

**HAWKE'S BAY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT THE GAME FARM**  
**ON TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2017 AT 6.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Hern, Williams, Niblett, Bates (Chairman), Mackie, Lumsden.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mark Venman (Regional Manager), Nathan Burkepile and Christine Tuck (Hawkes Bay Fish and Game staff), Glenis Phillips (minute taker).

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Red Hooper, Paul Elstone, and Graeme Jobey.

**INTRODUCTION:**

**1.0 WELCOME**

Cr Bates opened the meeting at 6.00pm and welcomed members of the public.

Cr Bates advised Councillors that this meeting will be recorded.

**2.0 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Greg Duley and also Te Kaha Hawaikirangi from the East Coast Conservation Board who has submitted a report but unfortunately could not attend. No apology was received from Cr McIntosh.

**3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (13 June 2017)**

**AGREED**

3.1 *That having been previously circulated to members, the minutes of the meeting of the Hawkes Bay Fish and Game Council held on Tuesday 13 June 2017 are a true and correct record.*

**Hern/Niblett**

**4.0 MATTERS ARISING:**

Nothing was tabled.

**5.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF GENERAL BUSINESS**

- Lake Waikopiro (Cr Hern)
- Silver Carp (Cr Hern)
- Lake Opouahi (Cr Lumsden)
- Duck banding (Cr Lumsden)
- Junior Hunt (Mark Venman)

**6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER**

The Conflict of Interest Register was passed around Councillors to sign.

Carrying on from the discussion held at the last Council meeting the recommendation is: -

## AGREED

- 6.1 *That Councillors disclose any Conflict or potential Conflict of Interest, record it in the Interest Register, and Council agrees on how to deal with any Conflict of Interest raised. The register is to be signed at each meeting by all Councillors regardless of whether Councillors have a conflict of interest or not.*

Niblett/Williams

## 7.0 HAWKES BAY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL 2018 COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Chairman opened this discussion by saying that this subject has already been discussed at length but a decision needs to be made on the number of Councillors required for the 2018 election.

During the 2015 Council election, the number of Councillors was reduced from 12 down to 8 and there has been great difficulty in getting a quorum in the past. The Chairman asked the Councillors for suggestions as to what Council numbers we require. Between 10 and 12 Councillors was the number suggested.

Cr Williams provided some insight to Councillors as to what was discussed on this subject at the NZ Council meeting. He stated that over the last 6 election cycles the average number of regions who have an election is 6 – hence half the regions have an election and half do not. Hawkes Bay has done well with elections. Cr Williams added that the West Coast region have not had an election in the last 18 years.

After some good robust discussion and opinions expressed, Council felt that the more people that we get involved the better. A more diverse opinion will better the discussion. It was proposed that a Council of 12 members is required and all Councillors were unanimous on this number.

## AGREED

- 7.1 *That Council have decided on the number of Councillors required for the 2018 Council elections to be 12 (Twelve).*

Williams/Hern

## 8.0 APPROVAL OF THE 2017/2018 OPERATIONS WORKPLAN

Mark stated that since the last meeting back in June, a copy of the draft OWP has been circulated to DOC, the hunting clubs and fishing clubs to seek some feedback, but to date no submissions have been received back. Mark let Council know of the two changes made to the draft OWP which are -

1. Firstly, the \$1,000 that was received from the Walking Access Commission for the upgrade of angler access signs on the TukiTuki River has been added to the 2017/18 OWP as that is when the work will be undertaken.
2. Secondly, the deadline for the sign-off of the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan has been moved out to April 2018 and this has been corrected as a performance

measure. This will allow a draft to be circulated at the October Council meeting and then for a six-month consultation period.

Mark sought feedback from Council. Cr Niblett started off the discussion around banding and felt that more discussion and clarification was required. Nathan then said that we have to find a way to monitor the population and get good data. There is some concern over sample size, hence it comes down to how accurate you want the data to be but that depends on what you want to use the data for.

Mark informed Council that this year, \$1,400 covered the maize, bands and sundry items and the total hours for three staff to undertake the work was 200 hours.

