

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

**Held at Drumuie Council Office
On Thursday 16th August 2018 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 & Loch Brora)	AT	Martin Livings (Head Bailiff)	ML
The Hon. Martin Janson, (Lower Brora South Bank & Loch Brora)	MJ	Robert Rattray (Sporting Agent for Lord Cadogan)	RR
		Philippa Cliff (Agent)	PC
		Christian Wroe (Agent)	CW
		Colin Taylor	CT
		Jon Watt (Waterside Ecology)	JW
		Alastair Stephen (SSE representative)	AS
		Iain McMyn (SSE representative)	IM

1	APOLOGIES	Action
	None received.	
2	MINUTES OF THE 5th April 2018 MEETING	
	LC welcomed all attendees and explained that the Public meeting is usually held in April but has been moved to August in order to have the year to March 2018 accounts completed and presented at a public meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated. LC signed a copy as being a true reflection of the meeting. The signed copy was handed to the Clerk.	
3	MATTERS ARISING	
	To be dealt with during the meeting.	
4	FINANCE UPDATE	
	<p>NW advised that the yearend financial statement has been circulated to the Board and the figures remain the same as reported at the April meeting with a surplus of £6,000 for the year. Once depreciation for vehicles and equipment has been calculated the account shows a net loss of £571 for the year. The total income through assessments was 78,750.02.</p> <p>The main reason for the saving was due to the Board having one less bailiff for part of the year, otherwise the Board ran to budget. There was a capital purchase of a 4x4 vehicle which replaced the old Ford Ranger.</p> <p>NW ran through the finances to August, an extra thermal imager was purchased in July and allocated to capital. The accounts were presently all within budget with a small surplus of £1,100. Assessments of £27,800 have been collected to date.</p> <p>NW proposed keeping the assessment at the same level until December 2018 when the assessments would be increased to £105,000, in order to cover the survey work and management</p>	

	<p>plan being produced by Jon Watt. This level of assessment is the same as the proprietors were paying two years ago. The increase does not need to occur until December as there is sufficient funds in the account to pay for the first round of survey work undertaken by Jon Watt.</p> <p>PC explained that an email had been circulated to the proprietors regarding a proposed increase to the clerk's fee and whether this was agreed by the proprietors. All proprietors agreed the increase.</p>	
5	HEAD BAILIFFS REPORT	
	<p>LC wished to thank ML and his team for maintaining the river in such good order and keeping on top of invasive species.</p> <p>ML ran through his bailiff's report and commented that the catch figures are very low at present due to the warm dry weather. The spring run was down by about 50 fish, the previous year it was around 100 fish. As it stands at the moment the season is around 200 fish down on this time last year. ML noted that there is a lot of fish at the mouth of the river and a few fish have been caught on the lower stretches of the river. The grilse that have entered the river are small, around 2-3lb.</p> <p>The river has started to rise this week which may help, but there is not sufficient flow to remove the weed which is growing at the moment.</p> <p>ML commented that the Bailiff team have been busy with camper vans parking and camping on the river bank. The increased amount of traffic may be down to the NC500 picking up in popularity.</p> <p>The Board went on to discuss the benefits and pitfall of the increase in traffic and campervans.</p> <p>ML reported that there has been some summer assistance from a local person with the strimming work. NW commented that further assistance will be looked at for next season to assist the bailiffs with their normal duties and also to assist with the electrofishing survey work, which is becoming more important. PC enquired for how long would a person be required. ML suggested that 3 to 4 months would be helpful. IM suggested that advertising in various backpacker magazines such as TNT may yield results.</p> <p>ML rounded up his report by noting that both himself and Graham have completed their introduction to electrofishing course at the University of Highlands and Islands. Graham will likely take a lead on the survey work.</p>	
6	SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT – CONSERVATION MEASURES	
	<p>NW explained that the Scottish Government are presently calculating the new conservation categorisations and it is hoped that a provisional categorisation for the Brora will be released prior to Christmas.</p> <p>Marine Science Scotland (MMS) also wish to undertake electrofishing survey work on all rivers in Scotland, the results of this survey work will assist with future calculations for conservation measures. MMS have allocated £6,105 to the Brora to undertake</p>	

	<p>15 electrofishing sites, which will include fish scale and water sampling. A number of these sites will be undertaken by Jon Watt and the remainder being done by ML's team.</p> <p>*Post meeting note, Brora has been provisionally set as a category 1 river for the 2019 season.</p>	
7	CONSERVATION POLICY	
	<p>NW explained that until the categorisation for the Brora is known we will not be able to set a conservation policy. However, the Board agreed a policy last year and this would be a starting point. Once the classification is known a proposed policy will be circulated to proprietors and sporting agents for comment and discussion.</p>	
8	PRESENTATION BY JON WATT	
	<p>LC welcomed JW to the meeting.</p> <p>JW thanked the chairman and noted that he thought that he has some relatively good news for the Board.</p> <p>JW ran through a number of slides which demonstrated the present habitat of the river and some key issues that will be addressed in the management plan. The presentation is very much headlines and not a finished study.</p> <p>All 145km of river and tributaries has been walked and various elements have been recorded, including habitat, wetted area width and river bed conditions. A very high proportion of the 145km would be classed as productive for either juveniles or spawning habitat.</p> <p>JW ran through the various sections of the river and general habitat conditions.</p> <p>There was a general discussion about the possible use of the hatchery in the future. JW commented that the hatchery would unlikely do any good and the risk is that you would stock already productive areas and increase competition, plus you would be changing the genetics. The hatchery might work for a few years if you can identify areas where there is good spawning and juvenile habitat but is void of fish, this may kick start a salmon run. The proprietors agreed that given the scientific work presented the hatchery would not be used unless it could be justified scientifically.</p> <p>LC thanked JW for his very informative presentation and was glad to see the river in reasonably good order.</p> <p>*A voice recording of the presentation is available on request.</p>	
9	AOCB	
	No comments were made.	
10	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	LC commented that the public meeting will be held in August again next year. The April meeting was to be agreed closer to the time.	