

**MINUTES of the MEETING of THE RIVER DEVERON DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD,
a Meeting open to the public within the terms of the Aquaculture & Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013 on
Thursday 28th March 2024 at 12 noon at Avochie House, Huntly.**

**This meeting was held in conjunction with that of the TRUSTEES of THE DEVERON, BOGIE & ISLA RIVERS
CHARITABLE TRUST. These 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 and all social media accounts along with a copy of the proposed Agenda. Any member who wished to attend was required to inform the Clerk.

Members of the Public Present: Carl Malpass

Present: **Jim Cruickshank (B&T), Andrew Allwood (B&T), Andrew Higgins (B),
Matthew Marsden (B), Robert Shields (B & T), Gordon Morison (B), Rory Cooper
(B & T), Richard Breakell (B), Frank Henderson (B&T) (Turriff Angling
Association & Turriff Community)**

In attendance-

Marcus Walters (River Operations Manager - DBI Trust), **Sarah Roebuck** (Clerk
to the Board and Administrator of DBI Trust);

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

Chairman: Mr Andrew Allwood

**Apologies for Absence
& Welcome** **Robert Copland (B), Mrs. J Player (B), David Borthwick (B & T)**
Richie Miller (B and representative of DBI Trust)

**Minutes of Meeting on
6th Dec 2023** A draft of the Minutes of the Meeting had been sent to all Members of the Board
and Trust and unanimously approved by those who had attended. The minutes
have been published on the Board/Trust's website (www.deveron.org) and
signed by the Chairman of the Meeting.

There were no queries nor matters outstanding.

**Aquaculture and
Fisheries (Scotland) Act
2013** Mr Allwood reported that there were no changes noted to Board Members
financial interests since 8th December 2023 meeting as applicable to the Board.
No complaints against the Board had been received by the Clerk since the last
meeting.

Mr Marsden explained he's applying for a woodland grant. The Forestry
commission have advised to put the RDDSB down as a consultee.

**Update on Financial
Matters – Board** Mrs. Roebuck reported the last quarterly accounts to 31st December had been
circulated and the ones for March will be issued in May.
The Board was informed that there were two beat assessments outstanding. Both
beats have had ample reminders via post/ e-mail and phone calls.
Mr Allwood to chase.

Mr Allwood has asked Mrs Roebuck to review the Board's cashflow for the next Board Meeting.

AOCB – Centenary Planning Mr Allwood was in discussions with Macduff Distillery and has asked Mr Marsden if something could be organised on the land The Wrack owns alongside the distillery.

AOCB – Poaching Mr Allwood reported there are two cameras currently set up and already seen poaching incidents. Mr Allwood enquired about the rest of the cameras. Mr Walters explained Mr Miller is looking into deploying more. Mr Morison wondered if the cameras had made a difference. Mr Walters thinks they have been beneficial. One of the incidents caught might not have been reported or picked up had it not been for the cameras.

Mr Allwood to discuss plans to deploy more of the cameras to enhance bailiff monitoring. An e-mail will be circulated with an update.

AOCB – Beaver Plan Mr Allwood suggests the Deveron needs to have a response plan in place for when beavers reach the Deveron catchment. Mr Morison gets the impression that the Deveron would be too far and perhaps far less effected than most other rivers because of its type of trees and wildlife. Mr Cruickshank explained the Deveron is not on the approved list for releasing Beavers, currently there is not a license for releasing beavers in the Deveron.

Mr Allwood explained that inevitably beavers will spread, and we should have something in preparation for when that event does happen in the future. Mr Allwood is concerned they could will interfere with the free passage of fish. Furthermore, bankside trees are likely to be barked or felled by beavers as they have been on the Tay.

Mr Higgins asked if there are any advantages to having beavers on the river and believes we need to understand the balance of the pros and cons of having beavers in the area.

AOCB – Award for the first Salmon caught on the river Mr Breakell was presented with a bottle of Gin by Mr Cruickshank for catching the first salmon of the season, at Ardmiddle.

All members congratulated Mr Breakell.

AOCB – Beaulieu to Peterborough Cable

The final proposed route will be announced in May.

Mr Higgins asked if there's hope for it to go under the river. Mr Morison explained that there is a possibility.

Mr Walters added offshore wind cables seem to be trenched in, drilled under the river, whereas this cable is an overhead one. Mr Morsion explained this one is much bigger which is why it can't go under ground for most of it.

Mr Shields added he doesn't think its in the Trust / Board interest for it to go under the river because of the magnetism from a big cable, it will stop fish in its

track. Mr Shields added all electric cables create a magnetic field around them and its certainly not good for the fish.

Mr Walters responded that offshore wind has explained that the cables would normally have to be buried 2 metres deep which creates enough of a shield for the electromagnetic fields. Studies were carried out to evidence this.

The meeting then focused on Trust Business.

Update on Financial Matters – Trust

Mr. Cruickshank explained that at the start of the year we were looking at a significant deficit over this current financial year, initially a potential deficit of £40k. At the end of the month of February that deficit is reduced to £2k so financially the Trust is in satisfactory shape.

Mr. Cruickshank added that the trust is free to focus on the tasks and challenges facing us. We have the financial resources and we are not restricting what we do just to make the books balance. The challenge now, especially with the restoration plan in place, is to achieve things and make the financial side follow.

Mrs Roebuck reported that the Trust budget will be drawn up for the June meeting.

The valuation of the Trust investment held by McInroy and Wood was £162,550

Report by Mr Miller & Mr Walters on DBI Trust work

Mr Miller, Director of the Trust, and Mr Walters, River Operations Manager, had prepared a written report on the work of the Trust since the last Board Meeting and this was e-mailed to all members (**Detailed report available on request from the Clerk**).

General discussions were had on the topics below:

- Communications
- Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI).
- Fishery Protection
- Water Quality
- Bird Counts and license
- Health and Safety
- Windfarms
- Seal Licence
- Project Deveron – Phase 1
- Project Deveron – Phase 2
- Mrs “Tiny” Morison’s Deveron Salmon – Centenary Celebrations
- The River Within – Chivas & Rivers Trust Partnership
- Wild Salmon Strategy: Implementation Plan 2023 – 2028

Health and Safety

Mr. Miller and Mr. Walters have attended a first aid course.

All fire extinguishers have been serviced.

AOCB – Angler’s Map

The River Map has been updated thanks to Robert Shields and copies can be purchased by contacting the Trust.

Presentation By Mr Walters

Mr Walters, The River Operations Manager gave an excellent presentation on the Sonar Camera and the results from last year.

Mr Walters demonstrated the handy, low-cost PIT tag scanners which can be purchased to check fish that have been caught to see if they have been tagged to see if they have been tagged.

After the presentation, there was a discussion on how to speed up the analysis of the data collected by the sonar camera, which is currently extremely time consuming. At the moment MW is the sole specialist and needs help. It was agreed the possibility of funding from Marine Directorate should be explored.

There was also a brief discussion on the collected data being stored securely for future requirements.

Meeting closed at 3:15pm

Mr Allwood thanked everyone for attending, and in particular, Robert Shields and the family for their kind hospitality at Avochie House today.
Next meeting – Thurs 27th June 2024 at the Banff Springs Hotel, Banff.