

ARGYLL Fisheries Trust AGM Minutes

Loch Fyne Hotel

At 11.00 on Wednesday 6th November 2019

Attendees:

Andrew Barker (AFT Chairperson)-AB, Roger Brook (AFT Director/ADSFB Chairperson)-RB, Robert Younger (AFT Director/Clerk to the ADSFB) -RY, Alan Kettle White (AFT Senior Biologist)-AKW, , David Stewart (AFT Director/Creeran District rep), Richard McKenzie (Awe district rep)- RM, Jamie Mellor (Nell District rep)- JM, John Tilly (Awe District rep)- JT,Alastair Reynolds, Alyssa Stewart (Secretary)-AS, Alan Wells (FMS)-AW, Jonathan Brown (AFT Director-Awe District Rep)- JB, Jane Wright [AFT Director]; Stephen Austin (SNH)

Apologies:

Hugh Nicol, Mark Smith, Tim King, Hugh Whittle

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

AB thanked everyone for coming.

Nick Beevers will be giving a presentation on a proposed initiative, “Moving People, Making Waves” which will be circulated with the minutes.

APOLOGIES

As noted above.

Tim King was planning to present the accounts but has taken ill. Thoughts are with him. Apologies were not recorded from Hugh Nicol for the previous meeting and Keith Miller as being in attendance.

MINUTES OF 2018 AGM

The minutes were approved by RB and seconded by JB.

MINUTES OF DIRECTORS MEETING IN JULY 2019

The minutes were approved.

AB reported that the SANDS project, which JW had originally volunteered to be co-ordinate is a larger project than anticipated, and for that reason a project which JW could not commit

to. AB contacted Ian Robertson at SANDS to let him know that the Trust were not in the position to launch the initiative however they would be willing to give introductions to the local four Angling Club's. The Trust is stretched to chair meetings; however, they can help in the background rather than in the forefront. It was felt that SANDS have not delivered their part of the initial incentive. However, AW explained that it is a joint commission between FMS and SANDS, Ian's job allows two days per week to work on SANDS and it is not in his remit to speak to the Angling Clubs, the steering group was to be chaired by Ian Robertson but not for him to travel around Angling Clubs, AW suggested a further discussion between Ian, AM and JW.

RB suggested that Angling Clubs may be willing to promote a steering group, as it is in their interests. AW agreed that this may be something that Ian would be able to help with. There is a volunteer course which is funded by the SANDS project. AB will suggest a meeting regarding SANDS to the Angling Clubs and liaise with Ian.

Since the last meeting at which the nutrient project was discussed, AB had suggested that anyone who had contact with stalkers could consider asking them to place some deer carcass by the rivers as a nutrient supplement, the Ruel are now doing this.

JB reported that ADRIA is still fighting the fight with Dawnfresh. JB has lodged a complaint with Alastair Salvesen regarding the short-term losses and extra bailiff costs due to the trout escape. AKW also put together a paper on the effects of the escape on the ecosystem and a plan for future work. Alastair Salvesen was invited to contribute towards the costs but has yet to respond.

AB attended the Rural Crime Committee meeting, which aims to encourage communication between all rural industries and the police. AB suggested that the Awe Bailiff Ewan MacLellan attends the next meeting. AKW also suggested that the Loch Awe committee group get involved as fly tipping is an ongoing problem.

MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising.

ACCOUNTS FROM 2018/19

AB presented the accounts.

Overall, our accounts show a surplus of £4,147 compared to a budgeted surplus of £10,443 (a £6,296 gap). This compares to a surplus of £8,375 for FY18 (a reduction of £4,228)

Income:

Our income of £94,883 is just over £13k short of budget (£108,045).

The shortfall is primarily explained by the £30k of EMP work that didn't materialise (and hasn't yet for this year, either).

The shortfall was offset by non-budgeted income from projects such as the Awe Catchment Management Plan and MSS Temperature Monitoring work. AKW added that FMS did a lot of negotiation with Marine Scotland and they really helped last year.

Expenditure:

The shortfall on income is also compensated by a £6,886 lower level of expenditure for the year, primarily from lower than budgeted staff costs (e.g. Maja leaving part way through the year, which also saved on pension costs).

JB approved accounts, seconded by RB.

AB thanked AKW and AS for keeping the show on the road successfully.

FORECAST FOR 2019/20

The Statement of Financial Activities were available which outlined the budget for 2019/20. This statement gives our FY20 position at just over the half year mark (H1). Our Statement of Financial Accounts is completed on a cash, rather than accruals basis.

Given there are some material variances to budget, it was thought it would be helpful to include the actuals to roughly this point last year, in order to provide some additional context.

Income:

At first glance, a simple, linear projection of income for H2 from a current budget deficit of £60,755 would leave us in a very poor position at year end, but as far as a detailed forecast goes, we have line of sight to £47k of income.

Project income:

- £16,352 in National projects (MSS NEPS and Sweep Netting and the Biodiversity Challenge Fund on the Mingary Burn)
- £4,000 income from Catchment projects (Ruel and Goil catchments)

Fishery Management income

- £3,500 from Fishery Management activities

Contract income

- £11,697 of work done, with reports and invoices needed to be completed
- Big drop in contract work but the EMP's should counteract this

Donations

- £11,456 in donations are still to arrive (letters have only recently been sent)

Forecast

Such a forecast would result in an income for the financial year of £32,784 + £47,005 = £79,789, some £13,750 shy of budget

This is a worst-case scenario and will be looked at again in the February Directors meeting and if necessary, at an earlier meeting of the Executive Committee.

