

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

WESTER ROSS FISHERIES TRUST OFFICES	PRESENT:	
DATE: 25 August 2016	David Barclay (DB) Chair Ian Lindsay (IL) James Close (JC)	Melanie Smith (MS) Mark Williams (MW) Bob Kindness (BK)
OPENED AT: 11.00 CLOSED AT: 16.00	APOLOGIES:	
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Cunningham (PC) Veronica Mullaney (VM) Peter Jarosz(PJ)	Mary Gibson (MG) Bill Whyte (BW)	Richard Greene (RG) Nigel Pearson (NP) Alasdair Macdonald (AM)

1. Minutes of Meeting on 23rd June 2016

1.i BW pointed out that in 2.v the sentence “ *Marine Harvest Scotland (MHS) will continue to work to the lower levels of 0.5 adult lice per fish (in the first year of production) and 1 lice per fish (in the second year of production).*” should read “*MHS will continue to work to the lower levels of 0.5 adult lice per fish (from 1st February to 30th June each year) and 1 lice per fish (from 1st July to 31st January each year).*” This wording has been inserted into the minutes of the June meeting.

1.ii The minutes of the meeting on 23rd June 2016 were approved by MS, seconded by PC and confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

2. Meetings (DB) and Correspondence (PJ)

2.i On 6th July IL, IM and PJ met with Gareth Butterfield and Chris Read (MHS) regarding possible financial support of the PhD telemetry project. MHS agreed to support the project with a £18k grant that will be paid directly to Glasgow University. MHS will also sit on the steering group for the PhD project. An application to the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme for a further £15K has also been submitted. If successful the project will be fully funded. The LTC money will come into WRFT and will then be paid to Glasgow University.

2.ii IL, PJ and Neil Cameron (SFT Trustee) had a meeting with Ms Kate Forbes (MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) on 02/08/2016 at the Broadford Hotel. The meeting was arranged by NC and was very productive. KF was extremely interested in the outline of our proposed FMO area in particular she was fully supportive of its concept and its cost effectiveness. She did make us aware that there was not one minister who is solely responsible for the decision making process regarding the Wild Fisheries Review. In fact the decision-making will be a joint process involving Ms Roseanna Cunningham, Fergus Ewing and the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee.

2.iii Trustees reiterated their approval for PC to support meetings/events that further the trust's environmental and educational aims and our standing in the local community

2.iv PJ reported that the WRASFB has objected (based on a report/advice from PC) to a CAR licence application for a run-of-the-river hydro scheme on Coire Bhanaidh (Achnashellach). Various concessions have since been made by the appellant and it remains to be seen whether SEPA will still grant this application if the Board does not remove its objection. The Board has consulted with the river owner on this project and will further talk with SEPA. There is the option of the Board giving consent conditional to annual surveys on the river - to be paid for by the appellant. The river owner may also look to the appellant for financial assistance with fishery projects on the river as well as with possible community projects. PC will carry out e-fishing surveys on various tributaries of the river Carron in order to gather as much information as possible.

2.v The remaining monies (£5.5K approximately) in the Angling Information Project (AIP) need to be spent by the end of October 2016. Some £1.5K of this money has been allotted to an “App” project for the senior students of Gairloch High School – JC will progress this with the computer teacher (Jim Sutherland) with support from UHI. For the AIP there is still the requirement of an “App” and to that end we need to arrange a meeting with Kevin Ginty to hear his proposal of using “Twitter” so that trustees can approve this methodology. This meeting will need to occur before the month of October so that the “spend” can be approved in time for the ENTRUST deadline.

2.vi RAFTS/ASFB have requested a meeting involving the chairs of the Cromarty Board and Trust as well as the chairs of the WRASFB, SFT and WRFT to be held on 12th September 2016. A discussion ensued about this meeting and is summarised in more detail at 5.1.

2.vii A joint RAFTS/ASFB EGM meeting will be held on 14th September at Birnham to discuss the potential merger of the two entities into a single organization to be called Fisheries Management Scotland. It would appear that this new merged organization is positioning itself as the coordinating body for FMOs, after implementation of the Wild Fisheries Reform Act. This may well have implications for all fisheries Trusts, so their concerns, and the RAFTS /ASFB answers to those concerns need to be understood. There is little doubt that RAFTS do have financial difficulties that need addressing but this could be kept quite separate from any “eye to the future” FMO proposals.

2.viii There have been notifications received from two trustees (Angus Davidson and Ewen Ballantyre) of their resignation as WRFT trustees. Both are resigning because of changes in their work schedules that mean attendance at WRFT meetings has become very restricted, if not impossible. The meeting recorded sincere thanks to both of them for their time as trustees and wished them well for their work future.

2.ix PJ stated that a survey contract on Skye for SW through Mott MacDonald has dragged on for some time now with numerous email correspondences from Mott MacDonald regarding procedural items including insurance and health and safety issues. These now appear to be resolved but with the contract needing to be completed by the end of August, Isabel is not able to do the work and write the report as well as do her PhD work. Following an approach by PJ to UHI, MS has offered help in the form of Matthew Curran (Living Lochs biologist) doing the survey and writing up the report. On the day of the survey IM will accompany Matt.

3. FINANCIAL REPORTS

3.i The cash projections and the management finance reports had been previously circulated by email and there were no queries regarding the finances shown on them.

