

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 3.15PM AT COACHMAN HOTEL, 140 FITZHERBERT AVENUE, PALMERSTON NORTH

1. **Present:**

Chairman Paul Dewar. Councillors Jim Cook, Don Scott, Malcolm Francis, Steve Brown, Prof. Stephen Haslett, Andrew McGregor, Jennifer Yanko, Richard McIntyre.

Video Link Councillors: John Hancock.

In Attendance:

Fish and Game Staff: Phil Teal,

Licence Holders: Graeme Stevenson

Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda

Chairman Dewar opened the meeting and extended a welcome to all councillors, staff, and licence holder(s).

2. **Apologies:**

It was noted that apologies were received from:

Councillors Aaron Passey, Colin Shore

Staff: Ami Coughlan. Dr Matt Kavermann, Hamish Carnachan

It was moved

that apologies be accepted

Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook

Carried

3. **Conflict of Interest**

The Conflicts of Interest Register was discussed. Councillors updated their conflicts of interest as follows:

- Councillor Haslett noted that he was no longer a member of Environmental Health Intelligence NZ consultancy and research group.
- Councillor McIntyre noted that he was no longer Chair of the NZ Dairy Industry Awards Trust.
- Chairman Dewar noted that he was no longer the President of the Sports Fly Fishing NZ.

It was then moved that

The Conflicts of Interest Register be updated accordingly to record the change in status of Councillors on various Trusts and Committees.

Don Scott/Andrew McGregor

Carried

Mr Teal confirmed that the Conflict-of-Interest register would be updated, and Conflict of Interest Management Plan would also be updated with the removal of the conflicts of interest declarations.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 12 December 2023:

Following consideration of the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish and Game Council of 12 December 2023 it was moved that ***the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 12 December 2023 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

Steve Brown/Malcolm Francis

Carried

5. Matters Arising:

Councillor Scott referred to the minutes of the previous meeting noting comments regarding the Future Finance and Future Structure Working Groups established by NZ Council – and sought assurances that NZ Council remain in touch with the regional views when objectively looking at the future purpose of NZ Council. This included consideration of centralisation of functions suggesting: for example one common system of accounting to be managed and consolidated and this includes common accounting procedures which need review. He noted little had progressed on this despite being identified in recommendations as a potential outcome to drive organisational efficiency and reducing duplication. It was clarified that there had been proposals discussed to look at establishing a common auditor and reporting procedures, but this had not been confirmed or progressed to date.

Councillor Scott referred to the minutes of the previous meeting regarding Health and Safety insurance – with it reiterated that current law does not permit individuals or entities to insure against incidents – although some offerings can cover legal fees and reparation payments (but excludes fines imposed by the Court).

Councillor Scott referred to the role of NZ Council with its coordination function and being able to move organisation forward. He expressed frustration at there not being enough momentum for change. He considered that the Minister needs to provide clearer direction and expectation of change and potentially make stronger decisions to enable the organisation to move forward.

Councillor Haslett considered that there are efforts being made to make changes from NZ Council's influence but conceded only Wellington and Taranaki are the only regions considering an amalgamation or shared resource arrangements.

Councillor Francis questioned whether the issues around organisational governance had changed since the Ministerial Review as there are still examples of poor outcomes. He noted that Fish and Game had been considering responses to the Ministerial Review for nearly three years and he postulated that Fish and Game were approaching a point that a decision will be made on the organisation's behalf and it might result in decisions being made that Fish and Game do not prefer and support. This may result in outcomes that are not in the best interests of licence holders.

Councillor McIntyre noted that a key contributor to organisational inertia for change has been the reliance on an approach of seeking for consensus rather than majority - by trying to bring all entities with to agree to an approach or paradigm. This provided a relatively easy opportunity to block meaningful change.

Councillor Scott referred to the minutes of the previous meeting regarding the streamlining of processes for getting information to licence holders via regulation books and confirmed his support for retention of availability of the regulations in hard copy form.

Councillor Scott supported the consideration of a 'senior's licence' rather than a 'senior loyal' licence category in the review of licence offerings to remove ambiguity of eligibility. He also referred to the additional consideration being proposed for options for woman's fishing licence options to promote diversity of participation.

