



COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday 6th October 2016, 10:30 -13:00
Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Pitlochry

Draft Minutes attendees

James Hunt (JH)*	Tweed Foundation (Chair)
John Armstrong (JA)*	Marine Scotland Science
Kerrie Campbell (KC)*	Marine Scotland
Jackie Graham (JG)*	Galloway Fisheries Trust
Alan Wells (AW)	Marine Scotland
Pamela Esson* (PE)	River Dee Trust
Sean Dugan (SD)	SFCC
Alison Baker	River Forth Fisheries Trust
Tommy McDermott	Trex Ecology
Marshall Halliday	Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust
Anthony Watkins	SEPA

* *Denotes committee members*

Apologies: Simon McKelvey*, Jo Girvan*, Alistair Duguid*, Alistair Stephen, Shona Marshall.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

The previous minutes were agreed as accurate and were approved.

3. JH Chairman's Report.

JH's role has largely been related to line management of Sean, weekly phone calls and provision of support when required. JH noted that the discussion on the future of SFCC is drawing every closer and will be picked up in agenda item 5.

Comment (verbatim) "What has become increasingly apparent is the disparity in utilisation of SFCC functions and benefits across the SFCC membership. On the whole, members attend one or two training courses each year, but in terms of GIS and data utilisation, there is a strong imbalance in uptake. This is where the "SFCC service" concept comes in where we are more proactive in going to members, assisting them, identifying their needs and putting "GIS on a plate" for them and this is what we anticipate doing as the field work season comes to an end. Sean will be going to members directly to work with them to improve their GIS and data use, a service which was provided at the outset of the SFCC."

JH drew committee's attention to the objective setting process within the SFCC constitution and the annual questionnaire. Committee made several suggestions to encourage members to complete the questionnaire.

ACTION: Invite SFCC members to fill in the questionnaire during the biologist's meeting.

4. SFCC Manager's Report

The manager's report can be viewed here: <http://sfcc.onlineintegrity.com/about-us/constitution-and-meeting-minutes.html>

Committee mentioned positive comments on the salmon distribution map tool and encouraged those who have yet to fill it in to do so before December.

Committee asked SD to report on the first 3 months of secretariat provision for the various Conservation Regulations working groups. The process is working well, and it is balanced with and complementary to ongoing SFCC working activities. Approximately 13 days were focused on the secretariat role between June and September.

Committee also discussed the success of the trial of the new Marine Scotland Fish observations database for Trusts to record smolt data, and were in favour of this system being developed to involve more Trusts in 2017.

ACTION: JA, SD to discuss taking forward this aim.

ACTION: SD to continue monitoring his time allocation to secretariat duties

5. Wild Fisheries Reform

Committee discussed future employment of SD after the proposed changes to RAFTS/ASFB. It is expected that employment/ payroll functions can continue through the new organisation in future. Committee also reflected upon SFCC's current functions and there was some discussion as to whether some functions could be delivered out-with government (such as training) and some functions would be better achieved within government such as managing databases and providing data.

ACTION: Continue the discussion of SFCC's future at the November committee meeting.

Committee discussed the following options for the future of SFCC functions:

- 1) Within the future Fisheries Management Scotland organisation.
- 2) Within Marine Scotland or the national wild fisheries unit.

Members noted that Marine Scotland's relationship and input to SFCC is vital. SFCC should not be considered as one entity, rather its individual function components should be developed in the most appropriate organisation. For example, access to Marine Scotland fish databases is only permitted to those who are employees, or those who are seconded to Scottish Government.

Continued thought from committee is required to manage this dynamic situation over the next few years. It is important to maintain the core functions through the transition period because the interface and interaction with SFCC is highly valued by Trust biologists. Members noted that September 2017 would be the earliest time that a Bill could be introduced to parliament with implementation likely to commence 9-12 months after the Bill becomes an Act. The proposed national unit should be up and running before then in time for the pilot FMO's. There is a need to crystalize discussions further and pick up at the next SFCC meeting.

AW provided a summary of current progress on the Wild Fisheries Reform. Although the programme for Government does not propose to introduce a bill this year there is a manifesto commitment to reform wild fisheries. Working groups that have been convened include CPD, Regulatory and Enforcement, Fishery Management Plan Template, Promotion & Development and Change Management and Transition.

AW noted that improved communication between national and local functions is a theme emerging from several working group discussions. Marine Scotland will establish a science group in future (after the Conservation Regulations process has been developed further). A finance group will also be established. ASFB and RAFTS submitted a report on proposals for FMA's. Pilot FMOs may be set up soon to ground truth a range of issues including indicative expenditure for future FMO's. The draft wild fisheries strategy will be informed by the outputs from the various working groups.

ACTION: AW to send this report to SD.

6. Finance

JH outlined expenditure and income over the past quarter. The river network dataset is no longer purchased resulting in a saving of £6,500 per year. The scale reading course was not

budgeted for and one outstanding invoice is the annual fee for the electrofishing database of around £6,000. SFCC are currently running a surplus of around £11,000 for this year with around £70,000 projected balance at the year end.

7. Communication

SD and JH outlined the concept for the new wild fisheries online forum and welcomed guidance from committee. Key feedback points were:

- Very difficult to get buy-in and regular use of forums.
- Time required to administer the forum should be monitored
- Members must use real names.
- Forum should start small and be limited to SFCC member biologists through invitation only.
- Rules must be clearly set out.
- The forum could be a highly useful and welcome resource if buy-in is gained from biologists.

8. SFCC Member Access to Geographical Information

SD presented a demonstration of the new online system in action further to an explanation of how to gain access to One Scotland mapping Agreement data. SFCC members now have access to all relevant maps through an online connection. SD has also written a user guide available [here](#).

ACTION: Hold a mapping themed session at the biologist's meeting.

9. Biologists meeting

A choice of 4 venue tenders were shared with committee.

ACTION Choose venue after hearing back from Faskally House

ACTION AS to contact new SSE Pitlochry Dam venue to see if it can accommodate the meeting

Committee were in support of continuing the successful joint MSS-SFCC day again this year.

The following themes were suggested:

Conservation regulations current business and outputs from working groups

Flooding

Mapping

Non-salmonids

Large water body surveys

Wild Fisheries Reform workshops

ACTION: Committee members to consider taking responsibility for organizing one session each to help with the organization of the event.

10. Training refresher courses

The electro-fishing refresher course has now run successfully for three years. Committee discussed raising awareness of this course and inviting more MSS and SEPA staff to attend.

11. Temperature network

An application has been made to NERC to continue the Scotland River Temperature Monitoring Network project with the proposal for SFCC to help facilitate working with Trusts. SFCC have agreed to provide support in terms of collating information provided by Trusts.

12. AOB

There were no AOB items.

13. Summary of actions.

Next Meeting: November 30th