

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL 2012 AT 3.05PM AT THE UPPER HUTT COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 11 LOGAN STREET, UPPER HUTT, WELLINGTON.

1. Present:

Chairman Martin Taylor, Councillors Andrew Morris, Brad Johnson, Strato
Cotsilinis, Richard Moore, Chris O'Meara, Jim Cook, Tim Allen, Mark Grace,
Eric Neumann, Andy Tannock,

Licence holders: Simon Muckley (part)

2. In Attendance:

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Nic Cudby

3. Apologies:

Councillor Duncan Thomas,

Staff: Corina Jordan

Licenceholders: Paul Browne

It was moved that:

the apologies be accepted.

Chris O'Meara/Brad Johnson

Carried

4. Conflicts of Interest

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of
Interest. There was no additional declaration of Conflicts of Interests not
already registered.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 7 February 2012:

Councillor Allen noted that he had concerns about how the minutes recorded
the discussions on the NZ Council appointee. After brief discussion it was
moved that:

*the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 7
February 2012 be approved as a true and correct record of the
proceedings of that meeting.*

Chris O'Meara/Richard Moore

Carried

Councillor Allen requested that it be noted he did not agree with the inference made in the minutes of an external influence behind his support for changing Wellington F&GC's NZ Council appointee.

6. Matters Arising:

Councillor O'Meara stated that his remarks made at the previous meeting under general business relating to comments made by Councillor Allen on an internet forum were mistaken, and withdrew his comments and offered an unreserved apology.

7. Process for Confirming Minutes of 7 February 2012:

This item was deferred for later discussion and the chair apologised to Councillor Allen for including it in the Agenda following Councillor Allen's email on the matter as the Chair thought this had been requested .

8. Meeting Standards:

Councillor Allen had requested that the item be placed on the agenda. He made comment that he was disappointed with the extent of profanity used at the previous meeting which went beyond the good conduct rules noted in the Wellington F&G policy manual and believed that the Chair had not followed the correct procedure by not calling Councilor O Meara to order as allowed under the meetings standing orders. Councillor O'Meara apologised for his poor standard of language at the previous meeting. Chairman Taylor also apologised for not calling a point of order and noted no one called a point of order at the time . He then reminded Councillors of the standards of behaviour and that any Councillor at any time may raise a point of order to highlight poor behaviour.

Nic Cudby arrived at 3.20pm

9. Operational Process for Confirming Minutes:

Councillor Morris spoke to a brief paper presented relating to circulating the draft minutes immediately (within a short time period) which would give Councillors the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the minutes and would also provide information to Councillors who did not attend the meeting a chance to participate in subsequent discussions between meetings.

Discussion ensued on a process that would achieve this outcome by circulating the draft minutes within five working days to all Councillors and giving them five working days to respond. Comments as to accuracy of the minutes could be made on the unconfirmed minutes and if minor then amendments made. In the event of a disagreement on the accuracy of the draft minutes then they would not be published on the website, but held over to the next meeting.

The intent of the change was also for this to act as an informal affirmation of the unconfirmed minutes so that they could be posted with confidence on the website with the agenda.

Councillor Cotsilinis confirmed that it was often practice to have abridged minutes which record only the motions – bereft of the discussion and points of view which lead to the motion proposal. Councillor Cotsilinis however indicated that he preferred the more expanded type of minutes used by Phil Teal. He also confirmed that it was normal and appropriate practice for the draft minutes to be sent by the manager to the chair in the first instance prior to the draft minutes being sent to the full council.

Deleted: normal

It was then moved that

The draft unconfirmed minutes be circulated within five (5) working days to all Councillors and that all comments on additions/corrections had to be made within five (5) working days.

If there were items that had significant disagreement then the unconfirmed minutes would not be distributed until confirmed at the next meeting.

