

**MINUTES of THE 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 The Banff Springs Hotel, Banff on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 12 noon.**  
**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 are required 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 of the public who wished to attend was required to inform the Clerk.

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

In attendance- **Marcus Walters** (DBI Trust), **Richie Miller** (B and representative of DBI Trust), **Sarah Cruickshank, Stuart Cockersoll** attended as a members of the Public.

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

**Chairman:** Andrew Allwood

**Apologies for Absence:** David Borthwick (B), Sarah Roebuck (Clerk/Administrator)

**Minutes of Meetings on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023** A draft of the Minutes of the Meeting had been sent to all Member's 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](http://www.deveron.org)) and signed 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 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 as applicable to the Board. No complaints against the Board had been received by the Clerk since the last meeting.

Marcus presents findings from ARIS Sonar Counter

**Presentations**

Dr. Alan Wells presents update on Fisheries Management Scotland

Alex Kinninmonth, Marine Directive Scotland presents the work done by NASCO and their results to date.

**Update on Financial Matters – Board** Accounts are self-explanatory.  
Good balance and promising future.  
Mr. Marsden requests for change from father's 'Date of Resignation' to 'Date of Death' - Already amended according to Mr. Miller.

**Budget & Fix Assessment** Mr. Morison declares he is prepared to agree with the majority vote.  
Mr. Higgins and Mr. Cruickshank discuss anomalies and surprises of the new valuation.  
Potential of incorrect past assessments of some beats.

## Budget & Fix Assessment

Mr. Higgins declares:

The level of income to the Board should remain the same.

Work to date has been impressive.

Has some personal disregard about the valuation jumping up.

Mr. Morison declares that when approaching this subject from a commercial angle, subsidies are a different matter and fewer individuals are seeking to purchase fisheries at present. However, otherwise Mr. Morison is quite happy.

Mrs. Player expresses worry for future of fisheries as they are becoming simply 'expensive picnics' and there is a potential neglect of the sport.

Mr. Cruickshank expresses his desire to maintain income whilst sharing that dropping current activities or plans is not an option, i.e., the budget for activities must remain the same. Mr. Cruickshank also shares that from the dual angle of the board as well as the trust, he would like to find a good balance of budgets.

Mr. Cruickshank shares the 10% deduction on previous year's income and that this can be manageable but only if the funds are spent wisely.

Mr. Higgins suggests an increase in rod ticket prices. Mr. Shields replies to Mr. Higgins with concern of customers taking their business elsewhere in reaction to an increase of ticket prices.

Mr. Morison suggests a potential increase in owner expenditure will in turn encourage increase in income.

Mrs. Player declares her interest in this notion.

- Chairman's input:

Mr. Allwood declares there is a disconnect between incomes and that whatever is decided as F.A.L will never be ideal for everybody concerned but there must be an agreement of some kind which can be fixed to ensure the board may move forward.

Mr. Allwood suggest 69p as an option in order to give proprietors some recognition and to see some saving on the assessment.

Mr. Allwood further suggests that were the board to agree on 69p, the budget will most likely have to be trimmed or efficiencies found in the bailiff work.

Mr. Allwood declares that an F.A.L of 69p instead of 73/74p will result in a deliberate bank account decline over the next period, but this has been planned into the cash flow projections.

- Cash Flow Projections:

Mr. Allwood expresses that he would prefer not to pitch the F.A.L too low as running out of money and ending up having to increase the assessment further would show the Board is not in control of its affairs.

Mr. Morison reminds the Board that discussion on the assessment must take place every year in the aim that all board members can have frequent input on the matter and that the cash flow might be better sustained.

- Unanimous agreement from all present members.

Mr. Allwood adds that whilst this is true in terms of assessing the short terms aims, the board must also discuss and draw up long-term projections.

- Mr. Allwood also adds that this should be achieved without pitching the F.A.L too low.

Mr. Higgins inputs that more frequent discussion should be sought as it will be more beneficial to the board and that radio silence is not the way to go.

Mr. Morison declares that the cost of the first batch of surveillance cameras has been covered as individual charitable act in favour of assisting the board.

Mr. Allwood responds with expression of appreciation on the behalf of all members.

Mr. Allwood shares that nearly 50% of the board budget is being donated to the Trust.

- Mr. Allwood adds the surveillance thus far has been revealing on how much illegal fishing has taken place.
- Mr. Morison responds with query of what type of illegal fishing has been occurring.
- Mr. Miller responds by declaring the illegal fishing has been in the nature of rod and line, most regularly occurring from one family in particular and some contract workers in the area.

Mr. Allwood points out that £23/24,000 is budgeted for bailiff work.

Mr. Allwood declares that clerk, office, and accounting funds are an obligation and therefore may not be cut.

- Mr. Allwood adds that the costs towards the office is indeed heavily subsidised thanks to kindness from the Shields family.

Mr. Allwood also adds that the cash flow plan must take into account some few incidental expenses which is simply the nature of things and therefore the budget must recognise this eventuality.

Mr. Marsden queries if there is a way around saving money in terms of taxes?

Mr. Allwood responds by sharing concern that proprietors may not view the Board and its efforts as their preferred charitable cause to which they might donate, thus donations might be received less frequently. Therefore, Mr. Allwood declares that relying on charitable donations from proprietors is not a reliable source of income and may cause issues especially for the Trust.

