

MINUTES of MEETING of THE RIVER DEVERON DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD
being a Meeting open to the public in terms of the Aquaculture & Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013
Thursday 25th September 2025 at 3.30pm held at The Banff Springs Hotel, Banff.
This meeting was held in conjunction with that of the TRUSTEES of THE DEVERON, BOGIE & ISLA RIVERS
CHARITABLE TRUST. The minutes cover both organisations.

At the outset, the Chairman explained that in terms of the 2013 Act, all Meetings require to be open to the public. An invitation to the public was published on the Board's website along with a copy of the proposed Agenda. Any member who wished to attend was required to inform the Clerk.

Present: **Andrew Allwood (B), Jim Cruickshank (B&T), Rory Cooper (B & T), Andrew Higgins (B), Robert Shields (B & T), Gordon Morison (B).**

In attendance- **Richie Miller** (B and representative of DBI Trust).
S Roebuck (Clerk to Board and Administrator of DBI Trust); **Marcus Walters** (DBI Trust). **Jamie Gordon** (Project Deveron Catchment Restoration Manager), Steve Mackison, Sarah Cruickshank.

{B = Board member; T = Trustee or representative}

Chairman: **Mr Andrew Allwood**

Apologies for Absence: **Bob Copland (B), David Borthwick (B & T), Matthew Marsden (B), Frank Henderson (B & T)** (Turrieff Angling Association & Turrieff Community), **Richard Breakell (B)** (Salmon Anglers), **Alfie Cheyne (B).**

Minutes of Meeting on 26th June 2025 A draft of the Minutes of the Meeting had been sent to all Members of the Board and Trust and was unanimously approved by those who had attended. The minutes have been published on the Board/Trust's website (www.deveron.org) and signed off by the Chairman of the Meeting.

Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013 Mr Allwood reported that there were no changes noted to Board Members Financial Interests since 26th June 2025 as applicable to the Board. No complaints against the Board had been received by the Clerk since the last meeting.

Update on Financial Matters - RDDSFB Mrs Roebuck reported that approximately twenty assessments remain outstanding.

The Board was reassured that adequate cashflow is maintained in the bank to cover ongoing obligations.

The annual accounts have been signed off and filed without issue.

The Board discussed the continuing difficulty in contacting Mr. Shaw. His phone has been disconnected, and letters have gone unanswered. Legal options, such as pursuing the matter through the small claims court, were raised, but members recognised the practical challenges of pursuing such action without a response from him. It was agreed that enquiries would be undertaken to determine whether a solicitor is acting on his behalf. These steps will be reviewed at the next meeting.

**Discussion of
Forthcoming AGM**

There will be a presentation by Mr Walters, giving a brief overview of the counter and other projects which they have been working on. Also giving a presentation is Mr Jamie Gordon (AST).

AOCB – Poaching

The Board received reports of multiple poaching incidents. These included a subcontractor fishing without a permit during project works, trespassers breaking fencing to gain access to the river, and a group of teenagers who were fishing illegally and were removed following a warning. Members expressed concern about an apparent increase in poaching activity despite the poor fishing conditions.

The meeting then focused on Trust Business

**Update on Financial
Matters – DBI Trust**

The Trust's financial position remains stable. Mr Cruickshank reported that income and expenditure are broadly in line with projections, with no significant variances since the previous quarter. A major project, The King Edward Weir, valued at over £100,000, was completed successfully on time and within budget. Cash flow remains healthy, and the Trust continues to monitor expenditure carefully.

**Report by Mr Miller
and Mr Walters on DBI
Trust work**

Mr Miller and Mr Walters prepared a written report on the work of the Trust since the last Board Meeting. They gave a short report as most of the points were included in the Annual Report which had now been circulated to all Proprietors and other interested parties. Report available on request.

General Discussions were had on the topics below:

- Communications
- SISI
- Fishery Protection
- Water Quality
- Water scarcity and water temperature
- Bird Counts and Licence
- Health and Safety
- Windfarms
- Seal Licence – River Deveron
- Glenkeith Weir Fish Passage
- Project Deveron – Phase 1
- Project Deveron – Phase 2
- Restoration Projects
- Farming Cluster
- Research/Monitoring
- Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400kV OHL
- Banff Bridge Scour Protection
- Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25
- Pink Salmon
- An evening in the Garden at Mayen in aid of The Deveron Bogie and Isla Rivers Trust

Water Quality and Monitoring:

Concerns persist over the spread of algal blooms, attributed to a combination of high temperatures and nutrient enrichment. The Trust is progressing funding bids totalling approximately £35,000 to install continuous water quality monitoring stations at key points along the river system. These devices will provide real-time data on temperature, dissolved oxygen, and nutrient levels, supporting evidence-based management.

The Trust also launched a volunteer-led kick-sampling initiative, designed to monitor for invertebrates and provide warning of pollution events. Initial community engagement has been positive, with several volunteers already trained.

Water Scarcity:

The river has now been at “significant scarcity” status for over sixty consecutive days — one of the most prolonged low-flow periods on record. These conditions have affected water temperatures, fish migration, and spawning success.

Bird Count and License:

The Trust has received a licence for the limited control of cormorants and goosanders. Fewer birds have been recorded this year compared to previous seasons, possibly due to changing feeding patterns. It was reaffirmed the importance of maintaining accurate population data and submitting regular returns to the licensing authority.

Windfarms:

The Trust continues to monitor and respond to renewable energy proposals that may impact the catchment. Detailed responses were submitted for several planning applications this quarter, ensuring that fish passage, sediment control, and water quality considerations are properly assessed in development plans.

Glenkeith Weir Fish Passage:

Progress continues on the redesign of the Glen Keith Fish Pass, which will facilitate improved upstream migration for salmon and trout. Construction is scheduled for next year, 2026.

Banff Bridge:

At Banff Bridge, works have advanced well, and the recent fish rescue operation was completed successfully, ensuring that all species were safely relocated prior to construction activity. The project was noted as an example of effective coordination between the Trust, local authority, and contractors.

Fish Counters:

The sonar fish counting programme continues to evolve, with artificial intelligence now being trialled to assist with data analysis. The early results are encouraging, showing improved accuracy in species identification and migration timing. Manual counts will continue alongside the AI system during the evaluation phase to verify results.

AOCB - Governance

It was unanimously agreed to appoint Mr Steve Mackison, who brings expertise in agriculture, as a new Trustee.

The potential appointment of Mr Grant Gordon as a future trustee was also discussed and it was agreed that he should be approached to consider joining the Board.

- Health and Safety** Mr Miller, Mr Walters and Mr C Grant will complete medicals on 26th Sept and 30th Oct.
- Next meeting** Next Board/Trust meeting will be on Wednesday 3th December 2025.
- Meeting closed at 4:50pm** Mr Allwood thanked everyone for attending. The Annual Proprietors Meeting and DBIT AGM followed.