

# AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME



**Minutes of a Meeting of Council**  
**held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton**  
**on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025 commencing at 11:05am.**

**PRESENT:**

**Chairman:** N. Juby.  
**Councillors:** E. Williamson, D. Cocks, M. Barker, G. Annan, T. Clark, S. Smith, O. Kent, P. Dell.  
**Staff:** D. Klee, A. Daniel, B. Jarvis-Child  
**Public:** C Sherrard, Mark Banister, Paul Hardy (DOC representative)

The C.E. noted that some Councillors and Staff would be slightly late to the meeting due to being involved in banding activities in Te Awamutu.

**1. APOLOGIES:**

A. Brown, G. Dickey, A. Sapich

It was moved;

**that apologies be accepted.**

**Dell/Smith – CARRIED**

**2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:**

Nil.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024:**

It was noted that E. Williamson was listed both as being present and as an apology. It was confirmed that he was not present at the meeting.

It was moved;

**That the minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024 meeting be accepted as true and correct records subject to the removal of E. Williamson as present at the meeting**

**Cocks/Smith – CARRIED**

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

The Chair requested an updated on the Hamilton Anglers Club, (HAC) letter pertaining to access and signage for a kids fishing area neat Hamilton. Dr Daniel indicated that no further progress had been made as other projects such as the fish regulation review had taken precedence. Dr Daniel will provide an update at the March council meeting.

The Chair asked Dr Daniel if any progress had been made looking at body cameras for Rangers. Dr Daniel said he found some but didn't think they were suitable. The Chair suggested that he had one that staff could trial.

The Chair asked if any progress had been made on a consistent Regionalised set of standing orders. The CE responded that no progress had been made, but this was still the overall aim and made the most sense as they could incorporate the findings from various audit recommendations made in recent years. As an interim measure, the Chair requested that the AWFGC standing orders be amended with the NZC provisions that facilitate online meeting attendance. The C.E will aim to have this done in time for the Match meeting.

#### **5. INWARDS COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE:**

**NZC CEO report:** Council expressed concern with the paper that was circulated by the NZC CEO as it relates to setting national policy. It was felt that there were inaccuracies with the interpretation which were not in line with the Act or legal opinions and therefore NZC councillors were getting a skewed perspective.

It was moved:

That the Chair write a letter to the NZC Chair outlining the councils concerns and seeking that the NZC highlighting the councils' concerns and the AWFG CEO circulates the response to managers.

***Williamson/Cocks- CARRIED***

#### **Councillor Annan joined the meeting at 11.21**

**HPAI:** The council raised concerns around the potential closure of the hunting season that was highlighted in the NZC CEO paper and whether any further indication had been given by the government regarding financial support should this be required. The council also highlighted the need for regional experts in game management to be involved in the preparation of an organisational HPAI response rather than relying on DOC or MPI representatives. The council highlighted the need for evidence-based decision making and noted that game seasons have continued globally. More thought should be given to reaching out to partner agencies in Europe and the U.S. The CE highlighted that the

organisation has an HPAI response plan which covers many of these topics and that at this stage the impact of HPAI on game populations in NZ remains unpredictable.

## **6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:**

### **Trend Counts**

The CE highlighted the exponential increase in Goose numbers in the region since they were removed from the Game Schedule. The prospect of geese returning to schedule 1 was canvassed with the minister of Hunting and Fishing when he met with the Nelson Marlborough Council. The council noted, that now numbers have been left to get out of control, Fish and Game would require significant financial assistance to bring them back to 2011 levels.

### **Banding**

The CE extended his thanks to the councillors and volunteers that helped out with banding this year. New staff had made excellent progress and have. A summary update will be provided for the next council meeting.

### **Whangamarino Response Group and Action Plan.**

Councillor Williamson asked how progress was going with the Whangamarino working group and whether it had led to any tangible outcomes on the ground. The C.E. explained that at this stage there is no implementation funding associated with the project and the main aim of the existing project was stakeholder engagement and input. The CE acknowledged that an Action Plan without an implementation phase is just a plan, however, it is hoped that funding will be made available moving forward.

It was moved;

**That the Bi-monthly CE report be accepted**

**Annan/Dickey – CARRIED**

**Beau Jarvis-Child joined the meeting at 12.10pm**

## **7. SPORTSFISH REGULATION REVIEW**

The Council congratulated Mr Jarvi-Child and Dr Daniel on the excellent report.

The Chair sought clarification whether licence holders who identified solely as coarse anglers had been excluded. Dr Daniel indicated that they had been as the regulation changes were in relation to trout.

Dr Daniel was asked about the rationale for differential regulations on the Whakapapa River. He explained that the Whakapapa would ideally be a regulated fishery, but that would require an application to the minister and would be unlikely to get approval. He felt that any change to the regulations in the easily accessible water needed consultation with Iwi but the river had increased use so the fly only area was extended down to 1km

above the 42 traverse bridge. The fish population in the upper river is protected by a lack of access.

