

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday 29 February commencing at 11am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: D. Cocks

Councillors: G. Avery, A. Kerr, P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, S. Smith, E. Williamson, G. Annan,
N. Juby

Staff: B. Wilson, J. Dyer, J. Shaw, A. Daniel.

Visitors: P. Hardy (DOC), R. Foster

1. APOLOGIES

M. Young, W. Howard, D. Klee

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Annan/Smith - CARRIED

The chairman welcomed Jane Shaw (RMA Officer) to her first council meeting. The chairman also welcomed visitors Paul Hardy and Dick Foster.

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 14 DECEMBER 2019:

It was agreed that Ben Moore had not attended the previous meeting.

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 14 December 2019, as amended, be accepted as a true and correct record.

Smith/Kerr - CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

In reply to a question, Mr Wilson stated that he had not yet investigated the rights of contractors regarding access and the potential to impose bonds.

Mr Shaw stated that he had been contacted by DOC Wellington regarding his query on Blue Ducks and was pleased with the response. He thanked Paul Hardy for his efforts on this.

Councillors thanked Paul Hardy for his regular attendance at council meetings on behalf of the Department of Conservation.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

Emails were tabled from:

Graham Pyatt, Anne and Kevin Julian thanking Adam Daniel for his professionalism in their recent encounters with him while trout fishing. Councillors agreed that this was excellent feedback and great for the image of Fish & Game. Councillor Annan also expressed his appreciation for the professionalism shown by David Klee with his interactions with hunters and their families during the recent duck banding days in the Waikato.

It was agreed that the remaining correspondence be considered in committee when discussing the New Zealand Fish & Game Council meeting of 14th and 15th February 2020.

It was moved;

that all correspondence be accepted.

Annan/Shaw - CARRIED

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

Mr Dyer was asked why the number of ducks banded was low at some sites. He replied that there were problems with turkeys and with neighbouring properties feeding out.

Mr Dyer was asked about the King Country trend count. He replied that numbers were near the threshold and the data/report would be provided at the next council meeting.

Mr Wilson reported that they would be advising licence holders in the preseason newsletter that a special season in the King Country was likely in 2021. Councillor Kerr enquired as to whether the hunt would be for junior hunters only, but in reply it was agreed that the thresholds applied only to the length of the season.

Mr Foster spoke on his considerable concern regarding the ongoing botulism outbreak in the Hauraki Plains. He thanked David Klee for his effort in coordinating a response to the outbreaks, which was the worst Mr Foster had seen in the 66 years he had hunted in this area. He noted that it was also affecting birds in the Kōpuatai Peat Dome. Mr Foster had

been carrying out weekly sweeps of the Piako River, which he described as an absolute sewer and the carnage was shocking. He would have liked to see more councillors involved.

Councillor Shane Smith agreed that the situation was terrible but noted that there had been councillor involvement and that he had spent the last three weekends assisting with cleaning up dying birds. The Upper Piako Management Group had also been actively involved.

Mr Foster stressed his concern that DOC had not met their responsibilities for controlling the outbreak and had a long history of not adequately managing wetlands on the Plains.

Mr Foster was thanked by the chairman for his comments.

After further discussion it was moved;

that staff report back to council on whether effort should be diverted from the banding programme to controlling botulism outbreaks.

Cooks/Juby - CARRIED

Mr Wilson informed councillors that staff were preparing for several hearings concerning discharges from wastewater treatment plants including the Open Country Dairy factory discharge into the Piako catchment. He recommended that Council considers using funds from the non-resident levy to employ external water quality experts to provide supporting evidence. Because the non-resident levy was placed in a discretionary fund, there was a process involving consultations with the other Fish & Game regions and the New Zealand Fish & Game Council to gain approval for the use of these reserves.

Mr Wilson emphasised that the standard of recent submission prepared by staff was very high, especially due to the efforts and expertise of Jane Shaw and Anna Sintenie. However, they had been at a disadvantage in recent hearings in not having access to independent experts.

It was moved;

that council applies to the New Zealand Fish & Game Council for up to \$20,000 from the Auckland/Waikato non-resident fund for the funding of water quality experts to assist in RMA advocacy work.

Williamson/Annan - CARRIED

Mr Foster left the meeting at 12:06pm.

Councillor Annan informed the meeting that there was no notification about the recent Northern Paradise Shelduck season on the Fish & Game website. Mr Wilson apologised for this oversight and briefly commented on the issues with using the website.

Councillor Juby agreed that the website had problems, and this was acknowledged by the New Zealand Fish & Game council and would be addressed.

In reply to a question, Dr Daniel updated councillors on the access issues to the upper Whakapapa River noting that the CE of NZFGC, Martin Taylor, had been very helpful on this matter.

It was moved;

that the Chief Executive's bi-monthly report to be accepted.

Smith/Annan - CARRIED

Mr Wilson introduced the financial report emphasising that a budget deficit was likely due to the renovations of the office complex.

It was moved;

that the financial report be accepted.

Smith/Annan - CARRIED

The meeting rose for lunch at 12:30pm and resumed at 1pm.

7. NZF&G Strategic Communications Plan:

The draft NZ Council communications strategy was tabled.

