

**Unconfirmed Minutes of the Fish and Game NZ, Southland Region council meeting held at the Southland Fish and Game Offices, 17 Eye Street, Invercargill on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025, commencing at 6.00pm.**

**Present:**

Dave MacGregor	Mike Turner (Departed 8pm)
Lyndon Norman via zoom	Mike Hartstonge
Craig Horrell	Dave Harris

**In Attendance**

Zane Moss (Manager), Cohen Stewart. Ben Febery, Jacob Smyth, Dwight Grieve and Steve McCartney (minutes).

Members of the public: Lindsay Withington

**1 Welcome:**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6.08pm and welcomed those in attendance.

**2 Apologies:**

Cyril Gilroy, Bruce Diprose

**Resolved D Harris/M Hartstonge that apologies be accepted. Carried.**

**3 Declarations of Interest:**

The individual member declaration of conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda had been circulated to members before the start of the meeting.  
Any conflicts were noted by the Chairman.

**4 Confirmation of Minutes.**

The minutes of the public meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025 were considered.

**Resolved M Turner/D Harris that meeting be moved to Public Excluded pursuant to the provisions of the local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, Section 7, 2, (a) (ii) where it would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information. Carried.**

**Resolved M Hartstonge/M Turner to move the meeting from public excluded. Carried.**

**5 Notices of Motion**

**Health & Safety Report.**

The Council Health & Safety report for the period was attached to the agenda for consideration. All known hazards were listed in the Southland Health & Safety Plan. Cohen advised that he is reviewing our H & S plan and policy and as a benchmarking exercise he approached NZC's H & S specialist for a copy of their plan but was advised that they did not have one that we could use. Cohen subsequently obtained one from CSI, with the caveat from Steve McKnight that their policy has not received a full review. However, NZC is supposedly conducting a review with the view to producing a nationwide policy document.

Main matters to cover were that the policy is fit for purpose and hazard identification was up to date. Our policy has been updated to include councillor volunteer obligations (pg 1, 38,39) Councillor Harris asked that the obligation applicable to all to act in the event of seeing someone acting unsafely. Also to be added is the hazard re psycho/social harm.

**Resolved D Harris/C Horrell: That the Health and Safety Report and amendments be received and accepted. Carried.**

#### **Gamebirds on crop**

Currently there are two separate permits, one for disturbance and dispersal and a second permit for control. Now to be combined. After 2 weeks (expiry of permit), staff to contact applicant for feedback re methods employed, numbers of birds killed and assessment of success.

**Resolved D MacGregor/M Turner to accept framework for management of birds on crop. Carried.**

#### **Summer Mallard Season.**

Cohen led a discussion on this matter in response to Council's request for a framework for a summer season option should we need it.

Weather and water conditions through the brood rearing period (October) is a key driving factor. Essentially the soil moisture levels (upper quartile) would likely be a suitable measure in respect of anticipated population numbers.

**Resolved D Harris/D MacGregor that staff recommendations as appearing on page 20 be accepted. Carried.**

#### **Complimentary Group Fishing Licences**

Legislation allows for the provision of free special licences. Councils can apply these special licences where they align with R3 objectives.

There was universal agreement that the Council continue to supply these free to non-profit community groups and organisations, such as schools, scouts, churches, youth groups etc.

Robust discussion was held regarding eligibility for complimentary group fishing licences where there is a commercial element involved.

There is a longer-term view that these events participants may take up the sport, and become future licence holders. To deny these commercial ventures completely, would be to turn our backs on the recruitment efforts and influence of the private sector.

**Resolved M Hartstonge/M Turner to ask staff to create a formalised policy for Council to consider. Carried. D Harris abstained.**

### **Wellbeing Fund**

Cr Harris advised that The Southland Fly Fishing Club celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and a suggestion was made to establish a Angling for wellbeing fund with SFGC and to donate \$5000 to that fund to be held as a Restricted reserve. This would align with our R3 and wellbeing work.

**Resolved D Harris/D Macgregor to establish a Restricted reserve to receive these monies. Carried.**

### **Staff Report**

Zane drew the Council's attention to a paper Cohen has produced – Recreational Trout Fishing and Mental Health and Wellbeing in Aotearoa. Reviewer's comment was that this paper sets a benchmark for that type of research.

Council acknowledged this work and congratulated Cohen on his effects in producing this high calibre paper.

**Resolved D Macgregor/D Harris that the council accept the Staff report as presented. Carried**

### **Correspondence**

- Councillor Health, safety & Wellbeing responsibilities
- Governor's code of Conduct (as requested)
- Southland Fish Game crop protection guide FINAL
- Game bird disturbance and control permit FINAL
- Ardlussa Bridge Access signage
- Manager's indication of intention to retire
- Governance code of conduct
- Procedure for identifying and raising wellbeing and mental health concerns
- Letter to Wyndham Anglers Club

Ardlussa bridge – LINZ has leased land to Chris Dillon who had been grazing without a lease. Vehicle access to the river is now limited to part way down the access road.

### **Financial reports**

Invoice \$211.50 received from Route 6 Café (via Dave MacGregor) for catering for Duck shooting weekend. Invoice forwarded to Richie Cosgrove at NZC for payment.

**Resolved D Harris/D MacGregor to accept financial reports as presented. Carried.**

**NZC update.**

Councillor’s MacGregor, Hartstonge and Harris attended the last meeting.  
 D Harris advised discussions held on fishing regulations for next season. Budgets approved.  
 Email update sent to councillors by NZC Chair.