Mr Teal was requested to follow up with NZ Council as to whether policy had been considered to charge for permits and processing (as do DOC and other Government Departments) to ensure a consistent approach amongst regions if that option to charge is being pursued.

6. New Zealand Fish and Game Council Business

Councillor Haslett reiterated that the change in Government was being reflected in some fundamental changes in approach including the new position of Minister of Hunting and Fishing and this will change how Fish and Game links to the Government.

Councillor McIntyre noted there was increased uncertainty as to what the changes would mean across multiple portfolios.

After brief further discussion it was moved that

***The report from Wellington Council's appointee Councillor Haslett
on NZ Fish and Game Council business and meetings be received***

Malcolm Francis/Richard McIntyre

Carried

7. Ministerial Review of Fish and Game Governance

Chairman Dewar provided a brief update of progress made to reflecting recommendations made in the Ministerial Review.

• **Update of Meetings with Regional Chairs**

Chairman Dewar provided an overview of a recent online meeting to discuss how governors would deal with the upcoming contestable funding process – with discussions ending in an indeterminate conclusion. There was a suggestion that Chairs would become part of the process by having an opportunity to advocate for regional contestable funding applications and confine management recommendations to commentary on operational and technical basis. The Chairs were uncertain about what mandate they have to make organisational budgetary decisions anyway and how their involvement would add value to the process and any influence would be based on advocating for their own regional budget proposals.

Chairman Dewar noted that the discussions focused on the whole budgeting process and were seeking that more emphasis on governors setting the final budgets rather than relying on the perceived managerial advice dominating decision making for budgets.

Chairman Dewar confirmed that the most important topics relating to structural and financial changes were now going to be discussed at the governors' forum scheduled for 17 February 2024. Discussion occurred on the following topics:

1. Carrying on with the intent of the Ministerial Review including considering amalgamation of councils (with three feasible options). Deliberations focused on getting a majority of opinion to move forward rather than relying on a consensus approach – else the organisation would be risking a move from the Minister that could be heavy handed to break the impasse and from recent experience there is rarely universal agreement on approach.
2. All licence sales to be considered 'national' sales and collected and dispersed from a central account to remove the perceptions and tension of larger regions objecting to "their" money being collected as a levy for redistribution. There also needs to be consideration of

(Cash) Reserve Management and revising policy associated with this as there is currently no reward for managing budgets well.

3. Standardising corporate policies and regulations – including all HR, Health and Safety approaches, accounting and audit processing to be consider – as centralising some of these functions will be more cost efficient and give consistency to address weaknesses of the federal system.

Councillor McIntyre didn't advocate for a predominant change from a federal model to a centralised organisational model – as still making decisions at a regional level is best for regional licence holders and acknowledged that there are often good reasons behind different approaches being undertaken in each region.

Councillor Brown considered that in order to deal with the amalgamation issues that NZ Council be encouraged to get a 70-75% majority compliance ('super majority') then proceed with implementation of changes.

Councillor Scott considered that the Minister should be able to exercise authority following guidance from NZ Council's providing advice to the Minister indicating a majority support for organisational changes to provide enough legitimacy for action. Councillor McIntyre noted that if the Minister gets well-reasoned and good advice with considerable organisational support then it is more likely that the Minister will implement such. There are still opportunities to advocate for retention of regional autonomy rather than full centralised approach but changes will inevitably modify the current model. Discussion ensued on other organisations that have had similar debates and tensions regarding centralisation of management functions and coordination roles which meets resistance to fears of potential depowering of decision-making.

Councillor Francis noted that the current focus of South Island Councils that emphasise the narrative of licence sales dominance from South Island regions fail to take into consideration the effect on the Taupo licence on North Island licence sales in total.

Further discussion ensued on options to centralise the funding model with inherent risks associated with control of decision-making of budgets, and the options of centralisation of common corporate policies while retaining a national federal structure.

Discussion ensued on NZ Council taking over common regional functions through centralisation of that function and how the funding model would

be adjusted accordingly. Councillor Haslett note that regional Fish and Game Councils should have common and similar methods of operations (including monitoring), common standards in approach, and similar expectations of outcomes for licence holders. Councillor McIntyre noted that there should be some common policies for all regions that should be adopted – and if there is variance in policy then it should be justified for taking a different approach.

