

THE RIVER CREE HATCHERY AND HABITAT TRUST

CHARITY SC042355

REPORT TO THE NINEVEH CHARITABLE TRUST

This is the report requested in the email of the 12th June 2019 from Sally Hutchinson.

The first set of primary school visits were successfully carried out on the 12th and 14th November 2019. We arranged transport with Dumfries & Galloway Council. Some 64 P5 pupils from Penninghame, St Ninians, Creetown and Minnigaff Primary Schools visited the hatchery where they learned about the life cycle of the Atlantic salmon and saw eggs being stripped from adult salmon and subsequently being fertilised. There were some lively question and answer sessions. It was explained to the pupils that on their next visit they would each get a bucket of salmon fry which they would be able to stock into a nearby burn and would also take part in kick-sampling for invertebrates.

However, well before the fry were large enough to stock out, all schools had closed due to the Covid-19 “lockdown” and will not re-open until the start of the new school year in late August. Accordingly, the final two school visits (for stocking out fry and kick-testing and also the angling day) could not take place.

The schools involved are keen for the programme to run again in the next school year. Please see the attached two letters from Penninghame and Minnigaff/Creetown Primary Schools. We are hopeful that it will be possible to run the entire programme safely within whatever social distancing requirements are in place by that time. It is our intention that those pupils who missed out on the final two visits in the last year will be given the opportunity to join with next year’s P5 for those particular activities.

It is obviously a major disappointment that we were not able to deliver the full programme as intended, but trust it will be appreciated that this was caused by matters outside our control. Although much of the project could not be delivered in the last year, our core costs (such as salaries, insurance and motor expenses) continued to be incurred as previously. We could not furlough our Co-ordinator since his other duties continued notwithstanding the lockdown. At the start of the lockdown there were some 200,000 salmon fry in the hatchery. Daily checks on fish health, water temperature and pressure have continued to be required.

We appreciate that by not running the last two visits of the programme we have saved on the costs of transport, stock fish and bait. However, as mentioned, we hope that in the next school year we will be able to accommodate those P5 pupils who missed out on the last two visits this year, so there will be a doubling up of those costs. In the circumstances, we would request that you do not require a repayment of part of the grant.

Terence Flanagan

Secretary

3rd July 2020