Nathan said that the \$60-70,000 was a one-off during the 2015/16 year for Eastern to hire somebody to enter and analyse historical data. Councillors questioned what they actually got for this \$70,000 and whether this actually benefited the licence holders.

Councillors entered into discussion around this issue. To estimate the population is why we do banding. Once we have got the estimated population then what do we use the data for. Is it not better to be more productive and get more ducks out there, rather than spend it on this data? Where are we going to go with this? During discussion it was said that we have to keep asking questions. We do have obligations to monitor our population and the question was raised - are we going to do better by expanding our banding sites?

We do need to get an idea of how the population is doing but sometimes it seems that we get lost in the data and don't seem to get a good idea of the annual trends - there are just so many variables. Are we perhaps missing an opportunity to get some relatively cheaper data that gives us the information?

It was stated that we keep going over this and have had lots of discussion but nothing has come of these discussions at this stage. The more tools that we have the better we are able to manage the resource. It is one of those things that we don't want to just put in the OWP and leave it there, we need to keep asking questions. Again, it was stressed that we do have statutory responsibilities. It is an on-going subject which still requires further discussion.

#### **AGREED**

**8.1 That Council approves the Operational Work Plan and budget for the 2017-2018 year subject to the inclusion of any amendments agreed to at this meeting and**

**That Council delegates authority to the Regional Manager to approve expenditure during the year as set out in the Council approved Operational Work Plan and budget.**

**Niblett/Mackie**

#### **9.0 CODE OF CONDUCT**

Mark informed Council that this was prepared by Robert Sowman, NZ Council Policy and Planning Manager and Robert is seeking feedback from the regions on a Code of Conduct for sports fishing. It covers a lot of things and outlines the four key responsibilities as anglers which are:

- Treat fish humanely
- Protect our fisheries
- Care for the environment
- Respect the rights of others

Mark said that key elements have been taken out of this report and incorporated into a short article for the region's new season 2017/18 fishing newsletter. Mark asked Council if there was anything else that should be added or removed from the Code of Conduct.

Some Councillors felt that it was good while others thought that it was lengthy and that there were some mixed messages coming out of this report but it was pointed out that you have to remember what a Code of Conduct is - they are not rules, they are recommendations and you have to start somewhere.

There was discussion around limiting the number of trout that could be caught and released per day which has been discussed in other regions and the implications that this could have on anglers and guides. There was also discussion on the need for articles and videos put out by Fish and Game to show best practice when it comes to handling trout and that we should be leading by example whenever possible.

Good robust discussion on this report was entered into and under the subject "Care for the Environment" - removing all rubbish and preventing pollution. This is becoming a major problem. Human toilet behaviour has become a major issue on private property and at access points and carparks and this issue needs more thought. Human waste should be buried. It is a massive issue in NZ and for our tourism.

Mark to send feedback to NZ Council.

## 10.0 THEFT AND FRAUD POLICY

Mark stated that following on from the last meeting he had modified the NZ Council Policy document for the Hawkes Bay region and that was the version that was included in this meeting's agenda. He was seeking feedback or any comments on this latest version.

Council opened discussion on the approval section - *"When the HBFGC approved the Policy, it was agreed that no variations of this Policy or amendments to it can be made except by the unanimous approval of the HBFGC"*.

Following discussion, it was decided that we need to be careful as we could be "taken to task" so after further discussion it was decided that it would be better to replace the word "unanimous" with "majority".

Member of the public, Paul Elstone, brought up 7.0 - *"Any allegation concerning a member of the Council should be made to the Regional Manager. The Regional Manager will then advise the Council Chairman and commence investigation in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4 of this Policy"*. Paul asked what happens if the allegation is made against the Chairman? It was decided that the Council would investigate any allegations against the Chairman. Councillors asked Mark to amend the policy document to reflect these changes.

## AGREED

10.1 *That the Theft and Fraud Prevention Policy is adopted with the above changes.*

Williams/Lumsden

## 11.0 DOC MANAGED PROPERTY

Mark informed Council that there is an opportunity for Hawkes Bay Fish and Game to work with the Department of Conservation (DOC) on a 40 ha piece of conservation land in central Hawkes Bay. The area of land is just downstream of SH 50 on the Waipawa River.