Chairman Dewar noted that the Minister had informally indicated no appetite for a licence fee increase – essential a licence fee freeze – meaning that if cost increases due to inflation must be absorbed.

It was noted that the topic of recommendations of changes to governance and appointee representation from the Ministerial Review had not been addressed in detail by the organisation – with focus appearing to be on operational efficiencies rather than governance changes. Councillor Scott noted that politically we risk replicating that DoC model by reducing representation (e.g. a Conservation Board approach) and thereby risk further disconnection with licence holders. It was further noted that the issue of paid and voluntary governance contributions had not been widely discussed and remains unresolved.

Councillor Francis expressed frustration in the current structural arrangement providing poor governance results and constraints in leadership in order to get momentum to change and modernise practices. He noted that licence holders had essentially lost interest in the political inertia that existed and were still seeking to get best representation and value to be able to hunt and fish. This increased the risk of iwi being able to further justify pushing Fish and Game governance and resource management responsibilities aside.

Discussion continued on the need to maintain licence holder representation, and also maintain an appropriate skill set which might require use of appointees but retaining a majority of elected governors. It was again recognised that there should be ability for majority decision to move issues forward as the power to holds things up rested with a minority opinion/position.

Councillor McGregor expressed the urgency required to resolve direction of change required and that the organisation must find a way to move forward or else someone will move us forward. This sentiment was concurred with by other councillors.

Councillor McGregor noted that from his observations that the licence fee was approaching a price sensitive point for an increasing number of licence holders – which obviously affects the total licence sales and income. He considered that the price might need to plateau to increase value perceptions – this was related to cost management / reductions to take into account inflationary increases. He noted that currently many participants are considering hunting and fishing as a discretionary activity which may be limited to around 2-6 days per year and they need to get a better perceived value of experience accordingly. Councillor Haslett provided further insight into purchase behaviours around what licence holders are prepared to pay and what do they get for their dollar [value perceptions].

Councillor Brown reiterated previous comments by considering trying to change the focus and perception of a 'licence' rather than a management fee.

8. Public Forum

No specific issues were discussed. Mr Stevenson outlined his experience as a governor from experiences in Northland Fish and Game Council. He acknowledged the value and support of consultation regarding liability insurance for governors.

He noted that NZ Council and Minister of Hunting and Fishing needed to be aware of the risk of DoC officials wanting to absorb Fish and Game functions or their officials having the ability to have meaningful input into Fish and Game's future.

He further commented on and gave support to the campaigns for reinforcing social license for Fish and Game and the activities undertaken by hunters and anglers. He also suggested having a particular awareness of how to engage with iwi views that may influence the long-term governance and management of native waterfowl species.

9. Health and Safety Reporting – December 2023 to January 2024

Mr Teal confirmed that he had held the Health and Safety meetings of weekly frequency (less frequent over January with annual leave and field work commitments), and also provide an opportunity for more regular and timely health and safety discussions/updates.

It was moved that

Council receives the Health and Safety Report for December 2023 and January 2024

Steve Brown/Don Scott

Carried

10. Recommendations for the 2024 Game Season Notice – Confirmation

A. Recommendations for 2024 Game Season

Council considered the report presented by staff on the recommendations for season bag limits, duration, and special hunting conditions for each game bird species. Mr Teal noted that provisional approval was given via email by 31 January 2024 by Council and that these recommendations needed to be formally confirmed at this meeting. These recommendations needed to be finalised by 1 February 2024 for consideration by Department of Conservation officials prior to Ministerial approval – with justification provided for reasons for the changes recommended with supporting documentation.

One significant change to be considered for 2024 Season Conditions is inclusion of an area specified for Upland Game Property with Special Conditions.

Councillor Hancock noted that the proposed Upland Game Property operations in the Wairarapa would be positive for pheasant populations in the area, but this will supplement numbers in the locality and surrounds.

It was then moved that

Council confirm the recommendations made to to the Minister of Conservation (via NZ Council) for the 2024 Game Season for the Wellington Region – that was forwarded before 1 February 2024.

Jim Cook/Richard McIntyre

Carried

11. Legislative and Policy Review Considerations

Mr Teal provided an update on progress (or delay) in implementing the legislative reviews programme including repealing of some current legislation.

