

MINUTES OF TRUSTEES' MEETING

Skye & Wester Ross Fisheries Trust Offices	PRESENT: David Barclay (DB) – Chair Melanie Smith (MS) Richard Greene (RG) Bob Kindness (BK) Alasdair Macdonald (AM) Ewan Macpherson (EM) + Mandate for Neil Cameron Ian Lindsay (IL) + Mandate for Duncan Burd & Derek Dowsett Bill Whyte (BW) + Mandate for Peter Kinloch
DATE: 28 August 2017	
OPENED AT: 11.00 CLOSED AT: 15.00	
IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Cunningham (PC) Isabel Moore (IM) Veronica Mullaney (VM) Peter Jarosz (PJ) Mary Gibson (MG)	APOLOGIES: Nigel Pearson (NP) Mark Williams (MW) James Close (JC) Ally Macaskill (AMac)

1. Minutes of Meeting on 6th June 2017

Following two corrections (noted by DB and PJ) to the minutes of the meeting on 6th June 2017, the minutes were approved by IL, seconded by RG and confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

2. SFT+WRFT Amalgamation – Latest

- A round-table introduction of all attendees followed.
- PJ explained that prior to the meeting, mandates had been obtained from some Trustees who could not attend to ensure the meeting was quorate. Names of those present were recorded together with their associated mandates as appropriate.
- PJ has submitted the revised name (S&WRFT) to companies house and this has been approved. Initially proceedings adhered to the existing rules of the former Skye Fisheries Trust. All those who were present or had given a mandate notified the meeting whether they wanted to remain as a trustee, and PJ then listed those who did not want to continue as trustees. These names will be removed at the same time as the new trustees will be registered.
- The position of Rebecca Dean an existing SFT Trustee who was employed in the Aquaculture Industry was discussed. DB noted that WRFT had formerly had aquaculture company representatives as Trustees. However, this arrangement had been ended when the potential for sensitive information to be misused caused concern to Trustees and to the WRFT Board.
- After a discussion it was unanimously agreed that the existing policy of WRFT should be adopted by the SWRFT. It was also felt that other existing joint forums are more active and appropriate than having an aquaculture representative on fisheries trusts. Accordingly it was agreed that Rebecca should be contacted explaining the position, asking her to resign and thanking her for her contribution. This would also resolve the ambiguity of a single aquaculture company being represented and not others.

(Immediately subsequent to the meeting this was actioned and as a result she has agreed to stand down.)

At this point Bob K joined the meeting.

3. Election Process

- PJ then listed all the former SFT trustees that are remaining as trustees of the Skye & Wester Ross Fisheries Trust. PJ then listed all the members of the former WRFT. A total of 7 members listed were present – MW and JC were moved onto the listing and NP along with AM were held as trustees to be added later.
- IL asked what scope there would be to bring new members on. PJ believed that it would be necessary to first set up what was legally required for the first year, and that then Trustees could vote on new members. There will be some limited capacity to do this once Companies House has agreed the new number of members Chairman/deputy should take

a lead role to identify the ideal skill sets for members of the trust - based on the requirements of the trust. I.e. Gap filling. .

- **The voting in** of the members to the new trust was taken by those members of the SFT, which had now become the SWRFT. There was an unanimous vote for those WRFT members onto the trust of the new SWRFT. (The mandate of Peter Kinloch now no longer applied as he had resigned)
- The meeting voted unanimously that DB should continue as chair for the initial period, and that the arrangements should be reviewed at end of the financial year. IL and RG proposed and seconded.
- The appointment of the vice chair was discussed – it made sense for it to be IL until end of the next financial year – this was unanimously agreed with EM proposing and DB seconding.
- PJ will send the Trustees' and officers' details to Companies House (CH) tomorrow updating the register of directors/trustees. DBd (Skye) wants to continue as secretary – though the liaison role between CH and SWRFT will be PJ and the official business address will transfer to the Harbour Centre, Gairloch.
- The meeting unanimously approved the resolution, already signed by trustees, for the revising of the Articles and Memorandum of Association.
- VM and PJ were asked to continue with their positions.
- IL recommended a vote of thanks for PJ in disentangling the complexities of the former Skye Fisheries Trust.
- It was agreed that there should be a period of consolidation before the appointment of any further trustees be considered – in our next meeting there will be a presentation outlining the role of the Trust and of its Trustees. A more complete version of the presentation will be made available on the web site for any prospective trustees.