Preliminary discussions with DOC have indicated that they would be agreeable to Hawkes Bay Fish and Game managing the property and establishing some game bird habitat.

Mark asked Council for some guidance as to whether we progress and look at it further and spend some money – the question was asked, is this an option?

Nathan gave a quick overview of the land but also pointed out to Council that it is not without its challenges.

Dominant vegetation is a mixture of pasture grasses and there are several cabbage trees and Totara throughout the property. The Hawkes Bay Regional Council property next to this piece of DOC land is dominated by willows and pasture grasses. The opposite side of the property is agricultural land which is grazed by dry stock. Currently this piece of land has very little game bird habitat values and is considered bony country. There is a covey of quail that forage on the property within flying distance of the willows. There are also hares and rabbits on the property which would have to be controlled prior to any planting of natives. Concerns were also raised about managing the weeds on the property.

The neighbouring farmer grazes the property but grazing values are pretty low even in the winter. By planting tussock grasses and sedges on the property, we could create habitat for both quail and pheasants with the potential of creating duck nesting habitat. There are a number of livestock watering holes throughout the property which would be used by California quail. A piece of property this size would need a bit of investment to improve the area for game bird habitat. Staff are currently looking into some funding avenues to fund this work. Although there may be some funds from DOC and the HBRC, these funds are limited and may not be available. There is potential to seek funding from the Game Bird Habitat Trust. There could also be some funding available through the HB Biodiversity Trust that is currently being established.

Council said that it could be a good way to increase hunting opportunities but costs needed to be weighed up and a plan produced. It could be a great learning place.

### AGREED

*11.1 That staff create a plan and a budget for Councillors to review at the October Council meeting.*

Lumsden/Mackie

## 12.0 EVALUATION OF COUNCIL

Cr Williams started the discussion off by saying that he did this exercise because it is part of our governance policies to do this annually. It was a scoping exercise to see what we thought of ourselves and if done yearly then we can assess our performance.

His thought process was that anything scored under 3 which is below average, we should look at and then examine all our 3's. We are aiming to be the best Council as possible and

we should be aiming to have all 5's. There are a couple of areas that Cr Williams flagged as being of concern:

- Code of Conduct - that confidential information is well managed and not disclosed to others. Two of the councillors rated it below par. Confidential information must not be divulged.
- Financial statements are ensured to be true and fair. There is a couple of below par 2's there and both of these areas need to be looked at.

At this point Mark informed Council that two Councillors said unsatisfactory and the other five said a 4 or a 5 (highly satisfactory or excellent). There was discussion around historical issues and the need to focus on the last 12 months.

At this point the Chairman asked Councillors If there were any issues and if so, we can pick up these now. Discussion took place and in conclusion these are the points that were raised

1. We need to review and create policies.
2. It was expressed that the difference between governance and management roles may not be well understood.
3. We may need some outside help to help us be governors. We appear to be very tough on ourselves and perhaps felt we should have done better. At our last Council meeting, we did agree to do an annual appraisal of the manager but we need to talk about this further i.e. whether it be a 6 month or a 12-month review.
4. We are doing the things required of us, but are we actually getting the results?
5. We need to do better moving forward. It was felt among Council that a lot of these lower scores came about due to historic events.
6. In 12 months time, we will do another Council evaluation.
7. We need to improve how we communicate with our licence holders. We do some things well but the information isn't always taken up by people.

### **13.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS**

Mark informed Council that unfortunately Te Kaha Hawaikirangi who was recently appointed to the Hawkes Bay East Coast Conservation Board (HBECCB) couldn't be here tonight but he provided a written update. He was keen for us to rebuild that relationship and for us to provide them with information or things that we think they would be interested in from our Council. The first point he makes is -

- The Conservations Management Strategy (CMS) is still coming together. At this stage, the writers are in final drafting tasks as well as engaging with iwi and Treaty Settlement entities. It is anticipated that the draft will be notified early to mid next year.