A. Wildlife Act 1953 – Review announced by Minister of Conservation

On 9 September 2023 the Minister of Conservation announced that the review would formally commence and that key dates in March 2024 that consultation on high level objectives that form the basis of legislation development would be undertaken.

A change in the Minister of Conservation will change the focus, priority, and timetable of any review, but there is still internal momentum from the Department on this workstream.

B. Resource Management Legislation Review

Key elements:

- Natural and Built Environment Act was repealed in December 2023
- NPS-FM 2020 timetable and emphasis under review by Minister for the Environment.
- Fast Track Consenting Act being actively developed and foreshadowed for introduction to Parliament under urgency for regionally and nationally important infrastructure projects.

C. Developing a programme of policy review relating to governance and operational policy.

Mr Teal confirmed that work was continuing on developing regionally consistent policy. He further noted that this will include development of national policy, and a template approach for regional adoption on good contemporary policy. This includes HR policies, Health and Safety policies, governance policies, and other operational policies. These will be presented to Wellington Council at each meeting as they are progressed.

12. Regional Strategic Statement Development Summary

Council discussed the purpose of defining strategic statements and how Wellington Council can give effect to implementing the organisational strategy from a regional perspective. This involves confirming strategic statements that can be used in outcome accounting and auditing for 2024/2025 financial year. The definition of strategic statements also required defining broad objectives would be also defined to allow for measurables by auditor processes. This allows for assessment of inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts – which is the modern approach to reporting the effectiveness of actions and financial efficiency in achieving meaningful outcomes (for the licence holders and wider public).

After considerable consideration of the organisation's strategic document and various approaches that could be taken, Mr Teal was directed to develop some draft strategic statements based on the organisation's strategic objective statements.

13. Draft Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan and Strategic Projects

Mr Teal confirmed that NZ Council is developing a contemporary template for developing Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plans – which has resulted in deferral of consultation on existing draft until this is completed.

Other Strategic Projects

A. Developing workshop for Iwi engagement plan for Wellington Iwi

Mr Teal acknowledged that this needs to be progressed in this year and will require a working group to scope what should be covered and if external advice is required to supplement in-house capabilities. This is a regional response to some advisory work on Mana Whenua engagement undertaken by Kahu Environmental (co-ordinated by NZ Council). Discussion and shared which supported in principle that Fish and Game put together a list of every iwi grouping that we should interact with.

B. Developing Workshop for Simplifying Setting Regulations

Mr Teal provided an overview discussion paper Simplifying Freshwater Sports Fishing Regulations (dated 1 February 2024) formulated by Mr Teal following discussions with Councillor Brown.

Wider Organisation Approach

It is acknowledged that to achieve a consistent approach across all regions, a proposal needs to be developed that establishes the basic principles of regulations and compliance in fisheries management.

Several regions are now actively assessing their approach to regulation simplification with a view to rationalising regulations across the country. Ideally all Fish and Game Councils would be proactive in rationalising regulations in their respective regions – at a management and governance level – to be able to achieve meaningful rationalisation.

However, there are several examples in the past where attempts to simplify regulations have been met by intense resistance from anglers and governors – so there needs to be an approach that has wide acceptance.

A proposal for rationalisation of regulations will be developed for NZ Council and all Fish and Game regions to consider – identifying the key principles used to set regulations and applying them consistently in each individual region.

Wellington Fish and Game Council Perspective

Councillor Brown has provided input and perspective as a governor to start discussions within Wellington and Taranaki regions on the relevance of various regulations. This will involve working from key principles of what each regulation is trying to achieve, the regulation effectiveness, and does do they make an actual or perceived difference?

Purpose of Regulations

The purpose of the regulations relates to two broad purposes:

1. Species Management for Sustainable Harvest:

- When does harvest pressure result in additive mortality to the population?
 - Number of fish able to be harvested – what is reasonable/ when harvest pressure affect the population.
 - Size of fish – selecting large fish, limiting small fish that won't be eaten.
 - Sensitive fisheries – what specific factors make some fisheries sensitive to harvest pressure.
 - Temperature of water - catch and release practices.
 - Slot limits that select for genetic robustness
 - Timing – to protect spawning fish.