The spokesperson policy was discussed and each point accepted or rejected as noted below:

- Coordinate all media activity through the NZC Comms Team. **Rejected**
- Empower the Chief Executive of the NZC to serve as official spokesperson on public policy issues and in appropriate high-profile media opportunities, and, where appropriate, the South Island and North Island Communication Advisors. **Rejected**
- Agree that only the Chief Executive and the NZC Comms Team, or staff nominated by them (either generally or on particular matters), may provide official comment to the media on behalf of Fish & Game New Zealand and the New Zealand Fish and Game Council. On matters related to governance, the New Zealand Fish and Game Chairperson may speak to the media on behalf of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council. **Rejected**
- Where an issue or topic is run by the NZC, in the first instance the NZC takes the lead on responding. Regions are empowered to localise these issues after talking with the NZC Comms team. **Rejected**
- NZC office has authority to take over any regional media engagement if it's in the national interest. **Rejected**

- NZC office will maintain a nationwide network of media Spokespersons, who represent Fish & Game in regional media markets and on topics of expertise who are invited by the NZC Office to speak on campaigns as needed – e.g. Fish & Game scientists, regional experts, managers etc. **Rejected**
- NZC office will organise an training program for Spokespersons including media training. **Accepted**
- NZFGC office will provide media relations guidance and support to the regional Fish & Game Councils. **Accepted**

The media policy was discussed and each point accepted or rejected as noted below:

- Fish & Game New Zealand has a strong commitment to no surprises – regions do not engage with media without first informing NZC Comms Team, and the NZC Comms Team keeps regions informed in advance of its media activity, particularly when its media activity has a regional focus. **Rejected**
- Regions are empowered to comment on and issue media statements on local issues subject to checking in with the NZC Comms team before commenting. **Accepted**
- All media enquiries relating to Fish & Game New Zealand policies, operations and issues received by a staff member or a region must be directed to the NZC Comms team, who will, in consultation with the NZC and/or the regional Manager/Chief Executive, where appropriate, determine a spokesperson to address the enquiry. This spokesperson is then responsible for coordinating the gathering of relevant information and communicating with the media. The roles of spokespeople are further outlined in the spokesperson policy above. **Rejected**
- Any staff member or region who becomes aware of an issue or event that has the potential to impact significantly on the NZC and Fish & Game New Zealand’s reputation or stakeholder relationships must immediately notify the NZC Comms team. The staff member must not make any comment to the media, even if it is the media who have alerted him or her to the issue/event. The NZC Comms Team will then follow the above policy to determine who the spokesperson should be. **Rejected**
- The research by Fish & Game scientists is a critical element in underpinning the credibility of what the organisation says on various issues. It also provides valuable opportunities for proactive media. Fish & Game Comms team will ensure it keeps exploring opportunities to better harness the research. **Accepted**
- Fish & Game New Zealand is committed to following its style guide attached in appendix one **Accepted (but concerns over American spelling style)**

The digital/social media policy was discussed and each point accepted or rejected as noted below:

- Fish & Game New Zealand runs Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn pages. **Accepted**
- Fish & Game national communications advisors alongside the Business Development Manager manages all social media engagement. Regional staff will get access to the pages for local posts in line with the digital and social media strategy. **Rejected**
- all digital channels will be managed centrally **Rejected**
- only one facebook page to operate (similarly for any other channels), regions to only post approved content **Rejected**
- Social media guidelines for the type of content that can be posted, and to which channel and an approval process for content will be developed and a commitment to a weekly content schedule which will be circulated and discussed **Accepted**
- Fish & Game New Zealand notes that influencers can play a part in carrying Fish & Game's messages through their own channels and through earned media. Identifying anglers and hunters with profile would help Fish & Game expand those who can talk on their issues, particularly through blogs and opinion pieces. Most importantly, influencers strengthen Fish & Game's voice so help get greater cut through. The NZC is committed to investigating how to develop Fish & Game 'ambassadors' to provide a fresh voice on issues. **Accepted**

Mr Wilson updated councillors on current policy, which was that all media releases, including social media, had to be approved by either himself or the chairman. He noted for example that David Klee had obtained his approval before posting on Facebook about the recent botulism outbreak.

Councillors emphasised their lack of confidence in the national office to competently handle regional media issues, especially given the considerable adverse impact of recent media campaigns on the relationship between Fish & Game and the local rural community.

It was moved;

that the NZF&GC be informed of Councils concerns with the draft communication strategy.

Cocks/Juby - CARRIED

Mr Hardy left the meeting at 2:05pm.

8. OSH REPORT:

Mr Wilson summarised the OSH report and noted that staff were considering options for dealing with the potential coronavirus epidemic.

It was moved;
that the OSH report be accepted.

Smith/Kerr - CARRIED

9. NZF&GC Meeting 14th and 15th February 2020

The meeting moved into committee at 2:05pm.

It was moved;
that Council moves into public excluded meeting

Smith/Annan - CARRIED

REASON UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982	SECTION	PLAIN ENGLISH REASON	WHEN REPORT CAN BE RELEASED
Protect the privacy of natural persons	Sec.9(2)(a)	Information provided identifies a particular person or can easily be connected with a particular person.	Once the person to whom the information relates consents to its disclosure

The meeting moved out of committee at 2:39pm.

It was moved;
that Council moves out of public excluded meeting.

Annan/Avery - CARRIED

10. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Sherrard suggested that the other F&G regions be informed that all chairman correspondence should be sent to both the chairman and vice-chairmen of the Auckland/Waikato Council. Mr Wilson agreed to do this.

The non-attendance of council meetings by Mr B. Moore was discussed.

Councillor Kerr asked whether council was controlling hunters on the Lake Waikare property. He expressed his concerns over goat carcasses left by hunters. Mr Wilson replied that they had a booking system for the property. He agreed to inform hunters using the property that they shouldn't leave carcasses.

Councillor Kerr inquired whether council had a list of maimai owners on Lake Waikare as it was a good time to remove derelict maimai due to low water levels. Mr Dyer replied

that no such list existed that was up to date.

Councillor Shaw suggested that the recent changes in the game season regulations be promoted in a press release to the farming media.

Councillor Shaw informed the meeting that he would be assisting with a “Town to Country” farm day on Sunday and it was a good opportunity to promote Fish & Game.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2.50pm. 21st