Andrew Morris/Richard Moore

Carried

10. Enhancement Works on Yules and Simmonds Lagoon:

Councillor Morris presented a brief paper on the desirability to undertake work on Yules and Simmonds Lagoon considering that Fish & Game owned and could better control management direction. Councillor Tannock recalled previous field trips made to the site which highlighted the main management issue had been potential and likely infilling of gravel resulting from floods of the Tauherenikau River. Councillor Cotsilinis recounted that a possible remedy of stopbank protection had been a relatively large capital cost to protect the sites (approximately \$250,000) was considered too high at that time. Discussion ensued on the new opportunities afforded by the recently announced Clean Up Fund and other sources such as the Gamebird Habitat Trust Fund.

There was general agreement that Wellington Fish & Game should actively manage Yules and Simmonds Lagoon following investigation as to how the gravel builds up and floods the sites. Discussion ensued that as a landowner there would be an expectation that the river does not breach the banks and based on that obligation of the Regional Council a restoration plan could be defined. It was suggested that the following approach could be made:

- Develop a plan to restore Yules and Simmonds Lagoon;
- Register an interest in actively managing the sites to the Regional Council;

- Request assistance as a landowner to the Regional Council to protect the stopbanks to avoid infilling of gravel;
- Signal possible course of action that may require Clean Up funds to Regional Council and Wairarapa Moana.

It was suggested that the contributions to undertake works within the lagoon would be under direction of Fish & Game.

It was then moved that

Restoration of Simmonds and Yules lagoons be given priority and that the Manager undertake investigations as to the feasibility of progressing this

Tim Allen/Brad Johnson

Carried

11. New Zealand Council Business

Mr Teal acknowledged that while all Councillors had already received a copy of the unconfirmed minutes directly from NZ Council he had included them in the agenda papers for immediate reference and this also provides a copy for public attendees. It was agreed that the NZ Council minutes would continue to be included in the Wellington F&G agenda.

Councillor Morris acknowledged the difficulties that Councillor Moore had had as the preceding NZ Council Wellington appointee with regards to “in committee” items.

Councillor Morris confirmed that the Minister had indicated support for a non-resident licence which had effectively deferred interest from DoC in the progression of the proposed Guides Licence.

Councillor Morris made comment on the Public Awareness personnel (0.5 FTE) based at Eastern region for the upper North Island PA function. Mr Teal explained that assistance was given to Wellington F&G by NZ Council’s Communications Manager who facilitated press releases and public communication initiatives.

Councillor Morris noted that a consistent approach to compliance reparation was being sought.

Councillor Morris noted that setting up a Mallard Research Group to progress research in a timely manner had been approved and would hopefully meet prior to the NZ Council meeting at the end of May. Following a question from Councillor Allen, Mr Teal confirmed that the current annual NZF&G research budget was \$100,000 and that recommendations from Managers/CEs last year to increase the annual research budget to \$150,000 had not been approved by NZ Council.

Councillor Morris drew to Councillors' attention that NZ Council had resolved to convene a NZ Council/Regional Chair meeting to discuss planning for the new term – once the new council is appointed and completed governance re-familiarisation. It was noted that the South Island governors held a meeting once a year and Councillor Morris suggested that this approach should be considered with at least the lower North Island F&G Councils each year. It was agreed that this idea had merit and that a letter be sent to neighbouring Councils to convene a meeting.

Councillor Morris confirmed that there were items regarding conflict of interests had been dealt with in-committee. Chairman Taylor considered that Wellington F&G seek the advice provided to NZ Council relating to Project 1810 of the NZ Council Minutes. It was then moved that

A letter be sent to NZ F&G Council to reaffirm Wellington F&GC's Official Information Act request to obtain a copy of the final Mai Chen legal advice on Conflicts of Interest and how to operate within the Fish & Game Council context

Richard Moore/Andrew Morris
Carried

It was then moved that

That the report from Councillor Morris on NZ Council Meeting held on 16 and 18 March 2012 be received

Brad Johnson/Strato Cotsilinis
Carried

12. Amendments to Annual Plan 2011.2012

Mr Teal explained that the Auditors had suggested that a technical book entry be included for depreciation expense in the Budgeted Statement of Income – which was different from the cash flow based budgets NZ F&GCs use for budgeting.