This shortfall is explained by:

- £11,850 relating to EMP work that has yet to come in and is unlikely to be completed with current staffing levels or over Winter months
- £900 relating to the Awe Catchment project
- £1,000 WLATHR Monitoring

Expenditure:

Overall, our expenditure is in-line with budget, but is slightly up on this point last year.

Salaries and pensions:

Our main costs relating to Salaries and pensions are likely to be slightly underspent due to provisioning for additional staff costs that have not been used

Rent:

There is potential for a slight overspend on rent (~£300), however, space used by the Trust in the North Tower of the building has been cleared and is back in the hands of the Estate. Our rent for H2 therefore could be renegotiated

Motor expenses:

At the current rate of expenditure, we are likely to underspend by up to £3,000, however, it would be wise to maintain this contingency for unexpected costs over Winter and for MOT's

Heat and light:

The estate office did not donate monies to the Trust last year, rather, it waived the bill. This position needs to be confirmed for this FY. Aly will still request a copy of the bill in order to monitor usage

Travel costs and general expenses:

Already significantly over budget, primarily due to the increased use of contract staff on projects. With fieldwork in H2 likely to reduce, further overspend can be minimised

Training:

Underspent by 100%. Perhaps to be discussed in next agenda item on staffing

Contractors:

On budget, but associated travel costs and expenses are over budget. One to bear in mind for next year

Summary:

Project income to-date is more than double that achieved by this time last year. Much of the field-based work has been done in H1, leaving more office-based activities for the colder months in H2. We are in a good position, but risks associated with staffing are evident in higher expenses when employing contractors.

Forecast income for FY20 from chargeable activities of £66k (income less donations), suggests around 165 chargeable days at a rough average of £400 per day. Based on a normal availability of 210 days, this equates to over 78% utilisation. Quite a rate to maintain.

AB has suggested to TK that some of the cash in the bank be placed in an interest paying account, TK has investigated this and there is nothing on the market that would be worth investing in at this stage. To be kept under review.

JB thanked AS, AKW and TK for the information which is very much clearer.

STAFFING

AKW reported that for the last two years the fieldwork season has been helped by local people doing part time contract work. This can be problematic in terms of the weather and their availability. It has been difficult but do-able to date, however sustainable in the long term. A second FT or PT person would be ideal however is dependent on the EMPS's which would hopefully generate sufficient income and work to justify such employment..

RB added that there are going to be 3 EMP's shortly to be signed, and the position can be reviewed thereafter.

AB stated that as a Board they are keen to justify a FT/PT staff member to ease the pressure on AKW.

ELECTION AND RE-ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

AB asked for the following to be agreed.

David Stewart, Tuggy Delap, Hugh Whittle, Keith Miller, Robert Younger and Hugh Nicol are due to retire by rotation and prepared to be re-elected other than Keith Miller who has elected to retire.

AB thanked Keith Miller for his contribution as a Director.

RB agreed and JB seconded motion.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NB spoke of his "Moving People, Making Waves" project, which is a part of Centre 81, a community organisation that he is a Director of, connected to 100 families.

The initiative focuses on Conservation and Public Engagement. Local burns are quite neglected, one of particular interest is the Macaulay Burn which is degrading and a disaster for fish, it is unknown what is in the burn. NB would like to introduce oysters which are low tech compared to fish, they are valuable species, and he would like to educate people on their

part in the water cycle. NB is keen for AFT to be involved, they have excellent expertise which could be utilised. The initiative aims to improve human health from primary school and up, getting people out in the environment, along with marine conservation.

NB would like for the AFT to be a lead partner and can work to their objectives, the initiative is expected to take 2 years. The Board were given a proposal at their last meeting. AKW asked who would be the main funder? Heritage Lottery Fund would be the perfect funder as it would fit into their ethos, it would take 8 weeks for a decision to be made, submission of the application would be early 2020. They would fund the whole project and a further 10% would need to come from partners. JW suggested that NB also contacts the MOD, however their funds are depreciating at the present time. JW stated that if this is successful the mission statement could be used in other places in Argyll.

The oysters are purely an engagement tool for conservation, this is not a commercial operation. The University of Glasgow are on board with this and may be able to source underwater cameras to entice interest from younger children.

SA urged that Nick speaks to SNH earlier on rather than later. SNH's core principal is to engage people in nature. Argyll and Bute Council were running an initiative supporting unemployed people and are good at co-ordinating funding. JW urged the AFT to try and get involved particularly with the Macaulay Burn.

AR suggested that NB contacts the Queens Harbour Master who is very clued up on environmental issues. Landowners would also need to be contacted. AKW has a briefing note that WILL be sent to all AFT Directors and anyone else who is interested. AB stated that this sounds very interesting and that the AFT would like to be involved if funding becomes available. He thanked NB for his presentation.

The AFT AGM merged with the Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board meeting.

NEXT DIRECTORS MEETING: FEBRUARY 26TH, VENUE AND TIME TBC