4. Meetings and Correspondence (PJ)

4i. Ewen Gillespie (EG) of Marine Harvest (MH) had a meeting (early August) with PJ and DB and IL. at which he presented a draft document for cooperation between MH and Lochaber, Argyll, Skye & Wester Ross and outer Hebrides. EG felt this would work better than individual fish farm EMPs. PJ, DB and IL expressed no view either way but undertook to consider this and any further versions more fully. Just recently MH sent revised version. On a specific point, PJ was not happy with word "appropriately" in the sentence: *The salmon aquaculture industry has a desire to grow in order to meet increasing demand for its products. To do so it must recognize its role in relation to the wild salmonid stocks and engage with the necessary fisheries bodies, and also appropriate regulators; all parties must have the confidence that farmed-wild fish interactions will be appropriately managed.* It should be replaced with word "competently". Also there is no provision in the document for responsive action, such as biomass reduction, if the site does not manage adequately for addressing issues.

There then ensued a general discussion about the draft document, and its possible purpose and benefits, and on concurrent national activities by Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS).

Iain raised: nature of EMPs etc. Felt that strategy could mean additional funding for necessary monitoring.

PJ – suggested that funding should go to FMS to be distributed.

BW – pointed out that if EMP's were to be with each trust/board on west coast - this would equate to 5 EMPs. On basis of sea lice currently reporting on 31 area - there is a risk that this may be reduced to the proposed 5 areas which would then be more difficult to distinguish

between farms and specific areas, ie, the 3 reporting areas of Torridon, Loch Ewe and Kennert to Gruinard might be reduced to 1 Wester Ross Area. Boards, being a statutory consultee in aquaculture planning, cannot accept money direct from the aquaculture industry for monitoring hence the potential use of FMS to facilitate monitoring contributions from industry.

MS raised the comparability with hydro mitigation and how that has worked. BW said that this comparison has been discussed but it is not the same. Mitigation for impacts from hydro schemes are easy because only the river/catchment in which the hydro scheme is located is affected. When mitigating for aquaculture impacts, consideration must be given to many rivers/catchments.

DB said that we need to wait to see what comes from national discussions.

BW said that at higher level there are a lot of discussions involving FMS, Government and the other regulators. The whole point of the FMS fish farm committee is to reach agreements with all trusts and boards so there is a accepted and agreed policy over all of the wild fish sector - delicate negotiations. BW feels it is inappropriate for individual groups to enter any agreements until the overall policy is agreed between industry and our sector.

DB said that SWRFT was only engaging in preliminary discussions with MH at the moment. BW made the point that the aquaculture committee is not the only place where ideas are spawned – ideas can and should come through to the FMS fish farms' committee for consideration.

Agreed that the issue had a good airing and if it can be fed into the national policy that would be good.

Action:

- Proposal from MH been received by SWRFT and are wanting to ensure that monitoring is done at level of farm reports etc.
- PJ will feed back to FMS aquaculture committee that the discussions that have taken place with MH and issues/concerns raised by the trustee board.

Carron etc. and lice presentation....

- Presentation by PC and issues raised by BK.
- DB summarised the issues etc. and that RLI UHI would look at data etc and discuss with PC.
- BK then explained his perspective/view on the presentation.....why should Carron be somehow different to other rivers – DB clarified etc. that this was also raised at the meeting last time, for consideration by the 'validation group' at RLI. BK classes salmon on weight....For it to be defined specifically need to read scales. Stocking programme – fish came from grilse stock, not salmon. Jump in catches in 2004 would be from grilse stock. Then meant that the fish now in river would be grilse. Mentioned slice treatment tests. Demarcation of grilse and salmon needed through scale reading, as assessments to date probably not correct. May be looking at inflated grilse numbers in even years.
- Grilse/ salmon – Dave B asked question is there is a genetically demonstrated difference between them; apparently there is as they breed 'true'.
- Bob K explained about grilse character and the fact they are scarce across the country. If this is linked to what is happening in the environment. The earlier fish spawns better chance of successful breeding – situation at sea likely to be the issue re. numbers of grilse. Skinny grilse appearance 5-6 years ago – possible link to marine situation etc.
- It was agreed that these points raised by BK in his initial email, and then again today, were fundamental to the work being done by RLI UHI to underpin the PC presentation, and should be considered by them.
- Ranging discussion with regard to issues/ data available etc etc. and how much wider the view needs to be taken in any consideration of the research to be undertaken.
- BW clarified that the data for the Carron presentation had been requested by the board as part of a wider data set for the whole area. Subsequent data sets for additional areas demonstrate that these further areas all show the same traits as the Carron.
- MH may be persuaded to fund work that is in their area of fish farms.