Mr Teal also gave explanation that the Auditors had suggested that it was good process to disclose a Budgeted Statement of Dedicated Reserves in the Annual Plan

It was then moved

That the amendments recommended be adopted to be added to the Annual Plan 2011/2012

Martin Taylor/Eric Neumann
Carried

Simon Muckley Arrived at 4pm.

13. Draft Annual Plan 2012.2013

Discussion ensued on the draft Annual Plan 2012/13 with focus on projects which would change strategic focus.

Chairman Taylor indicated that there was a need for Fish & Game to increase introduction of novice participants to the pursuits, and that resources could be directed to increase anglers and hunters. Further initiatives were discussed including recruitment via schools, and pheasant hunter training days (that had been previously organised by Clubs).

Chairman Taylor considered that a regular (two weekly) local event management approach be taken and needed to be resourced. It was considered that while the NZ Council school information pack was useful in providing interest but it didn't translate into a recruitment programme to get people out and increase participation.

Discussion continued that this be the subject of a Contestable Fund Application to provide for a programme to be funded each year for three years that could provide a co-ordinated effort involving other ad hoc initiatives such as those run by F&G clubs and upland game preserves.

Councillor Eric Neumann was against diverting an existing 0.5FTE staff but considered that 10% of staff time could be spent looking at a strategy and solutions used in other sports and pursuits. There was also a possibility that, despite doing a lot, the results may be indeterminate. It was agreed that results might take many years to get results on this long term project.

Steve Pilkington noted that there were already considerable efforts put into junior angling days in Wellington and Palmerston North that were building relationships. Other initiatives with schools were discussed including taking students from schools on paradise shelduck hunts.

Councillor Cotsilinis was fully supportive of the proposal and noted that Fishing Licence sales hadn't been declining in recent years and had reached a plateau, although the number of people attending clubs had declined over the similar timeframe.

It was considered that a contestable fund application for an initial six-month salary, logistics, and trout costs be applied for in the 2012/2013 F&G budgeting round.

It was then moved that

a project be included in the draft Annual Plan relating to Increasing the Numbers of Hunters and Anglers and tasks be developed accordingly.

The Manager will develop and cost a three year pilot project plan including a full time person to the next Council meeting

Funding will be sought from NZ Council for that position – initially as a contestable funding application

Strato Cotsilinis/Chris O'Meara

Carried

It was further moved that

A Contestable Funding Application be made for salaries taking into account Kiwisaver obligations and CPI

Chris O'Meara/Jim Cook

Carried

14. Baring Head and Pencarrow Lakes Access

Baring Head - Councillor Cotsilinis indicated that Wellington Flyfishers Club had been contacted by Greater Wellington Regional Council regarding the Baring Head Draft Amendment Plan. He considered the document was predominantly conservation based with only some recreational component – with no acknowledgement of fishing, and no shooting to be allowed (specifically mentioning gamebirds). He indicated that the Wellington Flyfishers Club will be putting in a submission.

Discussion continued on Fish & Game making a submission which closes on 18 May 2012 and why Fish & Game had not been consulted relating to fishing and gamebird hunting issues, prior to public release. It was considered that there was a need to resist in the strongest manner and seek clarification from GWRC as what they believe the extent of hunting is, and notice of any incidents in the past. Staff were requested to define initial areas of F&G interest such as the bottom of the Wainuiomata River – but to consider wider hunting opportunities not limited to pest control operations.

Simon Muckly spoke to this point and indicated it was not a good look for Wellington Fish and Game to not be formally consulted on this issue and believed once the GWRC achieved their goal of stopping gamebird hunting at Baring Head they may try to do the same at Lake Wairarapa.

Pencarrow Lakes Access - Mr Teal understood that access would be granted this year as per previous years. He also believed it was possible that a management plan for the lakes might be developed which would curtail gamebird hunter access in future).

