

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE RIVER ANNAN DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
HELD IN CHAMBERS, ANNAN TOWN HALL ,
ON WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2013 AT 10 AM**

<p>Board Members Present:</p>	<p>Mr Alister Jack – Chairman - Proprietor of Halleaths Mr F Sandison – Vice Chairman - Angling Representative Earl of Annandale and Hartfell – Mandatory for Raehills Trust Cllr R Brodie – Mandatory for Nets Mr L Devery – Angling Representative Mr A Dickson – Mandatory for Upper Annandale Angling Assoc Mr D Rothwell – Angling Representative Mr F Sykes – Coarse Fish Representative Mr J Warwick - Netsman Representative Mrs M Colville – Clerk to the Board</p>	
<p>In Attendance:</p>	<p>Mr. N. Chisholm – Director of Fisheries Mr M Fearn – Head Water Bailiff</p> <p>9 Members of the Public</p>	
	<p>The Chairman opened the meeting, introducing himself and thanking the outgoing Chairman, the Earl of Annandale, for his 25 years service as Chairman of the Board. He also welcomed the members of the public to observe the meeting.</p>	
<p>Apologies:</p>	<p>Mr. G. Birkbeck – Proprietor of Hoddom Castle Mr A Guthe – Proprietor of Greenhill Mr O Routledge – Proprietor of Selcoth</p>	

<p>Approval of Minutes</p>	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 4th October, 2013, copies of which had been previously circulated amongst members were submitted, approved and signed.</p>	
<p>Conflict of Interest:</p>	<p>The Clerk passed round Conflict of Interest forms for members and staff to complete and return. The Chairman asked that the ASFB guidelines be sent to all members and that forms be returned to the Clerk as soon as practical.</p> <p>No new conflicts of interest were declared.</p>	<p>MC</p>
<p>Sea Trout Consultation Response:</p>	<p>Mr Chisholm intimated that he was surprised at the number of responses to the proposed measures. He outlined the main points of his report on the response, which had previously been published on the website, www.riverannan.org, going on to highlight the main findings and expanding on these. The main threads being hatchery, predation, habitat improvement, research, monitoring, pollution, economy – loss of revenue/amenity, policing, farmed escapees, moral and cultural issues and neighbouring river policies.</p> <p>He summed up by saying that he had fulfilled the first part of the consultation process and that it was now over to the Board to decide whether or not to go ahead to the next stage of the consultation and make a submission to the Scottish Government The Chairman opened up to questions.</p> <p>Mr Sandison asked how the success or otherwise would be measured in the five year time span. Mr Chisholm intimated that he would hope to see an increase in catch results and also in electrofishing results by finding increased fry in burns.</p> <p>Mr Sykes asked that assuming this Order was given the go ahead would it be in place for the start of the season. Mr Chisholm indicated that this was unlikely and that the best estimate he had been given would be March/April 2014.</p>	