Action:

- Proposals wanted with regard to taking forward projects etc.
- Peter C to work with UHI RLI to scope and work up a costing of a programme with specific work packages (roughly costed in first instance) to come back to trust.
- Bill W funding for Peter C to work with RLI...etc.

Donation

- The trustees acknowledged the very generous donation by the Hon Philip Smith and recorded their thanks via the minutes of this meeting.

5. BIOLOGISTS' REPORTS

5.i PC's Report

- PC went through main points from his report.
- There are rivers still to survey for juvenile fish – may manage some of the southern rivers and Skye.
- rod catches – BK reported 80 ish numbers. Many fish appeared towards the end of July and then disappeared, possibly in to Loch Du - these may drop back later in summer. Most of the fish being caught at the moment are grilse. Red vent syndrome present. No skinny fish. Hoping for wet October.
- **Contracts**
- Trip to Rum very interesting. It could be viewed as a pilot area for EMP with funding from fish farms. DB made point that this was more preparatory work for EMP.
- **Biosphere Reserve Launch**
- Next Monday is launch meeting.
- IL – concerns raised that need direct participation of land managers and users. Point made by PC, MS and PJ that it is early days and crofting interests etc had been raised at meeting MS attended in Perth with regard to Biosphere etc.

5.ii IM's Report

- IL reported, on IM behalf, that the telemetry tags have been recovered. Now looking at analysis of results.
- Stable Isotope Analysis (SIA)– to look at anadromy (the migration of fish from freshwater to saline) through trace in fresh water and marine situation
- Rest on written update.

6. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- There are currently 3 lots of accounts being worked through. These are the current Skye accounts (ending in June) and the current WRFT accounts (ending in March) with the amalgamated SWRFT accounts now ongoing from 1st July 2017. It may prove easier to close the WRFT accounts at the end of the normal 12 months and then produce a three month set of final accounts for WRFT. The alternative of getting the right information to produce a 15-month final accounting year is complex as there are different budgets covering the different time periods.
- We need to know from Skye when their end of year accounts (30th June 2017) will be completed. Once these are complete we will then know what can be merged into the new year (2017-18) accounts for the SWRFT. PJ believed the SFT accounts can be handed over in September – by end probably – the sooner the better.
- Action: - PJ to come up with clear proposal on way forward.

- Next problem: despite previous assurances to the contrary from the bank, we need to set up a new bank account as, it would now appear, that it is not possible to simply change the name on our existing account. The reason given is that we are now a company limited by guarantee. Proposal: Take new account and run the existing one for at least 6 months along side it. This will get round the problem of all the operational requirements tied to current bank account etc. e.g. vehicle coming up for renewal so wait until this happens.
- Also need to inform HMRC for PAYE and also pension.
- It was agreed by trustees that these difficulties can be left with Ronnie and PJ.
- The meeting reviewed our current financial position – it is steady and stable. With funds from Skye to come over, there will be a considerable amount in the account whichever year end is considered. There are no outstanding issues as far as PJ and Ronnie know.
- IL thanked Ronnie and PJ for all their work on the rationalisation of the two Trusts' accounts.

7. Planning Ahead

7.i Education:

- IL – raised engagement in education. Margaret Carlisle from UHI – could SWRFT link into courses with regard to crofting etc. Trust get benefit from putting things in and find it easier to get things back in terms of help with surveys etc. at Tertiary level. Margaret could be on the committee....to consider...
- 'Living lochs' still being undertaken.
- Salmon in the Classroom also part of this and board agreed to further this as normal; there is anecdotal evidence that those undertaking 'salmon in the classroom' when in the primary school, actually remember the project when they engage with 'living lochs' in the high school.

7.ii Angling Information project:

The completion of the App may need some input from UHI with regard to finalise some technical details.

7.iii Telemetry Project

PJ updated - MH paid £9k (first half of a total of £18K - remainder next year)
SLCF Funding (£6K) came in last Thursday – we have also received donations of £2k and £1k for this project. Gift aid needs to be claimed.

7.iv Loch Maree project

PJ updated on the project development to date. The last meeting was on site – planning officer came out and subsequently warmed to the idea – it was mentioned favourably that road access was good etc. There are still a number of problems but with Neil Sutherland's involvement these can be addressed.

