



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

BOARD OF INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND

Meeting Report of March 25th, 2021

This is the report of the second meeting of the Board of IFI which took place in March 2021.
This report provides an outline of agenda items raised at this meeting.

BOARD MEETING – March 25th, 2021

1. Welcome & Apologies / Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the. In response to his request for declarations of conflicts of interest with matters on the agenda, one conflict was declared under Item 11 – Funding Awards 2021.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Board Meeting – February 16th, 2021

The minutes and meeting report of the February 16th and March 1st Board meetings and reports of these meetings were approved by the members.

3. Matters Arising

In response to a query regarding conservation steps to be taken in respect of commercial licences for L. Ree, the CEO confirmed that he had been in contact with the Inland Fisheries Division on the matter. It was noted that the [Shannon Tourism Master Plan 2020-2030](#) was launched on March 2nd by Waterways Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, where it was asserted that it did not reflect sufficient reference to the work of IFI.

4. Correspondence

The following items of correspondence were discussed by the Board.

- Galway City Council (GCC) - Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge at Galway Weir
- Board Member Submission – Lagarosiphon Major Removal Operations – L. Corrib
- Salmon and Sea Trout Recreational Anglers of Ireland (SSTRAI)

5. IFI Fish Farm

A paper titled 'Fish Farm Update' was issued with the meeting papers. The CEO briefed members on the status of the plan for IFI's trout production. The Board advised that the life cycle of fish stock is considered as part of the plan. It was proposed to re-convene the Fish Farm Working Group and re-engage with angling group representatives at this time. The CEO confirmed that this was under way. The Chair expressed satisfaction that environmental, financial, political and reputational risk would be mitigated or transferred by progressing with this plan.

6. Climate Action Framework 2019-2021

A copy of the '*IFI Climate Action Framework 2019–2021*' was distributed with the meeting papers and was noted. The Board acknowledged the approval of the final text of the [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development \(Amendment\) Bill 2021](#), which sets Ireland on the path to net-zero emissions by 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade, and provides the framework for Ireland to meet its international and EU climate action commitments. The Board expressed its support and commended the work of IFI's Energy Performance Officer (EPO) and Green Team on their commitment to driving IFI's efforts in meeting its emission reduction targets.

7. CEO's Report

The CEO's Report for March was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read.

Lagarosiphon major removal L. Corrib

A discussion on addressing the environmental, governance and financial risks associated with IFI's decision to seek to control the spread of the invasive weed L. major in L. Corrib. The CEO confirmed that the required AA screening was complete and did not require progression to a Natura Impact

Statement. In response to the CEO's request to sign the contract to commence, the Board expressed its desire not to impede the progression of works and proposed that subject to assurances requested the work is to continue to be stood down. The CEO indicated that these assurance would be provided at the earliest opportunity.

Marine Institute

The CEO briefed members on his interactions with the Marine Institute in progressing the working relationship between agencies. The Board welcomed this development.

8. Finance

M. Martin was admitted to the meeting.

DRAFT Financial Statements 2020

The 'Draft Financial Statements for 2020' were distributed with the meeting papers. The Chair of the ARC confirmed that these statements were reviewed by the committee at its meeting on March 11th. M. Martin provided a verbal presentation on the Income Statement and Statement of Financial Position for 2020. The Chair of the ARC noted the feedback advised by the committee had been applied and she provided additional comments. She expressed gratitude to the Finance team for the significant work involved in compiling the statements. The **draft Financial Statements for 2020** were approved by the Board.

DRAFT Governance Statement and Board Members' Report and Statement on Internal Control

The draft '*Governance Statement and Board Members' Report and Statement on Internal Control for 2020*' was distributed with the meeting papers. The Chair emphasised the significance of this statement in terms of good governance. The Board advised a number of amendments and pending the application of these amendments, the **draft Governance Statement, Board Members' Report and Statement on Internal Control for 2020**, was approved by the Board.

Development Budget Adjustment

Further clarity was requested in ensuring the budget approved for 2021 reflected the Board's focus on the conservation of habitats and fish, as per the new Corporate Plan 2021-2025. It was asserted that IFI could achieve this by ensuring that a series of 'simpler' projects could be delivered to support the ethos of IFI as an agency being the 'doers' over 'enablers' within the budget approved. The CEO confirmed that projects for 2021 had been developed by River Basin District (RBD) Directors, some of which are being delivered through contractors, and committed to providing a report on the work planned for 2021 including purpose and location. It was also suggested that communication of these works/projects could be supported by footage of IFI staff working with stakeholders. M. Martin left the meeting.

