

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

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**Held at Drummie Council Offices  
On Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 11am**

<b>Present</b>		<b>In Attendance</b>	
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
		Robert Rattray, Sporting Agent for Lord Cadogan	RR
		Peter Voy, Factor for Sutherland Estates	PV
		Christian Wroe	CW
		Tony Smith	TS

<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	<b>Action</b>
	The Hon. Martin Janson, Lower Brora South Bank Iain Mackenzie	
<b>2</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE 14<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2015 MEETING</b>	
	LC welcomed all attendees. The minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated and LC signed a copy as being a true reflection of the meeting. The signed copy was handed to the Clerk. LC noted that the January meeting had been cancelled due to the reorganisation of the FMO proposals as there was nothing to report.	
<b>3</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	
	Any matters to be addressed during the meeting.	
<b>4</b>	<b>FINANCE UPDATE</b>	
	NW ran through the accounts to date with the yearend figures showing that the board's expenses for the year were just over 79,000 but £101,000 had been collected, this was due to the assessment figures being reduced part way through the year which left a surplus. However, as will be discussed later in the meeting the extra funds will be required for a new vehicle and possible habitat studies on the river.  The District Valuer is working on the new rateable values for the Fishings on the Brora and these should be issued shortly, this will allow a new assessment to be calculated based on more recent catch records.	
<b>5</b>	<b>HEAD BAILIFFS REPORT</b>	
	ML commented that kelts had been plentiful this year and many of the locals had caught them. PC enquired if that would be good for increasing the catch figures. LC requested a chart to show the catch and release figures.  ML noted that they carried out electrofishing surveys late last	

	<p>year with poor results, these sites will be surveyed again once the water has warmed up as the fish may have been hiding due to the cold. 10 sites are surveyed at present but this may be increased to include smaller burns.</p> <p>ML commented that they have carried out some bank work and they would now like to see some habitat improvements on the river. Gordonbush have looked at their section but it would be good if the Board could look at the whole river and the spawning grounds.</p> <p>It was noted that Ben Armine has the worst electro fishing counts and there is potential for improvements with habitat. Dalreavoch could also be improved with habitat tree planting.</p> <p>ML continued on with his report and commented that the residents and visitors permits need to be re-printed along with the rules being updated. A limit on fish needs to be set.</p> <p>LC agreed that dates should be brought in line and all rules should be the same for the river.</p> <p>PC enquired as to who issues the permits. ML responded that the café in Brora and the bailiffs. RR asked how do guests know to find a permit. ML they usually have to ask around. RR thought that this was an unusual way to do it. NW commented that this is how the Helmsdale and Conan also do it.</p> <p>ML mentioned that he was going to make a post box so that guests can leave their permit card, which has their catches recorded on them, otherwise guests forget to post them back. LC agreed with the proposal.</p> <p>ML advised that a new vehicle would be required shortly. PC enquired if it would be a new vehicle. ML responded that it would be a second hand vehicle with low mileage. RR suggested the Toyota garage in Inverness and PC suggested the machine ring are offering 20% off.</p> <p>ML further commented that the trailer had been repaired and is fully operational now.</p> <p>LC wished to note that Sam had done a good job on the gorse. ML responded that he has someone lined up to top the gorse next year so as to keep on top of it.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b>RIPARIAN TREE PLANTING &amp; HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS</b>	
	<p>CW had prepared a short report based on a visit by the Spey Fishery Board to Gordonbush. The proposal was originally for Gordonbush but it could be widened to the whole board. There is some riparian trees along the Blackwater with a small seed source but it is over grazed and would need to be fenced to allow regeneration.</p> <p>The Balnacoil section has bad bank erosion and this is being caused in part by livestock.</p> <p>Some proposals to date have been to add wood to the Skinsdale to help trap gravel, which has been washed down stream, along with a couple of fenced 50 x 20 meter riparian zones.</p> <p>Gordonbush has access to 20 meters along the Balnacoil section</p>	

	<p>but their co-operation would be needed. Sediment could be re-introduced into the river especially if wooded debris had been added.</p> <p>It is proposed that there will be an education element to the work so that the fishing tenants are aware of the work and why there is no hatchery.</p> <p>LC commented that the upper part of Gordonbush used to be protected and no one fished it. ML responded that the gravel has all been washed down in to the main part of the river.</p> <p>LC commented that there has been a big change on the lower river with erosion and movement of boulders, there is a concern that the island at the style pool is becoming eroded. LC further commented that the land up at Rogart has been drained and this has resulted in rain water coming into the river system quickly.</p> <p>PC noted general support and it was worth looking at the whole river system from the lower Brora up.</p> <p>NW suggested that some of the reserves that have been accumulated be used for a Board funded project.</p> <p>RR suggest that other bodies and individuals are researched for the proposed report, the Board will have to produce a management plan as part of the wild fisheries reform and the Board should try to do all the work at once.</p> <p>LC agreed that the Board would look into the possibility of a report and management plan.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT – WILD FISHERIES REVIEW</b>	
	NW commented that the proposed FMOs would no longer go ahead, a press release had already been circulated to the Board but some elements of the review will go ahead. They mainly consist of staff training, angling promotion and fishery management plans. There will be no change to the structure of the Board.	
<b>8</b>	<b>AOCB</b>	
	Nothing to report.	
<b>9</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	
	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2017 at 11am – Sunrise	