**Sports Fish and Game Management Plan**

Council asked Zane to contact the Minister to apply for an extension

**Resolved D MacGregor/D Harris for the Manager to apply to the Minister for an extension to the renewal date. Carried**

Jacob asked on behalf of staff for better communication from Council in respect of what is happening with Zane’s position and matters around the review that may influence their decision. The chair advised that the council would inform staff as quickly as possible.

**Motion to Exclude the Public**

Recommendation:

1. That the Southland Fish and Game Council:

(a) 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:

GENERAL SUBJECT OF EACH MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED	REASON FOR PASSING THIS RESOLUTION IN RELATION TO EACH MATTER	GROUND(S) UNDER SECTION 48(1) FOR THE PASSING OF THIS RESOLUTION
To consider the Council’s options for the replacement of the manager	s.7 (2) (a) Protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.	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.

(b) That Council staff not be required for this discussion

**Resolved D MacGregor/D Harris to move meeting to public excluded. Carried.**

**Public excluded session:**

**Manager’s resignation and proposed recruitment:**

**Present:** Dave Macgregor, Michael Hartstonge, Dave Harris and Craig Horrell.

**Apologies:** Lyndon Norman, Bruce Diprose, Mike Turner (Mike provided comments to Michael for him to speak to before he left).

**Acceptance of manager’s resignation:**

The group acknowledged the manager’s resignation which was received on 26 June 2025. While the Council are disappointed to lose someone of Zane’s experience the Council accepted the resignation and wish him all the best with his future endeavours.

Action: Dave to write formally to Zane acknowledging his resignation.

Noted a leaving function is to be arranged after discussions with staff in terms of the best way to do this in a way that is fitting.

**Replacement options and recruitment proposal:**

While some informal discussions have occurred it was noted that this was the first opportunity for the Council to formally discuss possible options and that all options should be discussed.

There was some discussions around temporary measures including the option of engaging a temporary manager (until such time that we have a better idea of what the proposed legislation intends) or employing someone on a fixed term so that once the reforms have been completed Council may look to either extend the term, make the position permanent, or readvertise based on the final shape of the organisation post the reforms.

Ultimately the discussion came to the conclusion that it would be better to engage a manager on a permanent basis and that we will not wait to see the outcome of the reforms. Cr Macgregor and Cr Hartstonge spoke of their recent meeting with the Minister. This gave them confidence that we could look to recruit and advertise for a permanent position rather than wait for the changes.

What was discussed with the Minister was that it was highly likely that going forward the NZC would be requested to standardise the manager's job descriptions. With this in mind and in the interests of wanting to get a fit for purpose job description in place, it was agreed that we would seek the assistance of the NZC to help draft the job description as they have the ability to pull together the various job descriptions that exist around the regions and the resource to assist with this.

In terms of the position title the idea of chief executive versus manager was discussed. It was agreed that it was not appropriate to name the position chief executive and instead it would remain at manager. This was based around the fact that the NZC have a CE already and it did not seem fitting to duplicate this title when our operation was relatively small in terms of staff numbers, budgets and overall responsibility.

The process of recruitment was discussed and the following was agreed upon:

1. The manager position will be a permanent position.
2. Recruitment working group to be established consisting of Cr Macgregor, Cr Hartstonge, Cr Norman and Cr Horrell.
3. Sheffields will be engaged to assist with the appointment process subject to final proposal by them being accepted by the working group.
4. Job description and subsequent remuneration range to be drafted by NZC and the working group based on standardisation of existing JDs around the country to help future proof it.
5. Once JD is drafted comment to be sought from existing manager and Sheffields with potential for changes at this point at the discretion of the working group.
6. Final draft job description, remuneration range and final recruitment process proposal by Sheffields to be taken to the full Council for them to vote on.
7. Position advertised.
8. Interviews of shortlisted candidates to be by full Council.
9. Selection of successful candidate to be by full Council.

The above process was put as a motion to accept by Cr Hartstonge, seconded by Cr Macgregor. All voted in favour. No one against.

A motion to take the above motion and discussion points out of committee was then put by Cr Hartstonge, seconded by Cr Macgregor. All voted in favour. No one against.

**Interim steps:**

The Council is mindful of the impact of having no manager for a period and so discussion was had on steps that could be taken to assist the staff through this period.

The following ideas were discussed:

1. Utilising accounting firm Leech and Partners to assist with accountancy support. This firm currently assists North Canterbury and provides guidance and support to the NZC.
2. Utilising the likes of the current manager or others on a short-term contract to work on specific projects or functions. This would be subject to approval by the full Council.
3. NZC have offered to provide administrative support where necessary.
4. The Chairman to meet with staff to discuss concerns and areas where we may need support until such time as a manager is appointed.

The above ideas were put as a motion to investigate by Cr Harris, seconded by Cr Horrell. All voted in favour. No one against.

A motion to take the above motion and discussion points out of committee was then put by Cr Harris, seconded by Cr Horrell. All voted in favour. No one against.

A motion to take the meeting out of public excluded was the made by Cr Hartstonge, seconded by Cr Macgregor. All voted in favour. No one against.

The full meeting was then closed at 9:20pm by the Chairman.

Next meeting scheduled to be held on 25th<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_