Discussion ensued on the previous issues relating to the specific Treaty Settlement Act which allowed for public access (subject to avoiding significant adverse environmental impacts) including duck hunting. It was considered that NZ F&G Council needed to be alerted due to the potential precedence to lose access to significant areas if this stopping access to gamebird hunters succeeds despite legislation on prima facie providing for access.

Councillor Allen considered that while there was a need to have a conflict over this issue, there was also a need to consider the ramifications of this on relationships with DoC, Regional Council ,and iwi groups. Simon Muckley considered that once the precedent is set, Fish & Game need to look at where and to what extent this may occur.

Chairman Taylor then questioned on how to progress the issues, and it was then moved

Baring Head

1. *Submission to formal consultation with strong disagreement with the specific exclusion of gamebird hunting, posing the questions on:*
 - *How much hunting occurs now;*
 - *Notice of any safety incidents.*
2. *Letter to Regional Council Chairman and Councillors reaffirming our statutory roles and why F&G were not consulted on a formal basis (prior to public release of document).*

Pencarrow Lakes

Letter to the Prime Minister indicating that Wellington Fish & Game Council has been supportive of Treaty Settlements in the past and what F&G now understand to be happening now, and the difficulties we have had since his previous comments made two years ago.

Letter to NZ Council alerting them to the erosion of hunting opportunity due to Treaty settlements (Port Nicholson) and Regional Council purchase (Baring Head), and the apprehension over the coming settlement of claims involving Lake Wairarapa. In the future all F&GCs need to be cautious of treaty settlements and Wellington F&G are seeking advocacy and legal support to protect hunters interests as this issue is seen as having significant precedence value and being the thin edge of the wedge.

GW Regional Councillor Gary McPhee would also be specifically be sent a short letter explaining our issues and outcomes sought.

Tim Allen/Mark Grace

Carried

Simon Muckley left the meeting at 5.30pm

15. Fish & Game Licence Management System Review

The Council agreed *to move into Public Excluded session* (at 5.30pm)

Martin Taylor/Chris O'Meara

Carried

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting namely the agenda item:

Fish & Game Licence Management System Review

The withholding of information is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by councillors or officers and to maintain legal professional privilege and potentially commercially sensitive information.

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a)(II) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982 which would be prejudiced by the holding of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public

Wellington F&GC move out of committee (at 5.37pm) and that the public be invited to return to the meeting.

Martin Taylor/Chris O'Meara

Carried

16. Rangitikei River Access

Stopping of Paper Road, Taihape - Mr Teal gave an overview of the paper relating to a request for the stopping of a paper road adjoining Potaka Road near Taihape. After discussion it was moved

That Wellington F&GC don't oppose application to stop a paper road if the owner indicates an intent to continue to allow public access on request

Andrew Morris/Tim Allen

Carried

Ngamatea Station Visit Report – Chairman Taylor gave a brief overview of the previously circulated report which had also been sent to NZ Council.

17. Clean Up Fund – Fresh Start for Freshwater

Mr Teal brought to Council's attention the Clean Up Fund applications and probable grant spending focus for the \$5.2 Million for Manawatu River, and \$1.0 Million for Wairarapa lakes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.10pm for dinner and reconvened at 6.55pm.

18. Private Stocking of Farm Ponds

Mr Pilkington gave an overview of the discussion paper which had resulted from a request from a landholder near Masterton. The issues focused on the extent that the trout are available to the public (frequency and type [eg. junior]), and the purchase arrangements for private individuals. Chairman Taylor noted while this was an "in principle discussion", that legality of transfer and charging per fish (and whether only F&GCs can 'purchase' fish)

need to be carefully considered prior to confirmation. Councillor Johnson considered that up to three (3) open days via local club events would provide some additional angler opportunity. It was considered that further information is required in addition to the preliminary discussions.