2. Promoting Ethical Practices Consistent with Traditional Values and Wider Public Acceptance

- This reflects customs and traditional values of freshwater angling including culture, customs, ethics, etiquette, formality of methods and protocols, and reflection of local customary lore developed over many decades
 - Method – Flyfishing / spin fishing / bait fishing / reel and running line
 - Method - number of rods
 - Method – types of hooks – treble hooks, single hooks, barbless hooks
 - Restriction of waters to specific methods
 - Promotion of unique fishing opportunities (bucket list fisheries)
 - Catch and Release practice – ethical treatment of fish,

Progressing Further Discussions

Management Level

Discussion of issues by Fish and Game regional management to rationalise regulatory approaches.

How do we best present the information to licence holders – e.g. electronic presentation of regulations per waterbody as well as Regulation Book which is not 'user friendly'.

Governance Level

Discussion by governors on all the different nuances in regions – Critically look at regulation complexity - why do the regulations exist and are they still effective?

14. Licence Management System – Update on performance

Mr Teal noted that the Licencing Operational Group is considering providing a bi-monthly report on the functioning of the Licence Management System by ESL Ltd – and will update on the progress of contract obligations being fulfilled (bug fixes and material functionalities to complete).

Wellington Fish and Game Council is a signatory to the contract (as one of 13 entities) and should have an awareness of progress to comply with contract obligations, and general performance of the system.

A. Update on Licence Management System

The system has been operating with no significant failures or significant faults. The contract for service provision with ESL is transitioning from ‘development’ phase to ‘operational’ phase. A list of bugs and other contractual requirements such as development of booking systems will be required before Fish and Game signs of the ‘development’ aspect of the contract.

There are two other functionalities – Designated Water function and Salmon Fishing Endorsement Licence - that have been developed and are in operation.

It was then moved that

Council to receive the Update Report on the Licence Management System for November and December 2023.

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

15. R3 MARKETING UPDATE

Mr Teal provided an overview of the activities undertaken for the early and mid-summer part of the 2023/2024 Fishing Season.

This included:

- Magazine articles completed for Game Magazine 2024
- Fishing Pre Summer Newsletter sent in November 2023
- Assisting NZ Council to co-ordinate Magazine preparation with new provider (note this is a potential one-off production by provider – debate on continuation of magazine is active)
- Email to all previous fish season licence holders not yet purchased (potential lapsed participants) and re-engage with Wellington anglers prior to Wellington Anniversary weekend and prior to Waitangi Weekend
- Weekly Angling Lowdown prior to season and each week in season – includes Taranaki Region

Discussion ensued on ensuring the Weekly Angling Lowdown provided a fair and reasonable expectation of fishing opportunities to maintain credibility.

One factor that needed additional consideration was water temperatures that were getting extremely high in some reaches. It was confirmed that the purpose of the weekly report was firstly to provide information to current licence holders (to add perceived value of service)]– rather than as a primary tool to attract more or new participants to the pursuit.

16. Communications

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the key recent communication actions including Press Releases for – Family Fishing Days and opportunities in the Lower Ruamahanga River.

Further discussion ensued on potentially highlighting other opportunities such as perch fishing at Marton Reservoir – which was proving popular amongst local anglers.

Mr Teal also confirmed the arrangements with NZ Council that have Mr Carnachan currently contracted to assist NZ Council with:

- preparation of press releases for NZ Council CE
- assisting in larger projects related to social licence campaign
- coordinating the Game Magazine

17. Regional Planning Updates

Mr Teal provided an update of the four regional planning processes that Wellington Fish and Game Council is actively engaged in:

A. Horizons – One Plan – Plan Change 2 Appeal Update

An update was be provided on the PC2 Appeal - risk matrix development using GMP (Good Management Practices) and reliance on Overseer nitrogen loss estimates with the inherent uncertainties involved in deriving these figures and using them in a regulatory context. The hearing reconvened on 7 February 2024 and was adjourned after five further days of hearings until April 2024.

A decision is still required on scope – then whether the Overseer Model is fit for purpose in for confirming as a regulation and assess whether the untried Risk Matrix is a useful tool for informing regulation.

B. Horizons Regional Council – Freshwater Futures (Oranga Wai) Update

It was noted that engagement with stakeholders for defining values and expectations on water quantity limits and water quality limits was still actively being undertaken – although deadlines for drafting Plan Changes is now indeterminate in relation to timing of implementation of NPS-FM 2020.

