DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS SALMON AND INLAND FISHERIES FORUM

-Note of Proceedings-

MINUTES OF AN AD HOC MEETING OF THE SALMON AND INLAND

FISHERIES FORUM NI HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO LINK ON **WEDNEDSAY 10 JUNE 2020 AT 2PM**

Present Mr Edward Montgomery – Chair

Mr Maurice Parkinson

 Mr Gary Houston

Mr Pat Close

 Mr Albert Keys

 Mr Jack Tisdall

 Mr Paul Johnston

Apologies

 Mr F Conlon

Mr Mark Horton

Mr Robbie Marshall

In attendance

DAERA Mrs Fiona Lavery (Minutes)

DAERA Mr Seamus Connor

DAERA Mr Art Niven

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting and thanked them for their time.

**AGENDA**

1. **Apologies -** as above.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting 15 January 2020 for approval –** The minutes were accepted and approved.
3. **Matters arising from the last meeting**. The Chair agreed to leave the other agenda items and prioritise reviewing the Memo of Understanding and SIFF Terms of Reference.
4. **SIFF Memo of Understanding/ Terms of Reference and Standing Orders.**

**MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING**

The Chair suggested that each bullet point could be reviewed and amendments/comments suggested.

2.3 It was agreed that this section should read ‘*for an initial period of 5 years and thereafter with a review at the end of each 5 year period.’*

*4.1 Correct* spelling to Principal. Discussion was held on the requirement for SIFF members to complete an annual Conflict of interest form. It was agreed that Fiona Lavery would circulate a suitable form for completion by members.

5.6 Member clarified that a *casual vacancy* would apply to a one-off event when a replacement representative could ‘fill in’ for an absent member.

5.13 Accepted

5.14 Accepted

 Discussion was held on the use of the terminology ‘Chair’ as a non-gender term.

7.1 Seamus Connor stressed that the annual review between the Chair and the Department was important.

 Members accepted the document and it was agreed that a signed copy would be

Completed and circulated. Discussion was held regarding the SIFF minutes on the website and the Chair suggested that a list of the SIFF members could also be included.

1. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Chair suggested the removal of the FCB reference in the first paragraph, as obsolete now. Members agreed to this.

The Chair clarified the role of the SIFF as a consultative body. Paul Johnston queried the inclusion of discussion items relating solely to the Loughs Agency area. In reply, Seamus Connor clarified the Department’s overall responsibility for fish passage, weekend closures, etc. It was agreed that such discussions should not be site specific, but should be discussed on a general level. Mr Paul Johnston noted an example of the escapement of rainbow trout in the River Mourne. Seamus Connor clarified that it possibly had an impact on other areas within DAERA i.e. Policy, discharges etc. It was stressed that discussion should be on Policy-related matters and any cross over should be informative only. Mr Albert Keys asked at what point in the process are SIFF members able to view DAERA Policy and legislation. In reply, Seamus Connor gave an example of the 2014 Fisheries Regulations and highlighted that the draft outline was first sent to SIFF for comment. The next stage is that the proposed legislation is taken to the Assembly for MLA input. The Regulations were then sent back to SIFF members for final review before being sent back to the Assembly.

1. **SIFF STANDING ORDERS**

**Point 2 –** It was agreed to add in the 5 year review timeframe.

**Point 4 –** It was agreedto include clarification the non-attendance is 3 successive missed meetings in Section 5.7 memo of Understanding.

Members agreed that the Memo of Understanding/Terms of Reference and Standing Orders had been agreed. A hard copy would be circulated to members once signed by the Chair and Chief Fisheries Officer.

The Chair asked if Gary Houston would be content to leave the Cormorants agenda item for a further meeting, as it had been raised by UAF. Mr Houston agreed to this proposal.

1. **NIEA MEETING UPDATE**

The Chair referred to the note he had circulated in relation to the meeting held with NIEA. In summary, he was impressed by the due diligence of NIEA staff but the evident lack of resources. Mr Albert Keys suggested that it had been more of a sales job, as WFD was not considered in plans for weirs and dams. Continuing, he felt that putting hydros on small rivers will detrimentally impact fish habitat and smolt passage.

1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair suggested that given the problems with the WebEx connection it may be better to use the Honourable Irish Society Zoom account which allows unlimited time. The Chair agreed to send out the link which will allow members access to the meeting, along with the Minutes of this meeting.

**WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2020 at 2.00pm, via Zoom video link**

The meeting ended.