19. Fish & Game Elections

An election timetable was included for information

20. One Plan Update

Mr Teal confirmed that the hearings relating to the Biodiversity Chapter had concluded and that the Land Chapter had been underway for two days. He reiterated the outstanding dedication and efforts of Corina Jordan to co-ordinate the expert technical witnesses and planners. Council commended her efforts and the outcomes she had already achieved and expressed support for the future hearings.

21. Management Report 1 February – 31 March 2012

Mr Teal gave an overview of the Hautapu River willow clearance with Horizons taking particular care not to repeat the situation that occurred upstream.

Mr Teal confirmed that the didymo checks which are carried out on behalf/in conjunction with Horizons have not turned up any positive cell occurrence results.

Discussion occurred on the Lake Omanu training programme run by Foxton Waterfowlers Club. Staff were requested to ask participants and programme co-ordinators if this was an extra opportunity for waterfowl hunting (given that they may have been introduced to hunting via family or alternative) or an opportunity that they would not have had if not for the programme. It was noted that some hunting programmes in the US focused on graduate students who became the equivalent of regional council staff – in order to give them an appreciation of the hunting experience.

After further brief discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 February – 31 March 2012 be received.

Richard Moore/Brad Johnson

Carried

22. Fish Licence Sales Report as at 30 March 2012

After brief discussion it was moved

It was then moved

The Fish Licence Sales report as at 30 March 2012 be received.

Brad Johnson/Andrew Morris

Carried

Mr Teal briefly explained the interpretation of LEQ change per year sales graph from 1982 to present.

23. Expenditure Report/Financial Transactions

Councillor Cotsilinis requested that projected licence sales be included in financial transactions presented.

After brief discussion it was moved

the Expenditure Report for 29 February 2012 and Financial Transactions for January and February 2012 be approved

Brad Johnson/Strato Cotsilinis

Carried

24. Correspondence/Media

Brief discussion of media reports and adverts regarding an anti-pheasant hunting group in Cambridge alerted to Council by Mitch O'Brien (licenceholders in Auckland/Waikato FG region). Concern was expressed over hearsay accounts that resources were potentially being spent by Auckland/Waikato F&GC to promote/assist this anti-hunting group which would be against statutory obligations.

It was moved

That Wellington F&GC ask NZ Council if Auckland/Waikato F&G region have used any resources to promote or assist an anti-hunting group to stop hunting which F&G statutorily promote.

Martin Taylor/Andrew Morris

Carried

25. General Business

Save NZ Rivers Trust - Chairman Taylor read out a letter from Chairman NZF&GC Matthew Hall seeking regional F&GC support for the Save NZ Rivers Trust. He gave an overview of the Trust, and Mr Hall's request for suggestions of appointments of trustee(s) from each region. After discussion it was agreed to send a letter of support to the Trust. Councillor Neumann undertook to look into the Trust's potential purpose in more detail prior to next Council meeting.

Various Other – Chairman Taylor noted another item of recent correspondence from NZ Council Chairman Matthew Hall:

1. NZ Council functions – suggestion of governors get together
It was agreed to respond positively to this request/suggestion
2. Oath of Office – this item will be deferred until the subsequent meeting
3. Council Elections – encouraging all regions to engender interest to have enough candidates for elections

Wairarapa Moana – Mr Teal related that he and Nic Cudby had recently attended a meeting to discuss and expenditure of grants from the Clean Up Fund for Wairarapa Moana. He indicated that in a presentation by Kahungunu iwi they paid particular note to a 2010 Waitangi Tribunal recommendations relating to a statement made by Premier Richard Seddon in the 1890s noting the importance of the Wairarapa lake fishery and that introduction of acclimatised fish would not be supported/allowed. Mr Teal indicated that the way this was focused on provided some insight into their reluctance to include F&G on a governance group, and that there was a lot of work to do in developing a relationship moving forward.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.15pm.

Next Meeting to be held: to be confirmed, Masterton Cosmopolitan Club, Masterton, Wednesday 13 June 2012, at 3.00pm

Chairman _____ Date _____