C. GWRC – Plan Change 1 Regional Policy Statement

It was noted that the Hearing Stream to recognise the protection of trout habitat had been conducted in November 2023 and that evidence had been developed to present information on indigenous ecosystems to be held in mid-February 2024.

D. Regional Plan Approach for NPS FM 2020 Implementation

It was noted that NZ Council are continuing to develop an RM Strategy which should provide some guidance on multiple regions undertaking plan changes, and that Practice Notes (position statements) are being developed on a range of topics.

E. GWRC - Plan Change 1 – Natural Resources Plan (Regional Plan)

Mr Teal confirmed that submissions had been made to the GWRC on the Plan Changes to give effect to Waitua Recommendations for Porirua and Wellington Catchments (mostly supportive).

18. Western Region Resource Consent Applications

Mr Teal provided a brief update on the following projects:

A. GWRC: Otaki and Waikanae River Catchments – no progress had been made with iwi engagement

B. GWRC and Consortium: Hutt River – RiverLink project

Mr Teal confirmed that this was a substantial project intended to recontour the Hutt River for about two kilometres near Melling Bridge and that it would likely progress in the near future. Dr Kavermann had presented a report on trout population counts over the affected areas undertaken in October 2023 - prior to commencement of works, with some additional comments requested for clarification.

C. Horizons: Oroua and Pohangina River Management Investigation

Mr Teal reiterated the background to Horizons Regional Council's project proposal that received funding (\$300K) to look at various options for future management options for the two catchments. Consideration will be given to better incorporating the natural geomorphological form and incorporating wetlands into the rural landscape. He further confirmed that there would be:

- Establishment of governance group to oversee research and development of options.
- Support was provided by the community members present to continue and support the project.

19. Lake Wairarapa Update

A. Treaty Settlement update

Mr Teal reiterated that the Transfer of Land Titles and establishment of Statutory Reserve Board officially occurred on 7 March 2023, but there was still progress in processing the land transfers and clarification of processes by which the Board operates.

The intention is for Fish and Game to attend as an observer in the public meeting of the first official meeting of the Statutory Reserve Board – date not yet confirmed.

B. Jobs for Nature Project Management – Wairarapa Moana Research Funding and Restoration Plan

Mr Teal noted that GWRC staff were continuing to manage the Jobs for Nature project that focused on planting of trees on margins. It was uncertain on how or if these responsibilities would be transferred to the new Statutory Reserve Board.

It was then moved that

Council receive the Update Report on Lake Wairarapa management activities and issues, and associated governance arrangements

Malcolm Francis/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

20. Research Update

Mr Teal updated Council on various research issues and projects:

- A. **E-DNA Project** - Massey University researchers have completed a manuscript outlining the protocols for sampling ready for field trials and use for sampling river water samples to sample environmental DNA (eDNA) and nuclearDNA for brown and rainbow trout in spawning streams.
- B. **Native Fish – Trout Interaction** – Ami Coughlan has prepared a manuscript for journal publication with Dr Canning – but still required final review from an additional co-author before submission. Councillor Haslett encouraged staff to get this published with urgency to ensure it is not relegated to grey literature status and then overwhelmed by other social science-based publications that will result during policy development considerations from the Fish Futures project being co-ordinated by Cawthron Institute.

- C. Effects of Climate Change on Trout Fisheries in NZ** – Dr Canning has completed his assessment and draft of a manuscript suitable for publishing. Dr Canning undertook an assessment using NIWA hydrological modelling to assess effects of climate change (rainfall events intensity and frequency) and its effect on trout and native fish in New Zealand.
- D. Research Strategy being developed by NZ Council** – Councillor Haslett updated Council on the refining and development of a robust research strategy – including processes for competitive applications and provider offerings. He further indicated that there needed to be a consideration of providing information on regional needs (which was last updated in 2019). It was noted that Terms of Reference for the Research Committee were drafted along with a strategy document outlining a process for considering project priorities – with a timeline taking into account the annual funding allocation processes.

21. Licence Holder Engagement

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of initiatives and fishing events to engage with potential and existing licence holders, including a summary of the events:

Wellington: Capital Trout Centre – Children’s Open Days

Marton: Marton Reservoir – Family fishing opportunities that are still publicised locally

Palmerston North: Hokowhitu Lagoon – still fishing occurring with no unforeseen mortalities noted.

