

Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Rivers Trust Logie Steading, Dunphail, Forres, IV36 2QN 07501 767801 admin@fnlrt.org.uk

## Minute of Findhorn Nairn & Lossie Rivers Trust Board Meeting

Venue: The Long Room, Logie Steading Date: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 5.30pm

Attending: Mark Laing (ML), Alastair Laing (AL), Alec Rose (AR), Roy Dennis (RD), Crinan Dunbar (CD) In Attendance: Robert Laughton (Director), Clare Walker (Administrator), Elle Adams (Living Alive)

		ACTION
1	Welcome, Apologies and Board Only	
	Apologies from Marcus Braithwaite-Exley, Alex Leven, Andrew Wallace, Frank Clark,	
	ML opened the meeting and asked that those in attendance left the meeting to allow the Board	
	to discuss employee salary arrangements.	
2	Minutes of Meeting of 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2022	
	Approved	
3	Matters Arising	
	RD said there had been no further movement relating to the issue of bottom trawling in the	
	inner Moray Firth. RL has heard that the Spey Board are looking into a proposal to put a	
	biologist on a trawler to monitor bi-catch and Anna Burgess (MSP) has encouraged RL to	
	write to her office to raise the issue.	RL
	ML wrote to the Chairman of Network Rail to request that the Company take action to	
	remedy the serious spread of Giant Hogweed on Network Rail land. ML did receive a	
	response to this correspondence with the contact details of someone else in the organisation	
	who would action the letter, however, ML has not yet had a reply and will write to the	ML
	Chairman again if nothing is received soon.	
	RD highlighted the ongoing problem of pollution being discharged into the Mosset Burn and	
	that the Findhorn Bay Nature Reserve are continuing to push for action to be taken.	
4	Financial Update	
	FNLRT Accounts for April 2021 to March 2022- CW circulated the draft accounts prior to	
	the meeting. The FNLRT Board approved the accounts; ML will sign & CD will take them	
	to the accountants for co-signing and sending to OSCR/Companies House/HMRC.	ML/CD
	CW circulated an updated budget and cash flow forecast for the current financial year	
	which show an improved financial situation at year end of £4k credit. The projected year	
	end cash balance currently sits at £35k. This improvement to the financial situation is due	
	to funding received from Moray Council, commercial contracts, Adult Scale Sample	
	project and FMS Management Plan funding.	
5.	River Management Plans/SLA/Director's Update	
	RL latest Progress Report can be found <u>here</u> .	
	Staff – RL arranged a farewell lunch for Valerie and passed on Valerie's thanks to the	
	Board for their farewell gift. James Symonds has left his post as Project Officer for SISI and	
	has taken up a post on the Cromarty. Elise Cox, seasonal PO has taken up James' role until	
	March 2023.	
	Funding – The funding application to LNER has reached the next stage of the award	
	process and a final decision is expected shortly. An application to the Nature Restoration	
	Fund is awaiting further details before an award decision is made. The SISI project applied	
	for funding to continue the project for a further 3 years and a decision on this is expected	
	imminently. Funding was secured for a graduate post for 2023 for a 6 month period. The	
	Trust has been granted £4.5k to take part in a project to input fishery management plans	
	onto an FMS digital platform. RL is currently working on a proposal in conjunction with	
	Kellas estate to trial the use of pigs in the eradication of Japanese Knotweed and this will	

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	be submitted once the final details are decided. CD and AL suggested that Miller's abattoir in Grantown and Munro's abattoir in Dingwall could provide slaughter services.	RL
	Windfarms – Clashgour and Rothes III have been awarded planning permission. Ourack	
	comments will be submitted next week.	RL
	<ul> <li>Other developments – Scottish Water WWTW Bridge, new bridge in Forres is planned to service the water treatment works. Construction is proposed for January 2023. RL has been conducting Redd surveys and has confirmed no spawning activity and is therefore, happy to give the go ahead to Scottish Water for the bridge construction.</li> </ul>	RL
	• SSE Dallas Substation requires some repair works due to erosion in the burn undermining the substation site. A re-channelling of the burn is proposed to reduce erosion. Previous fish surveys have indicated very little fish in the burn so no significant concerns regarding the works. However, a fish rescue will be undertaken anyway. There appears to have been a lack of communication between SSE and Dallas regarding the works and concerns over a lack of flood prevention measures. A further site meeting between all parties is	
	<ul> <li>SISI – Most Japanese Knotweed (JK) on the Nairn is coming under control. AR highlighted that areas where JK has been treated are now being colonised by Himalayan Balsam and he plans to liaise with the factor at Cawdor about a collaborative effort to treat the problem. RL confirmed that now that JK and Giant Hogweed (GH) control are increasingly reaching management levels more time within the project could be dedicated to Himalayan Balsam. Progress is being made at the Mosset and Muckle Burns. JK is still a real problem on the Lossie, but inroads are being made and support and communication with landowners continues to improve.</li> </ul>	AR
	<ul> <li>Fishing Season – it was a poor season all round with catch numbers down. High temperatures, low water, lack of rain and disease outbreak in spring fish hampered the season. However, evidence of spawning has been witnessed in reasonable numbers. At the recent LDSFB meeting of Qualified Proprietors the Elgin AA raised their issues with a continuing decline in membership and RL provided some advice on ways to try and improve numbers.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>Tomatin – The temperature in the Burn where the distillery discharges its cooling water was measured at 10 degrees higher than a nearby burn showing that the distillery is failing to take action to improve the situation. The high temperatures have a negative effect on fish within the burn. The Chairman of the FDSFB wrote to the distillery to highlight the issue and a meeting has been arranged and it is hoped the distillery will take the Board's concerns into consideration.</li> </ul>	
6	Board Membership	
	ML outlined the more significant role which the Board have, with a larger remit than ever, to care and manage the three rivers catchment and it was agreed that the Board should continue to meet three times a year. A steering group has been set up to spearhead the Findhorn Watershed Initiative with ML, Andrew Wallace, AL and RD from the Board.  ML suggested that the Board would benefit from someone from the Upper catchment with knowledge of the river and also someone who has knowledge in finance, particularly with government contracts or project management. A few people were suggested who might be	ML/CD/
	interested in joining the Board and these people will be approached directly.	RD
7	Findhorn Watershed Initiative	
	The Trust has received a substantial grant of £970k from the Just Transition Fund towards the Findhorn Watershed Initiative. RL and EA have been working towards putting together a budget and finalising job descriptions. AL has been doing a lot of groundwork with local landowners to start the conversation about participation in the Initiative and the reception has been positive. ML congratulated RL and EA and the steering group for their efforts in achieving this momentous funding award.	
8	AOCB	

	A number of members have enquired about whether the Trust could hold hybrid meetings to	
	allow attendance remotely when unable to attend in person. The Long Room does not	
	currently have the facilities to host hybrid meetings, but it was agreed that a solution would	
	be worth pursuing to make meetings as inclusive as possible. Andrew Wallace has offered to	
	provide contact details for someone at the Fishmongers Guild who may be able to advise the	
	best way to achieve this.	AW
9	Dates of 2023 Meetings	
	March Board Meeting tbc, August Board Meeting tbc, November 27 <sup>th</sup> 2023 AGM	

ML closed the meeting at 19:30.