Councillor Dell raised the issue of temperature related mortality and whether enough was being done to mitigate this. Dr Daniel replied that the council had taken an educational approach with licence holders and that this would be highlighted further, specifically in highly susceptible fisheries such as the Mangatutu. There was further discussion around research opportunities using the trout tagging programme, for example, by looking at differential tag recovery rates depending on what stream temperatures are at the time of tagging to infer heat related mortality.

Meeting guest, Mark Banister was invited to speak to his submission. He gave a background to his experience with the Auckland/Waikato Fishery. He raised the need for further education regarding appropriate catch and release practices, the issues around overall degradation of water ability and trout habitat and the loss of access opportunities, especially in areas he had grown up fishing such as the Upper Waipa.

Mr Banister supports the entire Whakapapa being fly only and raised concerns about mortality associated with bait fishing. Mr Banister produced some graphs of water temperature data which indicated that the Whanganui below Taumarunui was reaching critical thresholds during the summer. He would support daily temperature related closures. Overall, he supports option A in Dr Daniels report.

Councillor Williamson reinforced the need to provide evidence based decisions to the minister if regulation changes were to be sought. It was noted that Dr Daniels report provided the basis for the recommendations and included a comprehensive consultation phase with licence holders.

It was moved

**Council adopt option A in Dr Daniel and Mr Jarvis-Childs report, subject to annual review with a comprehensive review in 3 years.**

**Annan/Kent – CARRIED**

The meeting rose for lunch at **12.34pm**. meeting.

The meeting reconvened at **1.20pm**.

## **8. GRALLARD HARVEST AND POPULATION REPORTS**

The council thanked Mr Jarvis-Child for his excellent reports and appreciated the development of the SMS pilot study which has greatly improved the accuracy of our population estimates. The CE commented that Mr Jarvis-Child had shown great initiative in using new techniques and spent a lot of time and effort on the data analysis underpinning the reports, agreeing they were excellent. Further, it was agreed there was merit in continuing the SMS survey and this had been incorporated into the OWP.

## 9. OPERATIONAL WORKPLAN

The C.E, explained the operational workplan process and asked councillors to ensure they worked through it using a governance lens focusing on what outcomes they want staff to achieve. He suggested that strategic objectives should be set for 3 years and in line with election council cycles.

The C.E. has not yet received updated budget templates from NZC which should have been with regions in December 2024. This has left very tight timeframes to complete the budget by the end of February, especially given the uncertainties around process, lack of policy and a shift to zero based budgeting which is now delayed until next year. Managers were quickly introduced to the newly proposed template which appears to be some kind of hybrid model based on previous years budgets but including aspects of ZZB.

The council spent some time workshopping through the OWP and the CE informed council that this was only their first opportunity to review the OWP and that it would be back on the agenda at the March meeting at which point it is hoped the budgeting situation will be resolved. In the interim the CE encouraged Councillors to provide any proposed updates to the OWP via email and an updated draft will be supplied at the March meeting.

It was moved

**That strategic priorities are reaffirmed for 3 years.**

**Barker /Smith– CARRIED**

## 10. OSH:

The CE noted there were no accidents or near misses to report. The Chair asked whether risk assessments were not being done by wetland groups as none were listed in the OSH Table. The CE informed council that 2 lots of documents had been received but after the agenda had already been finalised and sent.

Councillor Cocks suggested that the CE should budget for staff to receive workplace related inoculations and molemaps for staff, which council agreed was a good idea and should be done as part of councils good employer obligations.

It was moved;

**that the OSH report is accepted.**

**Annan/Williamson– CARRIED**

**11. GENERAL BUSINESS:**

Mark Banister addressed the council regarding his concerns about the loss of access in the region largely through the loss of public access through private property, where in the past this had been facilitated.

Mr Banister indicated that he was just completing the final paperwork with his lawyer for his property title to go freehold and would subsequently like to bequeath his property to the Auckland/Waikato restricted reserve access fund.

The CE and Chair thanked Mr Banister for his kind offer.

It was moved

**That Council gratefully accepts the offer of Mark Banister to bequeath his property to Auckland/Waikato Fish and Game restricted reserve access fund.**

**Williamson /Smith– CARRIED**

The Chair declared that council, pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 exclude the public from the following part of the proceedings of this meeting, namely citing Section 48(1)(a)(ii) That the public conduct of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting would be likely to result in the disclosure of information for which good reason for withholding would exist. Free and frank expression Protection of members Improper gain or advantage. s7(2)(f) and s7(2)(j)

**Williamson /Cocks – CARRIED**

The council moved into public excluded meeting at 2.50pm

The council came out of public excluded meeting at 3.19pm

The Chair declared the meeting was closed at 3.20pm