



Wednesday 22nd April 2020, 10:30-12:00

By Video conference

Draft note of meeting

Present:

Sean Dugan - SFCC

James Hunt – The Tweed Foundation

Jackie Graham – Galloway Fisheries Trust

Kjersti Birkland - SEPA

Sean Robertson – Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust

Alan Wells – Fisheries Management Scotland

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies: Jo Girvan, Marcus Walters, John Armstrong and Antje Branding.

Without several members of committee, the meeting was not considered to be a full formal management committee meeting, however a note of the meeting was taken for committee and the SFCC membership. Committee felt that it was vitally important to maintain discussion and to continue the work of supporting our members during these challenging times.

2. Review of February members' meeting minutes

ACTION: SD to discuss with MSS the possibility of opening up the pressures tool again in the future, perhaps for an annual update. -Tool designed so it can be opened up again as required.

ACTION: SFCC (through SEPA) to help push awareness of any green engineering days/courses. It was noted at the Biologists meeting that some green engineering courses had been cancelled due to lack of interest, but these could perhaps be publicised more as there was interest among the membership. Courses will be on hold with covid-19. AW happy to continue discussions with Simon Ollie later in the year.

ACTION: JG to investigate the possibility of online PVG courses through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). To be carried forward.

ACTION: SD to organise meeting with Antje Branding and Iain Malcolm to discuss future FishObs options. -Brief but productive chat with John A and Iain, then subsequently wrote to Iain.

3. Biologists' Meeting – February 4th & 5th 2020

Brief review of meeting and thoughts for next year

SD noted the meeting was very well attended, especially on the riparian woodland themed day. Over 30 different organisations represented, although slightly down on Lab staff turnout. Riparian woodland theme generated external interest which speaks to the importance of riparian woodland. High priority issue and one our members are well-placed to deliver. Web page produced after the meeting with talks and 25 links to resources. Article in FMS annual review.

Committee discussed how it seemed to work better that there were less trusts talking as they each had more time. Perhaps next year we can encourage talks from members who didn't speak this year. AW spoke with Scottish Forestry and they were impressed with the day and are engaged with the wild salmon strategy.

SD noted that planning of the sessions could do with some fresh eyes perhaps two or three committee members could take ownership of organising a session each, or we could have a regional themed approach.

ACTION: Members of management committee to consider bringing forward a theme of their choice to organise for next year's meeting.

4. Covid-19 and review of SFCC Objectives for 2020

SD welcomed a general discussion on the impacts of CV-19 on SFCC and SFCC members, then specifically on the SFCC objectives planning document circulated in advance of the meeting. The profound impact of CV-19 on SFCC members was acknowledged.

Committee discussed how CV-19 has resulted in cancellation of electrofishing courses at Inverness. SRUC Barony have not yet announced cancellation but are likely to. JH noted that this could provide an opportunity to look at an online refresher for team leader electrofishing. Brian Davidson has been working on an online refresher for bailiff training, perhaps the same software could be used. JG noted that electrofishing courses have been run in September and October in the past, and this may also be an option if restrictions are lifted in enough time.

Committee then discussed the proposed long-term objective of fully integrating SFCC's website with Fisheries Management Scotland. FMS' website has much higher traffic and the majority of key content has already been replicated from SFCC onto the FMS website. SFCC website rarely has new material added and it is onerous for SD to maintain and update both the FMS website and also the SFCC website. Some of committee felt strongly that the SFCC website should remain separate, as if FMS and SFCC become too heavily integrated members may feel they are paying two subscriptions for the same thing.

JH raised the broader question of how to raise the profile of SFCC and communicate with the membership in the longer-term. For example, although SFCC contributed content to the FMS annual review, the profile and any reference to the brand of SFCC was minimal.

Regarding websites, routing everything through one channel may make it easier for SFCC/FMS members. AW noted that the two websites are not fully integrated at present. Initially, the SFCC brand was important to keep distinct when SFCC and FMS initially came together. However, integration of the websites is a big decision, and perhaps needs to be canvassed around members. A mock-up of what it might look like could be useful to illustrate possibilities.

It was also noted that if the SFCC website is to be kept distinct there is room for improvement, but it is a big job to make sure both websites are coherent and linked.

ACTION: SD to circulate a table setting out potential options for integrating both websites including pros and cons for each option.

5. Finances

a. Year-end financial report

SFCC's bank balance appears low. However, this is because of the pressures mapping payments to boards and trusts. Maritime and Fisheries Fund payment is imminent to recover this, and without pressure tool payments our bank balance would be healthy. Angling Diary export invoice (£500) is void as the work has not been completed.

FMS/SFCC now have a new automated accounting system which will make reporting much easier.

b. 2020-21 SFCC budget

The committee discussed potential implications for subscriptions in light of Covid-19 and how the membership will be feeling financial pressure. SD noted that SFCC has healthy reserves which

could be dipped into to ease pressure on members. A further £5,000 worth of non-critical spending could also potentially be trimmed from the budget if required. Subscriptions have already been coming in from members and SFCC will have a clearer picture in 6 months-time. The committee also discussed that if part of the reserve is spent we need to make sure it is being used well. Savings have been made by a lack of travelling costs as video conferencing is being utilised more. So far 3 SFCC subscriptions have been paid, all in full. If SFCC decide not to seek the second £500 in October for any members who paid the lower fee for this year, to be fair to all members, for those who have paid in full reimbursements will be discussed by committee.

ACTION: Committee to discuss approach to subscriptions at June meeting.

6. Future data storage options

SD provided a written update on data storage options prior to the meeting. The consortium of software-users looking to buy out the license has gone quiet. EMIS can continue to license the software but want the hosting and maintenance to be outsourced. AW noted that MSS will not have enough time to implement a solution before October. The committee noted that an interim measure would be needed, as Covid-19 has taken up government resources we will need to move to another hosting and maintenance provider before a FishObs type solution can be created. Committee wanted clarity on whether SFCC's current provider would charge an "exit fee" if we were to move to a FishObs type system in a years' time. SD noted that for another customer within Scottish Government, the fee to transfer hosting to a new provider was "in the region of a few thousand pounds".

ACTION – SD. Seek clarity regarding an exit fee from current provider.

ACTION: SD to clarify whether any database defects and downtime would be chargeable.

There was some concern as to whether the current provider may just walk away, however EMIS have agreed to continue support until March 2021 and have agreed to help with migration. A letter from EMIS has been provided to support this.

ACTION – SD. Develop tender process with at least 3 providers. Microsoft Azure, UK Cloud and Amazon recommended so far but can take the process further.

AW noted that FMS have had a good experience with their website provider, and they may be worth contacting also.

ACTION: SD to discuss hosting with FMS web developer later in the summer.

7. Mapping Pressures On Wild Atlantic Salmon In Scotland

SD ran through how the outputs from the pressures mapping will be presented, via ESRI story maps. Plan is to have a "soft launch" where it is shared around the membership before being formally published later in the year. MSS have not yet examined the data as priorities have shifted, however it is on their list. SEPA's pressures map is incorporated into 6 layers which boards and trusts will have seen when they used the tool. However, no comparison/evaluation has been undertaken yet. The tools will be able to be opened up again for review at a later date if need be.

8. AOB

The committee discussed how online meetings seem to be working well, and it is possible to host larger meetings in this format. Reaching out to the membership could be worthwhile, as regional skype meetings could help boards and trusts see how each other are coping.

ACTION: SD/AW to explore a regional biologists' videoconference for SFCC members.

*Date of next meetings: June 17th – by VC
August 31st
November 25th*

