

**MINUTES of THE COMBINED ANNUAL MEETING of QUALIFIED PROPRIETORS of
THE RIVER DEVERON DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY and ANNUAL PUBLIC OPEN MEETING
held at THE BANFF SPRINGS HOTEL, BANFF on Thursday, 5th SEPTEMBER 2024 at 5pm**

Present: **Andrew Allwood** (Muirsek), **Jim Cruickshank** (Carnousie, Ardmiddle, Inverkeithny Glebe, Inverkeithny, Upper Netherdale, Lower Netherdale, Laithers Estate), **Gordon Morison** (Mountblairy, Bognie), **Mrs J Player** (Upper Inverichnie), **Rory Cooper** (Marnoch Lodge, Mains of Auchingoul), **Frank Henderson** (co-optee represents salmon anglers), **Richard Breakell** (Salmon Anglers), **Mr & Mrs Cheyne** (Mains of Mayen and Mayen & Garronhaugh), **Mr Higgins** (Castle Fishings, Lower & Upper Coniecleugh), **R Shields** (Avochie), **J Gardiner** (Marnoch Lodge, Mains of Auchingoul), **Sarah Cruickshank** (Deveronside Fishing)

Also in attendance: **Mrs S Roebuck** (Clerk to the Board); **R Miller** (River Director); **M Walters** (River Operations Manager), **Jamie Gordon** (Project Deveron Catchment Restoration Manager),

Members of the public including members of the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust, Ghillies, Estate Managers and Anglers.

Apologies for Absence: **Mr D Borthwick, Mr B Copland, Mr M Marsden, Mr M Hay, Ms A Stancioff,**

Chairman: Mr Andrew Allwood welcomed Proprietors, Mandatories, Ghillies, Members of the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust and other members of the public.

Minutes of last Annual Meeting: Having circulated the minutes in advance for the last meeting held on 28th September 2023, it was proposed that they be taken as read and were unanimously approved.

2024 Proposed Activities

- Project Deveron – Operation of Aris Sonar (Fish Counter) and Pit Tag Arrays in collaboration with the Marine Directorate and Atlantic Salmon Trust.
- Project Deveron Phase II – Continue scoping and fundraising for catchment restoration actions such as a catchment audit, 3D buffer strip creation, peatland restoration, riparian planting, fish refuge creation and barrier removal.
- Smolt Shepherding Programme- Continue to maximise number of smolts successfully entering the sea.
- Water Quality - Continue regular dialogue with SEPA to improve water quality within the catchment.
- Invasive Non-Native species - Continue control through the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) Project.
- Mrs Clementina “Tiny” Morison’s Deveron Salmon (100th anniversary) – Centenary celebrations will include a special edition bottle of Deveron Gin, Dinner & Charitable Auction, Article in Trout & Salmon Magazine and Fieldsports magazines and Ladies angling days.

Annual Report & Accounts:

Mr Allwood presented the accounts to the meeting. An abbreviated version of the Board’s Accounts is included in the Annual Report for the Board and Trust which had been circulated in advance to all proprietors and interested parties.

Mr Allwood asked if there were any questions. No questions were raised and so the Accounts and Report were adopted.

AOCB – Public Relations Mr Cheyne suggested more school engagement programs to highlight more about the river and the eco system and the benefit of fishing. Fishing being a social activity, gets people off their mobile phones, creates memories and helps with mental health. How can we as a river try and gain a bit of momentum from the the Scottish government, education authority, national health to say this is a healthy thing to do, its good for people’s minds to get out in fresh air doing the activity. Fishing needs to be more available to younger kids. Mr Miller explained there are stock fisheries such as Delgaty and Loch Insch. The Trust has held young angler days which were successful in the past.

Presentation by Mr Marcus Walters and Mr Jamie Gordon A presentation was given by Mr Marcus Walters and Mr Jamie Gordon during the Annual General Meeting of the Deveron, Bogie, and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust.

Questions asked:

Mr Andrew Higgins: Is there any progress on automating the sonar count? Mr Walters explained that funding was granted from the Scottish government for consultants to develop an AI system to take over some of his work as going through manually counting each fish is very time consuming.

Mr Andrew Allwood: How long will phase 2 take? Mr Gordon explained the full project is 10 years as an estimate, but it is being considered to change this as a project that comes with a programme so doesn’t necessarily have an end date. A natural environment is not static, there’s no status. There should be an understanding of this is vastly long term.

Thanks: Mr Allwood thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed: At 6:45pm, followed by refreshments.