

**MINUTES OF THE RIVER BRORA DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
MEETING**

**Held at Sunrise House
On Thursday 11th August 2016 at 11am**

Present		In Attendance	
The Earl Cadogan, Lower Brora North Bank	LC	Neil Wright, Clerk to the Board	NW
Mrs Angela Tyser, Upper Brora and Loch Brora	AT	Martin Livings, Head Bailiff	ML
The Hon. Martin Janson, Lower Brora South Bank	MJ	Robert Rattray, Sporting Agent for Lord Cadogan	RR
		Peter Voy, Factor for Sutherland Estates	PV
		James Dent, Sporting Agent for Mrs Angela Tyser	JD
		Philippa Cliff, Factor to Lord Cadogan	PC
		Christian Wroe	CW

1	APOLOGIES	Action
	No Absences.	
2	MINUTES OF THE 14th April 2016 MEETING	
	The minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated and LC signed a copy as being a true reflection of the meeting.	
3	MATTERS ARISING	
	LC opened the meeting and explained that any matters arising will be dealt with during the meeting.	
4	HEAD BAILIFFS REPORT	
	<p>ML went through his Bailiffs Report and discussed the number of fish being caught up to the meetings date.</p> <p>LC commented that the Grilse seem to be small but caught an 11lb last week, when the river was up there were a lot of hits on the Benjie but they were not easy to catch.</p> <p>ML responded that over the whole season there seems to be one or two days on each high tide when Grilse were being caught but it was then slow for the rest of the week.</p> <p>LC noted that when the river was at 5inchs there are no parr being seen, when you would expect to see them.</p> <p>ML stated that there is very little in the way of habitat on the lower river for parr. The only place on the lower river is at the style but there are eels present.</p> <p>LC enquired if this was due to the big freeze which took away the redds, could the surface have been removed by ice, and the river rose to 8ft.</p>	

	<p>JD asked how many survey sites had been carried out this year.</p> <p>ML responded that 10 sites had been surveyed and they had been based on spawning sites. The surveys are usually carried out the second week in May but there was a very poor count. A second survey will be carried out later in the summer when water levels allow. The weather was cold and this may have resulted in poor result.</p> <p>LC commented that the water may be taking the salmon up the river too quickly.</p> <p>ML agreed that there were few holding pools in the lower river</p> <p>ML continued with his report and stated that the Toyotas clutch was needing to be replaced and that the trailer needed an overhaul.</p> <p>LC stated that he wanted to flail the gorse on the way to the lunch hut, but consent would be needed from the common grazing constable. It cannot be burnt as it would damage the fence.</p> <p>ML went on to explain that litter/ waste has been a problem and he would like to see this mentioned in the tenants letters/ contract. RR responded that this would be possible.</p> <p>ML commented that metal signs could be put up for locals.</p> <p>PC suggested a bin could be located in the car park.</p> <p>PV continued that if it is a core path it might be possible to get help with emptying the bins. PC responded that the path on LC's land is a core path</p>	
5	FINANCE UPDATE	
	<p>NW provided a summary of the cash accounts to date. There is a surplus of funds due to the over payment of assessments in the past but the assessments were re-calculated in June and were lowered.</p> <p>NW suggested consideration should be given to returning funds once any capital expenditure is known for next year. The proprietors agreed.</p>	
6	SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF WILD FISHERIES MANAGEMENT – CONSULTATION	
	<p>NW stated that he has both spoken, and written to Lord Thurso regarding a merger with the 'Northern FMO' this looks unlikely and as they have produced all the documentation required and would be reluctant at this stage to add another board.</p> <p>LC expanded that he had spoken to Sir Johnny Nutting and it was unlikely they would allow it.</p> <p>NW suggested that the Kyle of Sutherland Board was the other option and it is recommended that preliminary discussions should be had with them.</p> <p>The proprietors agreed that NW should meet with the Director of the Kyle of Sutherland Board to gain an idea of their proposals.</p>	

7	Genetics Study – Lochs & Rivers Institute	
	<p>NW stated the Rivers and Loch Institute in Inverness are presently looking for rivers to carry out DNA testing on a sample of fish. This testing should determine the number of breeding Salmon in a certain area, this can then be multiplied up for the river. It is a way of providing evidence that there are sufficient fish in the river to the government should the river be downgraded to a category 3. The main reason for downgrading would be due to poor catches over 3 years or more.</p> <p>LC asked NW to look at a cost for the study.</p> <p>AT commented that she would be happy to see more angling at the start of the season.</p> <p>RR advised that there were a few early fishermen but not many. ML commented that it was a struggle to get people to fish.</p> <p>LC proposed that the proprietors should allow Martin to get locals fishing during the start of the season to help catch returns, the proprietors agreed that Martin was to offer this up.</p>	
8	Hatchery – Repairs and Future use	
	<p>LC commented that any intention to re-open the hatchery would require consents.</p> <p>JD stated that he has reviewed the catch data for Gordonbush and it would appear that the catch has dropped.</p> <p>RR responded that this may be as a result of catches across the board</p> <p>JD commented that more data needed to be gathered to make a decision on whether to re-open the hatchery but it can protect juveniles from very bad weather, one example if the spate of 2013. When the decision was made to close the hatchery in 2010 it was based on the Spey Board, who have now re-opened some of them.</p> <p>RR stated that it was very controversial at the time.</p> <p>LC responded that it would be very difficult to get consent now.</p> <p>JD suggested that should the board go down the route of the hatchery then professional help should be sought.</p> <p>PC recommended that the board look at what would be required to re-open the hatchery.</p> <p>LC asked NW to look into the consents required.</p> <p>JC noted that if the Board became part of an FMO it could use the services of the Biologist to help.</p> <p>NW suggested that the board undertake repairs to the hatchery building, which include replacing rotten cladding and a window sill. The exterior woodwork also needs to be treated.</p> <p>The proprietors agreed to the repair work.</p>	

9	Pensions	
	<p>NW explained that auto enrolment of pensions was due shortly for the board employees.</p> <p>The board discussed % contributions to be made. LC proposed that 3% contributions should be made now and this would go up to 8% when the government contribution allowance increased, this is expected in the next couple of years.</p> <p>The proprietors agreed to this proposal.</p>	
10	AOCB	
	Nothing to report.	
11	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	5 th January 2017 – Sunrise House	