

MINUTES OF WRFT TRUSTEES' MEETING

Via Teams and in Harbour Centre	PRESENT:	
	Mark Williams (MW)	Steve Kett (SK)
DATE: 17th December 2021	James Close (JC)	Duncan Burd (DB)
	Andrew D Barclay (AB)	Alasdair Macdonald (AM)
OPENED AT: 10.30 CLOSED AT: 12.30	IN ATTENDANCE:	
	Peter Jarosz (PJ)	Peter Cunningham (PC)
	Mary Gibson (MG)	

PJ welcomed MA to the meeting and asked for formal approval of his appointment as trustee. This was unanimously endorsed with AB approving and seconding JC this appointment.

1. Matters arising from minutes of the meeting held on 27th August 2021.

There were no matters arising.

2. Approval of the minutes

PJ asked for a proposer and a seconder of the minutes of the 27th August Meeting. JC proposed and DB seconded - the minutes were approved.

3. Update on Various Happenings

Information/advice from WRFT regarding the 2 fish farms in Loch Torridon is now with HC within the WRASFB's formal response.

HC agree with the advice and it is now up to them to ensure compliance of EMPs with conditions attached to planning permission. Currently the time scale is unknown.

WRF Ltd held an open meeting in Ullapool to outline proposals for a new fish farm at Annat Bay. Appears to be the same as that proposed in 2005. In 2005 it was refused planning permission on the grounds of the potential impact on the Little River Guinard SAC as well as major landscape impacts. These issues remain. Annat Bay is now within the Wester Ross MPA raising additional issues. Strong feedback from the open meeting indicated that the community is not supportive.

Mowi is proposing a new semi-contained system for rearing broodstock within L Ewe. This is to reduce reliance on Norwegian supply. The system involves using 4 cages holding a total of 250 tonnes within a wider tarpaulin. Mowi stated water would be feed into the system from a depth of 20m to avoid introducing sea lice. This does seem to be at odds with current good practice of drawing water from 50m depth. Waste would either be treated on board or piped to land. Also looking at another possible site near Lochinver.

BW and HW have resigned from the WRASFB. Following the latest Triennial Elections earlier this month the WRASFB needs to co-opt an anglers' representative in line with its constitution and then will look within the board to appoint a new chair.

4. Biologist's Report

Napier University has funds for a 3-year project to follow up the scoping study. However, there are no community elements and no other partners.

Involves undertaking interviews with fishermen from the western sea board, sea bed studies and EDNA work. WRFT will help if required but it would be good for WRFT to be more closely involved in the project. This would require WRFT to identify specific aspects they could contribute and secure separate funding.

PC provided summary of surveys carried out and some of the findings. The NEPS sites are not always that valuable for understanding the river and its associated issues. Some works including tree planting progressing on the Rhidorrigh River.

Sea lice from fish farms around Skye appear to be affecting Applecross River.

High numbers of sea lice in Gairloch are potentially from Loch Torridon.
Northern rivers are healthier than those in the south of the area.

SEPA have produced a consultation on the regulation of sea lice with the potential for protection zones and use of area management loads as used in Norway.

Feedback on the bid to HC was that the wildlife gardens element of the project could be developed with focus on raising awareness especially of non-native species. If WRFT wishes to progress a proposal needs to be drafted and submitted to HC. Would be sensible to see this as a pilot perhaps in collaboration with the WR Biosphere. Emma Watson, who has offered her services to the Trust might be able to help pull this together.

5. Finance

The cash projections show that the finance generally looks healthy with some money ring fenced for specific projects.

It may be prudent to set up a separate reserve account.

We should now consider employing PC for 4 days a week for the coming year 2022-23..

£5750 from fish farms unlikely to come in but potentially £5000 from contracts undertaken by the trust is expected.

6. 2022 Work Programme

We do need to identify priorities and a clear programme of works for next year. DB PC DB and SK will meet separately to agree.

It would be good to include a minor burns survey and within that include sampling of invertebrates as results of these surveys provide a lot of information on physical and chemical conditions within the burns.

7. Conflict of Interest Book

PJ said that he has looked for and not found the original Conflict of Interest book, the presence of which is a legal requirement. It is not in the safe and not in any of the lockable filing cabinets. If trustees will consider the entry that they wish to record in the book, email that statement to PJ, we can then start to assemble a new Conflict of Interest book/file.

8 AOCB

We need to follow up with BEAR Scotland the reports of dumping of the old crash barriers into the river at Braemore Junction.

Insurance for office items needs to be updated to reflect equipment owned by the Trust and its value.

The website is being refreshed

AB will redraft the objectives of the Trust for consideration by other Trustees.

There is a need to emphasis community engagement as a means of achieving objectives and raising awareness - perhaps by differentiating between fisheries and protecting fish populations.

9. Date of next meeting

To be arranged via Doodle Poll.