



## Skye District Salmon Fishery Board

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 at Aros Heritage centre, Portree at 10.30am

#### Present

Derek Dowsett (Snizort and Acting Convenor), Duncan Burd (Red Burn, etc.), Neil Cameron (Portree Angling Association and Scottish Government), Alasdair Hilleary (Greshornish Net Fishings), Robin Kennedy (North Hinnisdal Fishings Syndicate), Catriona and Martin Leslie (Braes Estate), Claire Lumley-Holmes (Marine Harvest), Sarah McGrory (SNH), Ewen MacPherson (SGRPID, Portree), Donald Matheson (Staffin and Braes Nets), Bill Peppe (Drynoch and Borline Fishings) and Jim Rennie (Clerk).

#### **1. Acting Convenor's Welcome**

Derek Dowsett welcomed everyone to what might be the Board's penultimate meeting.

#### **2. Apologies**

Alan Johnson (Camasunary Fishings), Peter and Berni Kinloch (Kingsburgh Fishings), Ian Lindsay (Skye Fisheries Trust) Ally MacAskill (John Muir Trust), Katherine MacKenzie and John Page (Kilmarie Fishings) and Richard Oliphant of Condie (Kylarhea Fishings).

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

Subject to amendment of the final paragraph to show that Martin Leslie (rather than Catriona Leslie, who was not present) proposed a Vote of Thanks to Derek Dowsett for chairing the meeting, Claire Lumley-Holmes, seconded by Neil Cameron, proposed approval. Members agreed,

#### **4. Matters Arising from Minutes**

- a) Convenor's Report Derek Dowsett advised that he had given further consideration to thanking Peter Kinloch for all that he had done for the Board and had included thanks to him in this year's Convenor's Report so that the thanks could be in a more public domain than a private letter.
- b) Discharge of Effluent near Black Rock, Portree Derek Dowsett noted that Scottish Salmon were unwilling to Share any information.
- c) Clerk's Annual Report Neither Derek Dowsett nor Martin Leslie had been able to persuade Charles MacDonald to make a donation to the Skye Fisheries Trust.
- d) Outstanding Levy Payments Derek Dowsett has made initial contact with the owner of the Lealt Fishings (south bank) but nothing further.

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## 5. Annual Accounts for 2015

The Clerk presented the audited accounts for 2015. Martin Leslie suggested that they needed a note to explain the drop in income, which the Clerk explained was due to the lateness of the 2014 AGM, resulting in no requests being issued for the 2015 assessments: these will be issued along with the 2016 assessments. Duncan Burd, seconded by Bill Peppe, proposed approval of the accounts subject to **the Clerk** discussing the above concerns with Donald Rankin the inclusion of a paragraph explaining the drop in income. This became the finding of the meeting.

## 6. Clerk's Annual Report

This was noted.

## 7. Convenor's Report

There was some discussion regarding the new legislation regarding the killing of wild salmon. Doubts were expressed regarding the situation where caught fish are so badly injured that, on welfare grounds, it might be better if they were killed.

## 8. Re-assessment of levy charged to proprietors

The assessment for 2016 had been agreed at the previous AGM and no further changes were proposed.

## 9. Election of Office Bearers

Donald Matheson, who had resigned as Vice-Convenor, agreed to be re-elected, proposed by Martin Leslie and seconded by Derek Dowsett.

## 10. Any Other Competent Business

- a) *Revaluation 2017* It was noted that the Clerk has requested that the Area Assessor should carry out a revaluation in 2017. It is understood that Boards will be asked to provide catches over the last 5 years: the Clerk noted that several proprietors have failed to provide returns when asked for. Martin Leslie wondered whether this should not be for the Government to obtain the necessary figures. **Derek Dowsett** agreed to ask the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards (ASFB) whether such an approach had been made on this matter.
- b) *Fish Farm applications in Loch Snizort* Derek Dowsett noted that the Board and the Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum (SLEF) were the only bodies to object, but Highland Council had still approved the applications. Martin Leslie noted that the Government and SEPA had both ignored requests for clarification of the composition of effluent from the Portree sewerage into Portree Bay and from fish farms in the area. He believed that we should ask for a survey of the seabed to be made when fish farm applications are made so that a comparison can be made with the position after sites are operating.
- c) *Joint ASFB/RAFTS Annual Conference and AGM* Derek Dowsett reported that he had attended the Conference but not the AGM and reported on

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items of interest. It was indicated that the proposed Government levy from rod licences would not raise enough to finance the costs in running the proposed new Fishery Management Organisations (FMOs) which are intended to replace District Salmon Fishery Boards and Trusts and more money will need to be found somehow and proprietors might find themselves hit hard as a result. It all has to be finalised by 2018 and any questions put to the Government on the subject are immediately put back to the questioners asking them how they see it being resolved. All finances currently received by Boards and Trusts would go to the Government, who would then pass it back to the FMOs, who would need to employ staff to ensure that government demands were all met. There is a possibility that 'poor relatives' (small Board/Trust areas) might benefit from this exercise.

- d) Union of Skye and Wester Ross Fisheries Trusts This is likely to occur in the near future, with the Skye Trust's rules being used rather than those of Wester Ross, which are older. Discussions are also taking place with Cromarty Fisheries Trust. Neil Cameron suggested that Skye should look west, rather than east. Derek Dowsett noted that the Western Isles Trust have already been approached, but seem to be uninterested in union with anyone else. FMOs will require to produce Fishery Management Plans. Derek Dowsett noted that no review produced so far by the Scottish Government appears to mention aquaculture: it could be good to include them in all discussions. It was noted that no-one knows how the new FMOs will work. Pilot FMOs are to be set up, but it is not known whether they will be Government-funded. Derek Dowsett further noted that Area Management Agreements have been replaced by the Skye Salmon Management Group (SSMG) and he can provide details on request. Two of the three fish farm groups have signed up so far: the third has an embargo on signing any agreements at present. One more group is on the horizon as far as operating on Skye is concerned.
- e) Clyde Salmon Homecoming 2016 The Clerk had just received an email from the ASFB which he will forward to members.
- f) Netting Rights The Scottish Government is to require all netting rights to be put into abeyance for 3 years. There is a possibility of using netsmen to catch fish for survey purposes and reimbursing them for the fish. Martin Leslie noted the hard work involved in netting fish. Alasdair Hilleary asked whether the Board supported paying compensation to netsmen in return for giving up their rights. Derek Dowsett noted that all monies go to the Skye Fisheries Trust at present and that the question of compensation is under discussion.
- g) Issue of minutes Martin Leslie asked that **the Clerk** should issue minutes within 2 weeks of meetings so that attendees had a better chance of remembering what had happened, especially when there were action points to be followed up.

No members of the public attended the meeting, so business was concluded with Catriona Leslie proposing a Vote of Thanks to Derek Dowsett for chairing the meeting.

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