. The issue of adequate project management of this money was raised.
- There is also possible additional funding from SG of circa £60K per annum over 3 years for both electro-fishing and management on catchments within the West Coast Boards area. There is some concern that this work programme may show up too many areas where aquaculture is not appropriate. However, the main focus is on habitat restoration and smolt production in rivers to improve fisheries on a catchment level.
- Trustees noted that currently both sources of funding would tackle similar projects.
- Loch Maree Project is a potential candidate for funding from the SSPO source monies though we may need to look for additional sources of funding – possibly from hydro developers/operators/owners. Currently looking at the existing WRFT Fisheries Management Plans to see what data exists that will inform a restoration (including stocking?) project.
- Depending on the complexity of future projects, the Trust may not have the necessary management tools. However, projects may arrive with “prescribed” templates, which would assist.
- The potential Skye Project takes into account that most rivers on Skye are publically owned and, therefore, lends itself to be able to gain public money for catchment restoration. A draft concept exists but we need a subcommittee to develop this further and pull it together as a viable and costed project proposal. Should we look at the Spey as an example?
- Another possible idea on Skye is for a trout restoration project – probably on a smaller scale with some private funding. This will fulfil our outreach remit and it would be a good idea to start a.s.a.p. with Salmon in the Classroom at Sleat school.
- Through the SISI project we have a number of new fishing kits that are to be used for outreach purposes. We need to ensure that anyone helping with fishing projects involving schools/children needs to have a ‘Basic Disclosure’ that is activity specific – the GHS would help individuals to obtain their disclosure registration. We should also ensure that all the time involved in any related schools project should be recorded so that it can be logged for the SISI project.
- Other schools activities would be co-ordinated by AM assisted by DB; it was envisaged that there would be a considerable increase of activity at our three local high schools (Portree, Gairloch, Ullapool and additional work with Primary schools and Lorna.

7. AOB

- PJ reported that the RBS bank account is now fully approved by RBS and fully operational and, as a result, we should now focus on internet banking as our main payment methodology. To that end, PJ asked for Trustees agreement that VM could use internet banking for payment of both PAYE to employees as well as payment of invoices – this was agreed unanimously.

- MG pointed out that River Basin Management (RBM) Plans and Flood Risk Management (FRM) Plans are good sources of information on both pressures and opportunities for positive management of catchment areas. The information that they contain could prove useful in the formation of some of our proposed new projects.
- There are opportunities for the Trust to have a presence at the various Highland Games within our area – possibly with a fly casting competition? This idea was endorsed by the meeting.

6. Date of next meeting

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	STATUS
06/09/2018	West Highland College, Auchtertyre	11.00	Confirmed
30/10/2018	TBA (possible AGM)	11.00	Proposed