IL seemed concerned that it is a black hole in terms of time, staff and financial resources. He asked if it is relevant to our core objectives. This raised discussion around the wider issue of what is relevant to the Trust and it illustrated that there may well be potential tension between the priorities of Skye and those of Wester Ross.

RG raised the City Region Deal Inverness which is about the provision of Newton Rooms (rooms, situated in accessible venues, with internet connections that are available for use by the public) making the area digitally equal to the best digital areas within the UK. It aims to boost interest among children and young people in technology, design and science through programmes driven by the youngsters themselves. Teachers and personnel from the industrial community have developed the Newton scheme over a number of years. Pupils using these facilities take a "Newton module", a multidisciplinary educational programme with the emphasis on science and technology. Andrew Johnson is heading the project and there is a desire for at least one Newton Room to be available in the Gairloch area.

There is undoubtedly a need to have a focus on the Loch Maree area looking at difficulties of sea trout fisheries of Loch Maree. There are many issues not tied together at this time – no research has been undertaken.

There is a link with Biosphere reserve and the issue needs to be at the fore of the SWRFT educational side.

IL – raised point of a dedicated strategy meeting – to look at both a 5 year and a 10 year plan. DB proposed a small subgroup to work on this in the first instance. BW proposed that RG and BW work on this thus representing both Board and Trust. PJ pointed out that a fisheries management plan was needed anyway, so it would be combined with this ultimately.

Actions:

BW and RG to look at Wester Ross plan.

IL and Skye to look at Skye plan.

Will then bring together.

8. AOCB

- PJ reported that we have had sales of some posters.....potential profit!
- IL – wants approval to start preliminary discussions regarding a flag-ship project to move the publically owned rivers on Skye into community ownership – potential to raise funding for community projects is easier than finding funding to improve a private asset.
- Salmonid fishing in the sea – out to certain limits # is illegal unless prior permission has been sought and granted. The regulations with regard to permissions are little understood by the public, and not clear. In fact they still apply to catch and release for sea trout even though controls are not in place for those fishing off the rocks.
- It would be good for at least one meeting a year to be on Skye – or at least a location closer to Skye.
- **BW** – Loch Maree Management Project. The Board has been discussing this since January of this year when it began to look like the Loch Ewe fish farm may have its maximum biomass reduced again. Loch Ewe fish farm has had biomass cut from 1850t in 2006 to 1030t in 2010. This is to do with environmental monitoring of benthic failures – the last 6 monitoring results were classified by SEPA as "unsatisfactory". Following its recent 6th failure SEPA made a decision to further cut the maximum biomass to 770.25t. BW is in the process of arranging a meeting with Ben Hadfield but we need to remember that even if Marine Harvest does pull out of Loch Ewe, there is nothing to stop another fish farm from applying for planning consent for that same site. Therefore the Loch Maree Management Project needs to span both before and after Marine Harvest presence in Loch Ewe. There has been baseline monitoring in place since 2011 during life of the fish farm in Loch Ewe so it is clear that any restoration project needs to include a marine phase. BW feels that a project of this size could be a central part of the biosphere project.

Action:

RG and BW will bring a proposal to the next meeting.

It will need to be a null hypothesis approach.

- **IL** stated that the Skye AMA is a useful body and DB thought that it was good. Should we consider broadening the remit of this AMA (it is currently a Skye board baby)? This would involve scoping out just who could/would be involved and then send a letter from the Trust.

Action : DB to write letter.

- **PC** mentioned that he is organizing a fishing day on Loch Maree - do any of the trustees want to be involved in a fishing day? The going rate usually is £70 per boat for the day. Ratios of brown trout to sea trout of interest. Those who know how to fish will be of most use. IL was interested. It will have to be in September. DB commented that in future it might be good to do a ghillies' day in July as they would be able to be involved then as not stalking.
- **PJ** said that the next meeting will now be on the 5th October.
- Whilst the meeting has been in progress, Rebecca Dean's email arrived in PJ's email inbox – he read out the email from her. She expressed disappointment regarding being asked not to be a part of the Trust because of her involvement in aquaculture. She does not think that this is a good way forward for the Trust but accepts view of the Trustees and steps down.
- The meeting agreed to send her a formal note of thanks and explanation from the chair.
- PJ wanted to ensure that a formal invite for her to be part of the Skye AMA (see point above from IL) is sent to her as it is considered that this is the correct forum for discussion/engagement with aquaculture.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

DATE	LOCATION	TIME	STATUS
05/10/2017	WRFT Office	11.00	Proposed
14/12/2017	WRFT Office	11.00	Proposed