#### Priorities of the HBECCB:

- The board aims to remain on task for joint public notification in early 2018 so that the final draft will be ready to take to NZCA by the end of that year.
- Cook's landing site is a crucially important icon for all of New Zealand and that needs to be recognition so the board will be supporting the local parties working towards the redevelopment and promotion by DOC to grant it that status.
- Engagement with youth and supporting education links within the communities.
- Grow both the Conservation and Kaitiaki Armies by supporting DOC staff and spreading awareness of these programmes to upskill and initiate local workers into conservation.
- Supporting solid biodiversity strategies especially water quality including mauri/corridors.
- Deer management - engagement with concerned parties to ensure agreement and implementation is best for conservation in our region.

Mark said that hopefully Te Kaha can make it to our next Council meeting and we can start building that relationship but if there is anything we should be reporting back to them then can we give that some thought.

Cr Williams talked about the NZ Council report by Robert Sowman. Cr Williams informed Councillors of the delay of the new CEO being announced but hopefully it will be made by the end of the week. The hold up was due to legal contracts. He said that the successful candidate was an amazing recruit and said that the process to get it down to the final man was very exhausting, very comprehensive and everything had been done to get the right person. He said that people will be suitably impressed.

Cr Williams also mentioned to Council about the NICO Real-time Nitrogen logger (a UV photometer for the determination of nitrate in water). The price for these is \$14,000 but Fish and Game need more of them - we need these on every river. They give nitrogen levels in real time and apparently, they are very accurate. They are getting cheaper over time. Councillors asked if they were mobile but Cr Williams said that they were a fixed position data logger to precisely monitor nitrogen levels at set time intervals. Cr Williams thought that six loggers would be good for the Hawkes Bay region.

The other thing Cr Williams wanted to advise Councillors about is that the NZ Council have decided on a template to unify all the fishing licence information and regulations throughout the country. Each region would have the same format and layout. At present, each region has a different layout and this is one thing that NZ Council is going to do. Discussion around the table took place regarding an electronic version, but it was pointed out that not everybody has a computer or access to the internet.

Council discussed the Guides Licence and Cr Williams answered questions raised. He said the Minister rejected it and gave the NZ Council 15 months to come up with a different proposal.

## **14.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

### **14.1 Management Report**

A diary system was discussed as an option to capture hunting data for both duck hunters and upland game hunters. It was hoped to get about 100 hunters participating in this

scheme next year. Mark added that the electronic diary for anglers last summer provided a snap-shot into the current state of our river fisheries and provided some useful data.

#### **14.2 Health and Safety Report**

Nothing Tabled

#### **14.3 Finance Report**

Cr Hern asked about the meeting room hire. It seems we budgeted for \$2,000 and we received \$2,191. The question was then asked, "do we charge everybody that uses the meeting room?" In reply, Mark said yes. Council also asked do we have non profit groups or non income groups that we don't charge. Mark said that clubs get a reduced rate but if we are hosting a meeting that we are involved in, then we do not charge.

Council asked if we had a policy on this and Christine advised Council that we have set pricing. We have a full day rate and a half day rate. WiFi has been installed and we have lifted our rates marginally to cover the costs. The meeting room has been advertised in the new fishing newsletters as well.

Another subject brought up by Council was what was happening with the lesions on the kids pond trout. Mark informed Council that the lesions are clearing up but they will take time to fully heal.

The vet believes that it was a bacterial infection that they have not been exposed to before. It could have been brought in by a shag or something else but given the numbers infected might have been caused by something else.

Salaries - it was predicted that this year the salaries and wages actual will exceed the budget. The reason for this is that the accrued annual leave is high (compared to last year where there were new staff members). The new staff were not due for holidays and now they are - this has to be below 20 days at the end of this month for the roll-over and any TOIL is supposed to be used as well. The Council asked Mark whether this was going to happen. Mark replied that it will be close come the end of August.

The next matter raised was regarding the installation of a heat pump/air conditioning unit for the staff house. A quote from Hawkes Bay Refrigeration for the amount of \$2,485 (excluding GST) had been received.

