

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
held at CASTLE HOTEL, HUNTLY on Thursday 10th December 2015 at 12 noon.

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.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

- Present:** Malcolm Hay, Rory Cooper, Mrs J Player, A Gordon Morison, (Upper Proprietors), Donald Galloway (Banff & Macduff Angling Association - Lower), Frank Henderson (Turriff Angling Association & Turriff Community), Richard Breakell (co-optee representing salmon anglers). In attendance-Richie Miller (DBI Trust) Mrs S D Paxton (Clerk)
- Chairman:** Malcolm Hay
- Apologies for Absence:** C Richard Marsden, David Borthwick, Robert Shields
- Minutes of Meetings on 9th October 2015** A draft of the Minutes of the Meetings had been sent to all Members of the Board and unanimously approved by those who had attended. The minutes have been published on the Board's website (www.deveron.org) and signed by the Chairman.
There were no queries nor matters outstanding.
- Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013** Mr Hay reported that there were no changes noted to Members Financial Interests since 9th October 2015. No complaints against the Board had been received by the Clerk since the last meeting.
- Co-option of Mr R Miller to Board** Following Mr Miller's appointment as Director of the River and as suggested at the last Board meeting, it was unanimously agreed to co-opt him on to the Board with effect from this meeting.
- Report by Mr Miller on DBI Trust work** Mr Miller, Director and Senior Biologist of the Trust, had prepared a written report on the work of the Trust since the last Board Meeting and this was handed out (available on request). He went over the salient points.
Brief discussion on the Kill Licence consultation and the future of 'netting' after the 3 year ban. According to Mr A Wallace, Chairman of RAFTS, one would need to prove an increase in mixed stocks to enable continued netting activity. Mr Morison asked if compensation was being granted to the netsmen – answer unknown.
The Deveron catchment has been graded Category 1 and it was felt that the reason behind this is due to our good code of practice and high return of fish to the river.
The Government are keen to get a network in place of fish counters.
Mr Miller reported that the Morison Trophy had been won by Mr Wyness for the second time. The trophy will be presented at the River Opening in February. The Opening will be performed by Paul Lawrie, golfer.
Mr Miller asked if any changes need to be made to our Conservation Code. It was suggested that dates need to be specified as 'inclusive' ie salmon to be returned up to 31 May (inclusive) etc; date for season for brown trout to be amended to finishing on 6 October, not 30 September, as per the legal season.
- Update on Financial Matters** Mrs Paxton reported that all assessments had now been paid in full - £71,971. Bank balance is still healthy and sufficient to cover on going monthly commitments. As agreed quarterly accounts are sent to Board Members –next

due 31 Dec. 2015. A valuation of the Improvement Fund had been received from McInroy and Wood showing a fall from 31 March to £122,128.

At the request of the Board, Mrs Paxton had met with 2 firms of accountants to discuss moving to an alternative auditing firm. Quotes had been received which were very similar but very much lower than the fee incurred this year. The decision has been left with Mrs Paxton as to whom we finally approach. It would be convenient to have the same firm prepare accounts for both the Board and the Trust.

Board/Trust Working Agreement

Mrs Paxton reported that the schedule (describing the work the Trust does) attached to the Working Agreement had been amended following the extension of Mr Miller's role to include Director, and cessation of the hatchery. All were in favour that this be signed by Mr Hay (Board) and Mr Shields (Trust). Copies will be circulated to Board Members.

Rent of offices for Board & Trust

Mr Miller reported that a lease had been prepared for the offices at Avochie, but awaiting finalisation by Mr Shields. We had contacted Bowlts but had not received a reply.

Return of Catches

Mrs Paxton was thanked for achieving considerable success in the timely return of catches from the proprietors. Chasers had been sent and currently 7 returns are outstanding. It was not felt that the omission of these would have a large impact on the results so far.

Wild Fisheries Review:

Further correspondence had been circulated to Board members regarding Wild Fisheries Review meetings. It is still the plan to reduce FMO's to about 20 (from 40 original Boards/Trusts). The Board/Trust have a 'Critical Analysis' Template to complete and Mrs Paxton has contacted Ythan and Ugie requesting they supply figures and we will attempt to complete a combined review. Mr Hay intimated that we will still be a small organisation and need to justify our existence, perhaps through realistic improvements, habitat restoration. We will probably need to consider increasing staff to administer an increased workload. The template has to be submitted by 18 Dec. There was a general discussion of 'grouping' of FMOs.

Disinfection & availability of Chemicals:

Mr Miller stated that anglers are required to declare if they have fished abroad. Mr Cooper said that the declarations didn't really serve a useful purpose. He mentioned that on the Dee every beat is given a spray and Virkon, but as most beats have ghillies, they can assist with compliance. The situation on the Deveron is different. Mr Miller has been requested to send a note to all proprietors prior to the start of the season to explain the possible problems and action to be taken. Virkon/ hand sprayers could be supplied to the commercial beats. It is particularly important to disinfect waders.

Proposed Meeting Dates:

Mrs Paxton circulated proposed dates for 2016 – 7 April, 30 June, 15 Sep (Annual Meeting), 8 Dec. No-one foresaw any problems at the moment. She will confirm with the Castle Hotel.

The Board agreed to continue the meetings with Trust members present as several matters discussed involve both organisations.

AOCB – RAFTS AGM:

Mr Hay had attended the RAFTS AGM. He said the good news was that budgets had been prepared and this showed that our ASFB subscription will drop by 48% to £2384 (based on 5 year catch). He reported briefly on other topics raised.

'Fishing for All': Mr Cooper discussed this incentive and asked what could be done in the Deveron area. He suggested 'Children's days' or 'Junior Open days' on certain beats, but this may need to be at the initiative of individual proprietors. Mr Miller reported that children had attended days on still water (Delgatie Castle) in the past.

Meeting closed at 1.55pm Mr Hay thanked everyone for attending. Next meeting is on 7 April 2016, 12 noon, Castle Hotel