Sea Trout Consultation Response:	<p>Mr Warwick felt that the Board should not proceed as he felt that other alternatives should first be explored. He further stated that he felt that the report produced had a number of inaccuracies and suggested that 33 responses from 800 angler emails could not be described as good. In addition both Councillor Brodie and Mr Warwick further commented on this email which was sent to anglers saying it was misleading as it stated that “At the Board meeting in July there was unanimity across the whole Board” when in fact both Councillor Brodie and Mr Warwick had voted against the proposal.</p> <p>Mr Chisholm suggested that non-response could be taken as indication of acceptance as generally if people are happy with a situation then they are more likely to remain silent, whilst on the other hand people are more likely to voice their thoughts when against an idea.</p> <p>Mr Warwick made it clear that all members of the Association which he represents were against the proposal but that their voice had been counted as one. He further stated that the netsman counted as ‘for’ the proposal in the report did not actually fish in this district.</p> <p>He also observed that of the NGO’s that had responded, most had Catch and Release as their policy and therefore would obviously support this outright without other considerations.</p> <p>Councillor Brodie also felt the report was flawed. He felt the impact on the local economy had not been taken into account sufficiently. Revenue raised from the nets is distributed through the Annan Common Good Fund to local organisations and that the people of Annan would ultimately suffer. He also stated that the Haaf netters are hobby fishers carrying on a long tradition and that by taking away the prospect of taking home something for the table the incentive for fishing was taken away thus losing this traditional skill.</p> <p>Both Councillor Brodie and Mr Warwick were fearful that once in place the Order would go beyond the five years.. The Chairman and the Director of Fisheries were hopeful that within the five years of the Order carcass tagging – which is under consideration by Marine Scotland at present – would be in place for both rod and net, thereby making the Order obsolete.</p>	
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<p>Sea Trout Proposals:</p>	<p>Mr Warwick felt that the proposal was discriminating against nets. He added that the whole proposal was hung around egg deposition and he reminded the Board that after the last nets buy out a decent recovery should have been proven but this was not borne out in subsequent returns. In his opinion he felt that the problem lay with degradation of habitat and suggested a way forward was an alliance between Nets, Anglers, owners, SEPA and some sort of compromise of catch and release and negotiated catch allowance.</p> <p>Mr Chisholm explained that it would be inappropriate and unfair to ask some fisheries to practise catch and release whilst allowing others a limited catch and pointed out that voluntary measures had been unsuccessful in the past.</p> <p>The Chairman opened the debate to the public. Issues raised were predation, pollution, fish count data, carcass tagging and the loss of revenue to the Annan Common Good Fund.</p> <p>The Chairman intimated that licences to shoot goosanders had been applied for.</p> <p>Mr Chisholm commented on the fish data and indicated that the problem with fish counters was identification of salmon/sea trout. He understood that trials were ongoing on the Tweed with photo counters. However, on the Annan problems with coloured water after spates would make photos unreliable. He also cited cost as a big issue.</p> <p>The Chairman indicated that there may be a way to plug the gap in the Common Good Fund but needed to explore this further before committing. Mr Sandison asked Cllr Brodie if the gap could be plugged would he change his position, Cllr Brodie said he would consider this but have to take it to committee.</p>	
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	<p>Carcass tagging for the Annan alone was felt to be firstly too costly to introduce at present and not worthwhile if neighbouring rivers were not also using this system to control catch numbers as this would also disadvantage the Annan.</p> <p>Cllr Brodie was fearful that if the proposals were taken further then not only would the the relatively harmonious relationship between the Board and anglers/fishers be damaged but also that money would be wasted on a flawed consultation. He proposed the following motion be carried “That this Board:-</p> <p>Agrees to postpone consideration of compulsory catch and release until –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. More robust figures for sea trout stock in the Solway and river Annan are established2. A suite of further measures is in place to improve the habitat of the Annan and increase the numbers of sea trout and salmon3. further efforts have been exhausted to ensure a successful policy of voluntary sea trout catch limitation and catch and release (where appropriate) is secured.” <p>The board members present voted as follows:</p> <p>2 in favour 6 against 1 abstention</p> <p>The motion was therefore defeated.</p> <p>The Chairman then asked the Board members whether they were in favour of continuing to the next stage of the consultation with the proposals for Catch and Release and the vote was recorded as follows:</p> <p>2 against 9 in favour (including three members who indicated their vote by Proxy to the Clerk) 1 abstention</p> <p>With the majority of members being in favour, the Chairman asked the Director of Fisheries to prepare the next stages of the submission.</p>	<p>NC</p>
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AOB	No further business was raised. The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their attendance and contribution and asked them to leave as the Board had now an "in private" item to discuss.	
Date of Next Meeting:	It was agreed that the December meeting be re-scheduled to the end of January. The Clerk agreed to get back to members to confirm the availability of the Annan Town Hall on 31 st January, 2014.	MC

In Private:

Pensions:

Alister Tait

31.01.14