Mark said that his understanding is that if it is over \$2,000 then Council permission is required. Mark has already asked Carmel if she is comfortable with this and she is, so we are asking for Council permission to go ahead with the purchase and installation.

Mark informed Council that there is a fire box in the staff house but that the heat pump was more for the summer period. Being a reasonably small house, it gets extremely hot during the summer months.



**AGREED**

*14.3.1. That the Council approve the following payments:*

<i>May 2017 - Table 4</i>	<i>\$46,293.04</i>
<i>June 2017 - table 5</i>	<i>\$40,475.99</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$86,769.03</i>

*Hern/Mackie*

**AGREED**

*14.3.2 That Council approves the purchase of an air conditioning unit for the staff house.*

*Hern/Mackie*

#### **14.4 LICENCE REPORT**

Council asked how we are tracking compared to other regions. Cr Williams told Council that we are year to date down 3.3% on game this year. Total Game sales YTD have decreased by 3.3% when compared to the same period last year and a total of 94.5% of the annual sales target has been achieved. Sales are reported to be 6.3% below licences issued for the same period last year.

#### **15.0 GENERAL BUSINESS**

Opouahi Lake - Cr Lumsden received an email from an old angler who was wondering why HB Fish and Game were not releasing fish into Lake Opouahi anymore. During this discussion, it was stated that the permit to release trout had lapsed and not been reapplied for. If we had reapplied for it, Mark stated that he doubted very much whether we would have been successful. Cr Lumsden said that he forwarded Mark's e-mail reply onto the angler.

Discussion around the table took place, and it was noted that in the short term we will be able to focus on Lake Tutira. Working with other agencies including DOC, we should hopefully see a significant improvement there in the near future. Lake Opouahi has suffered from algal blooms and it does have its issues but we don't believe there has been fish liberated in there for about 8 years.

Silver carp - Cr Hern stated he has been looking at some research that has been done on carp and asked if there were algae eating carp and if so, have they been considered for Tutira?

Mark replied and by saying that there is grass carp currently in Lake Tutira to control the hydrilla weed. Silver carp eat algae and they have been used in different parts of China. Mark added that he had downloaded some information off the DOC website and obviously there are some issues about bringing silver carp in. It was interesting to read that "silver carp are used overseas to reduce blue/green algae blooms and are sometimes used in conjunction with grass carp to control algae blooms that occur after aquatic plant removal". The silver carp in NZ have been limited and there has been no evidence they have achieved

a decrease in algae numbers. They can eat a considerable amount, and for every kg of fish, they can eat up to 40kg of algae. Mark said he does not think at the moment that that is the answer.

Good discussion around this topic, and Mark said he was still quietly confident that if the Iwi and Regional Council get the funding that they are after, we will see some improvements there. It won't be perfect but the lake will be useable.

If you can disrupt the algal blooms then we won't have some of the issues. Hopefully we will hear about whether the funding application has been successful soon. Mark added that silver carp had not been discussed at any Tutira meeting he had attended.

Junior Hunt - Mark thanked Cr Niblett. Mark let Council know that we had support from Tuna Nui station and NZ Game Birds to hold the Junior Shoot event this year. We have contacted approximately 180 junior hunters and the deadline for replies was Friday 11 August 2017. The random draw for the 9 positions will take place early next week.

Mark asked Council for an indication of which Councillors may be available to help out on the day of the junior hunt. Councillors Niblett, Hern, Bates and Lumsden said that they would be available to assist.

Mark also let Councillors know that there would be some filming done of the junior shoot this year and that there was an opportunity to undertake some other filming in the region. Mark added that he hoped to do a fish handling video prior to the start of the new fishing season to promote best practice techniques for anglers practicing catch and release.

Nathan addressed Councillors requiring some feedback on the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game 5 Year Strategic Waterfowl plan. He will be forwarding out an e-mail before the next Council meeting looking for comments. He advised Council that he has put it out to other regions for comment as well, as he needs to progress this plan.

#### 16.0 MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.05pm

CONFIRMED



CHAIRMAN

DATE:

17 / 10 / 2017