3.ii VM said that a number of the Southern River Proprietors’ contributions remain outstanding – including the River Carron.

3.iii The Trust is on a sound financial footing for a second consecutive year and has established a positive cash flow. DB said that the Trust were now in a position to open new discussions with UHI for projects/collaboration; the meeting expressed general support for this.

4. BIOLOGIST’ REPORT

PC summarized his report (that he had previously emailed out):

- The 2016 information from the Tournai trap needs to be forwarded to MHS - PC. There is also the possibility of analyzing the DNA samples from the Tournai trap fish in collaboration with UHI.
- BK said that the river Carron has not had much good fishing water to date though there are fish about but not many had caught. But of those that were caught most were in good condition apart from Red Vent.
- PC said that based on the results of the sea trout monitoring, that he has done to date, few sea lice have been in evidence on the fish apart from fish taken to the south of Balmacara.
- Sea Change is a constituted group based in Ullapool. It is recognised as a community group with a role to play in the Wester Ross Marine Protected Area (MPA). Sea Change is currently putting together a bid to HLF for surveying the sea bed (including fish) in collaboration with SNH. The Sea Change survey in the area of the Wester Ross MPA, particularly in the vicinity of Bottle Island, could be a possible involvement for WRFT with a sea trout/sea-bed sampling programme in the MPA.
- The angling for sea trout in the sea requires further discussion since it is illegal if fishing occurs within 1.5 kilometres from the shore without permission. It would be useful to provide information using the Angling Information web site/App to promote messages/objectives. The use of information boards and leaflets would also help promote the correct information to prospective anglers of sea trout and could attract some funding - PJ. PC will draft the text for a leaflet. There is also the need to clarify ownership of the coastal waters above and below

the High Water Mark (HWM) – PC will contact Rob Adam. Linked into this we also need a map and information on category 3 rivers.

- PC attended a meeting of the South Skye Sea Lochs group and reports that there is a possible collaborative project being considered. WRFT will keep over-viewing the progress of the project and is clearly interested in the results of the surveys but does need to be aware of the politics.
- JC said that he and PC had discussed many projects for the involvement of pupils from the Gairloch High School (GHS) – these include:
 1. Fly fishing days for GHS S2 and S3 pupils next May 2017.
 2. Assistance with sweep netting over the next few weeks.
 3. Dr Lorna Brown will do Living Lochs this autumn.
 4. Protein analysis of fish from beat waters – this will be cascaded to other High Schools jointly with A Johnson.

5. Planning Ahead

5.i At the request of RAFTS/ASFB (Alasdair Laing and Andrew Wallace) DB, IL BW and PJ will be attending a meeting with Ian Duncan (Chairman Cromarty Firth Fishery Board), Andrew Matheson (Chairman Cromarty Firth Fisheries Trust), Simon MacKelvey (CFFB) as well as AL and AW at the Ledgowan Lodge Hotel on Monday 12th September. From the RAFTS/ASFB perspective, the purpose of the meeting seems to be to fully explore the positives of a possible merger with Cromarty for a FMO with the email arranging the meeting stating that the meeting is to discuss and clarify the future of the two organisations. From the WRFT/SFT perspective, the WRASFB and SDSFB Members along with the SFT and WRFT Trustees have been fully consulted and have expressed a firm preference for a SFT/WRFT area FMO, based on the many differences between our west coast area and the east coast areas. To date little support for our preferred SFT/WRFT area FMO has been expressed by RAFTS/ASFB.

After discussion the Trustees agreed that we need to clarify, at that meeting, that our preferred option remains forming a local FMO within the Wild Fisheries Reform future structure, after the merger of Skye and Wester Ross Fisheries Trusts. Trustees were unclear why RAFTS/ASFB are pushing for its “one size fits all” model of FMOs and felt that this concept did not support the existing infrastructure or address our particular fisheries’ needs. DB agreed to convey the views of the meeting to RAFTS/ASFB at the meeting on the 12th, and again on the 14th if it seemed appropriate.

5.ii The SFT/WRFT amalgamation documents (the Memorandum and Articles of Association) have been re-drafted, read through and with the clarification (duly written into them) that there will be “no maximum limit” of membership numbers approved by both bodies. This now clears the way for a formal submission to be made to OSCR for their approval of our proposed amalgamation. It would be good to receive OSCR’s approval before the Open Day meeting of 24th October 2016. FC will continue to develop the business plan for our FMO building on what elements we are aware of that need to be included – such as Administration structure, Bailiffs, Fishery Management Officer, Biologist – but making the FMO more as a co-ordinating structure linking directly with the new amalgamated trust and utilizing the existing bailiff arrangements.

6. AOB

6.i DB will write to and meet the new head teacher of Gairloch High School.

6.ii MS said that there will be a “Salmon Festival” in Inverness in September 2017.

6.iii There have been many eels found in both Wester Ross and Skye (found during sweep netting and e-fishing surveys) so an Eel Workshop some time in December may be worth having.

6.iv The next WRFT meeting has been moved to 20th October that does give us the option of finalizing the Open Day meeting set for the 24th October 2016.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	STATUS
20/10/2016	WRFT Office	11.00	Proposed
15/12/2016	WRFT Office	11.00	Proposed