Mr. Morison suggests that charitable donations could be relied upon for the next year only and then assessed as to what form it takes and what it offers to the Board.

Mr. Cruickshank declares that the Trust is currently a charity and while it depends on a small number of donations, it does have a good public representation and relation thus it may be possible for the Trust to take less funding from the Board in the future.

- Mr. Cruickshank adds that contributory funds from the Board has delivered the Trust to the position it finds itself in at present and is thankful thus far but is prepared to accept change in terms of looking elsewhere for its funding.

Mr. Allwood responds with recognition of Mr. Morison's previous suggestion of accepting charitable donations for one year and then assessing and accepts this might be a successful route, but the Board will have to wait to see how much funding is received before coming to any conclusion.

In terms of the F.A.L. Mr. Morison offers his agreement on 69p

\* UNANIMOUS SETTLEMENT ON F.A.L. AT 69p \*

## **AOCB**

Mr. Allwood requests suggestions as to how best to mark centenary celebrations in 2024 whilst declaring it as a wonderful opportunity for public relations and advertising.

- Mr. Allwood acknowledges the Board has thus far received some interesting ideas from Mr. Morison

Mr. Higgins suggests a 24 hour 'Fishathon' as seen on other Scottish rivers.

- Mr. Miller respectfully shares concern of such an event happening in the summertime.

Mr. Cruickshank seeks to receive Board approval concerning accounts. No comments were mentioned by the Board and therefore they are approved.

## **Update on Financial Matters – Trust**

Mr. Cruickshank goes through year end accounts.

Mr. Cruickshank acknowledges various contributions are subject to their disposal for specific purposes only.

There is an error in the draft accounts in the "Report of the Trustees" section which requires amendment. The overall surplus is stated to be £5375, but the actual profit as detailed later in the accounts is £8,669.

Mr. Cruickshank shares with pleasure that the Trust began the year with projected deficits, but this was flipped into profit even with reduced contract and investment income. He congratulated the Trust team in this financial achievement in difficult circumstances.

Mr. Cruickshank advises that due to COVID and now inflation, where budgets were previously manageable, adequate provisions must be made for next year.

- Budget Projections:

Mr Cruickshank approaches this from a position of expecting the worst situation in order to best prepare for what the future may bring.

Mr Cruickshank shares there is a deficit of £38/39,000 and Mr. Miller provides the following potential causes:

- National electro fishing programme now going ahead
- Mr. Miller looks to Marcus to share what income stream might look like

Mr. Morison queries the progress of the King Edward Burn Project

- Mr. Miller responds:

- SEPA license, find funding to remove weirs.
- May need to use improvement fund.

Mr. Cruickshank comments that the Trust was in the same uncertainty regarding the budget last year, but we came through much better than expected.

- Discussions of projected figure:

Mr. Shields suggests that a 'finger might be kept on the pulse' of each project so that no funding is supplied to unintended projects.

Mr. Cruickshank agrees and shares his concern of current potential for the 'muddying of waters' and therefore figures must be available to back up any assertions and understandings.

The accountants must oversee this matter closely.

Mr. Cruickshank closes the accounts with unanimous agreement and recognition of an ever-changing situation.

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

Mr Miller and Mr Walters had prepared a written report on the work of the Trust since the last Board Meeting, and this was handed out (available on request).

Mr. Morison was asking for an update on Beauly to Peterborough Cable

- There were some concerns raised but a final route is now under discussion.
- Mr. Shields requests communications on this matter
- Mr. Morison shares the Cable people think there is a chance of a sea route but not convincing.
- Mr. Morison shares 'in our area', we've come up with a big chunk of ground and so given them a counter proposal 300 yards south of current proposed route.
- Mr. Morrison declares that whoever drew up the original corridor on the map only chose it because it looked good but neglected any practicalities and convinced the people in charge it is the most ideal route. Therefore, convincing them otherwise now (of the most sensible route) will be problematic. i.e., Mr. Morison's proposal of 300 yards south

Mrs. Player queries any discussions of any other routes to which Mr. Miller provides some updates which is followed by Mr. Shields querying some more specifics.

Mr. Morison asks Mr. Miller if he has seen any fallen debris/damage/wreckage/clear fell.

- Mr. Miller responds that he has not seen anything obvious or dangerous.
- Mr. Morison refers to a big clear fell at Forglan.
- To which Mr. Miller responds saying it is never ideal but nothing deeply frightening
- Mr. Morison asks what will occur when more rain comes in, will there end up being a colossal mess/flood?
- Mr. Miller responds by declaring it will most likely be alright and that what happened in the Bogie catchment area earlier in the year is as bad as it will get.

#### **Health and Safety**

Mr. Miller declares both the PAT and pesticide training have been completed.

**AOCB – Next meeting:** The next Board/Trust meeting will be held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 3.30pm at the Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, followed by the Annual Proprietors Meeting and joint Board and Trust AGM at 5pm.

**Meeting closed at 3.00pm** Mr Allwood thanked everyone for attending.  
Mr. Cruickshank formally closes the meeting for the Trust.  
The Board meeting is also closed.