Women on the Fly: Event held at Turangi but supported by Fish and Game – with further follow up and support events planned by the organisers in the Wellington region.

Councillor Brown asked about the measures of success for such events. Councillor Scott noted that this was an investment in future anglers and providing an opportunity for success and support – and acknowledged the need for assessing efficacy. Councillor Francis noted that there was an increase in interest in freshwater fishing as a result of organised days with some increase in local club members as a direct result. Mr Teal noted that these activities also needed to be considered in terms of increasing social license and increasing Fish and Game visibility in the local community.

It was moved to

Receive the Update Report on efforts to encourage licence holder engagement and participation

Steve Brown/Don Scott

Carried

22. **Access Issues – Update**

Mr Teal noted that staff were seeking formal confirmation of continuance of hunting at these sites:

- Otaki River (Hunting) – Fish and Game management of hunters
- Baring Head (Hunting) – Fish and Game management of hunters
- Waitarere Forest (Hunting) – Fish and Game management of hunters
- Santoft Forest (Hunting) – Fish and Game management of hunters
- Pencarrow Lakes (Hunting) – Fish and Game management of hunters
- Erindale Forest (Hunting) – Fish and Game management of hunters

It was moved to

Receive the Update Report on active access permissions and issues

Malcolm Francis/Andrew McGregor

Carried

23. **24. Management Report – 1 December 2023 – 31 January 2024**

Mr Teal clarified the following specific points in report:

- Implementation of the recommendations of the GWRC Whaitua – Porirua, Ruamahanga, Wellington
- Habitat Mapping Project – Dr Adam Canning to provide service to map trout fish habitat and spawning sites for use in advocacy.

Discussion ensued on the effects of flushing water releases from the Moawhanga Dam on reaches of the Rangitikei River below Springvale – and the negative temporary scouring effects on trout habitat.

It was then moved that

Council receive the Management Report for period 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024

Jim Cook/Don Scott

Carried

Mr Teal noted that he was in the process of changing the style of report to provide a more concise overview of work undertaken and be focused on reporting operational activities in line with the financial reporting periods for each two-month period.

24. **Fishing Licence And Game Licence Sales**

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of licence sales (up to 29 January 2024) and referred to cumulative licence sales (and differential) compared to last year.

Fishing Licence Sales

Key Point – 2023/2024 fish licence sales LEQs down 61 LEQ compared to previous year [2622 v 2561] as at 29 January 2024.

It was then moved that

Council receive report on Licence Sales for Fish Licences 2023/2024 Season as at 29 January 2024.

Malcolm Francis/Steve Haslett

Carried

25. Expenditure Report / Financial Transactions

Mr Teal provided an overview of information noted in the dashboard, and referred to supporting documentation. Councillor Scott noted the cash deficit that occurred due to NZ Council authorising expenditure from reserves for funding the RM case on Plan Change 2 of Horizon's One Plan hearings at the Environment Court.

It was then moved that

Council Receive and Accept the Expenditure Reports to 31 December 2023 and Financial Transactions for November and December 2023.

Don Scott/Malcolm Francis

Carried

26. Correspondence / Media

The following specific item was briefly considered:

- **Media: Repeal of legislation anticipated (and confirmed) as result of coalition agreement of new Government.**

It was moved to

receive the correspondence and media items

Malcolm Francis/Don Scott

Carried

27. Recognition And Contribution Awards

None presented and no further nominations received.

28. Wellington Conservation Board Liaison

It was further noted that there had been a change in the composition of the Conservation Board (as a routine refreshing of members).

It was further noted that the next Conservation Board meeting was scheduled for 16 and 17 February 2024 in Palmerston North, but no agenda has been provided or posted on website.

It was agreed that staff would continue efforts to maintain contact with the Conservation Board with a view to discussing any issues of mutual interest.

Councillor Cook noted that the Taranaki Conservation Board was keen to engage with Fish and Game to meet the responsibilities of working with Fish and Game noted in the Conservation Act.

29. General Business

There were no specific items of general business, and there being no further business the meeting closed at 6.07pm

Next Meeting to be held: Meeting on Tuesday, 19 March 2024 at Club Wairarapa, 20 Essex Street, Masterton at 3.00pm.

Chairman_____ Date_____