9. Management Assurance

Owenriff Population Rehabilitation Plan - Presentation

C. Gallagher, P. Gargan, F. Kelly and G. Forde joined the meeting. A copy of the presentation was distributed with the meeting papers. F. Kelly presented on; the research conducted to date on the fishery, with reference to international research, the pillars of a population rehabilitation plan; and the justification for the implementation of such a plan. P. Gargan presented on one of the pillars of the genetic restoration of salmon and trout in line with the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) stocking guidelines. As part of the plan, there was a recommendation for a temporary ban on angling. F. Kelly continued, presenting results of climate change monitoring, recommending further monitoring at 30 sites and 4 lakes in 2021 as part of the plan.

The members of the Research and Development team responded to queries in relation to; the plan which commenced in 2018 and the progress made; and the mitigations implemented to address

presence of pike since its detection in the system. A discussion ensued on the impact of the reducing levels of salmonids on pearl mussel. It was agreed that addressing genetic restoration and restricting angling would be expedited. C. Gallagher, P. Gargan, F. Kelly left the meeting.

National Protection Plan 2021

A copy of the National Protection Plan for 2021 was distributed with the meeting papers and was taken as read. This comprehensive plan was welcomed, and G. Forde responded to queries in relation to the content. Matters raised were: projected patrol numbers; the deterrent effect of prosecutions; the investment in technology and its impact to be reflected in reporting; and the mobility between protection and development teams. G. Forde emphasised the importance of the seasonal officer recruitment and training college on the efficacy of the protection function during the highest pressure season. In response to the need to the move toward increased development work impacting the protection effort, the Head of Operations stated that every effort has been made to drill down and make the staff available, highlighting that of the 34 Seasonal Officers, 14 are dedicated to development. The Board requested that this 're-focus' of manpower is reflected in the final draft of the plan.

Internal Audit Value for Money Review of Fisheries Patrols

A draft of the 'Internal Audit Value for Money Review of Fisheries Patrols' was distributed in the meeting papers. The Chair of the ARC introduced the review being recommended for approval by the ARC arising from its meeting on March 11th. She provided a summary of findings. A record of management responses to the conclusions will be added in advance of adoption by the Board. The CEO confirmed that a very high-level review had been undertaken and that as a result, increased night patrols were planned for the peak season.

Bye Law (Initial) Approval

The following draft Bye Laws were presented for approval prior to going to public consultation:

- Bye Law (permanent) ban dredging for Oysters in certain priority habitat areas in Blacksod Bay and Clew Bay;
- Bye-law (permanent) providing for measures in relation to trout, Lough Lene, Co. Westmeath;
- Bye-law (permanent) catch and release angling only for coarse fish and pike, section of Grand Canal;
- Bye-law (permanent) prohibiting any netting in Malahide Estuary;
- Bye-law (permanent) prohibiting anglers taking Arctic char, national.

Following discussion, the **Bye-laws** as outlined were approved by the Board. G. Forde left the meeting.

10. Audit & Risk Committee

Chair's Verbal Report of Meeting of March 11th, 2021

A verbal report was provided on matters presented and reviewed by the committee. Matters outlined were; the valuation of fish stock and conservation measures, looking at other jurisdictions' practices; resourcing social science specialty; the pending Communications and ICT strategy in light of the new Corporate Plan 2021-25; the review of other outstanding recommendations by the Internal Auditor and Board member training contracts approved.

Membership

The re-appointment of P. Gibbons as a member of the ARC was approved by the Board.

Draft Reviewed ARC Terms of Reference & Draft Reviewed IFI Board Standing Orders

The **reviewed ARC Terms of Reference and IFI Board Standing Orders** were approved by the Board.

11. Matters for Decision

Funding Awards 2021 (SSTCRP and Midlands Fisheries Fund)

S. Campion and Barry O'Connor were admitted to the meeting. The Board discussed the robust governance necessary in advance of approval of project applications. It was agreed that a review of awarding structures would be undertaken to provide necessary assurance for the disbursement of funds. Ms. Campion expressed her understanding of the reason for and welcomed the review. She indicated that neither fund would be disbursed pending a Board decision.

Ms. Campion briefed the members on two funds. The first, is the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund of €500k which had recently been awarded to IFI, where the executive is drafting a project submission. The second, is fund identified through the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) for €250k in relation to water quality improvement. She stated that her team would draft an application and seek Board approval. Members thanked the invitees, S. Campion and Barry O'Connor left the meeting.

12. Risk Management

Corporate Risk Register 10.18

The Corporate Risk Register was distributed in the meeting papers and noted. It was confirmed that the ARC had reviewed this document.

13. AOB

No matters were raised under any other business.