

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 Wednesday 4th December 2019 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.

Eriod of

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: **Malcolm Hay** (B & T), **A Gordon Morison** (B), **Jim Cruickshank** (B&T), **Andrew Allwood** (B), **Frank Henderson** (B & T) (Turriff Angling Association & Turriff Community), **David Borthwick** (B & T), **Richard Breakell** (B)

In attendance- **Mrs S Roebuck** (Clerk to Board and Administrator of DBI Trust); **Marcus Walters** (DBI Trust) **Richie Miller** (B and representative of DBI Trust),

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

Chairman: Malcolm Hay

Apologies for Absence & Welcome C Richard Marsden (B), Matthew Marsden (B), Robert Shields (B & T), Rory Cooper (B & T), Mrs J Player (B)

Minutes of Meeting on 12th September 2019 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 Hay reported that there were no changes noted to Board Members Financial Interests since 12th September 2019 as applicable to the Board. No complaints against the Board had been received by the Clerk since the last meeting.

Update on Financial Matters Mrs Roebuck reported that bank balances in both organisations were healthy and both budgets will be reviewed to reflect any changes.

The last quarterly accounts to 30 September had been circulated and the ones for December will be issued in January. The valuation of the Trust investment held by McInroy and Wood was £132,448.59.

Mrs Roebuck reported that two Board assessments were outstanding, totalling £3,751.75 and a final reminder was sent. Mrs Roebuck to phone both proprietors and chase up.

A donation from the Board amounting to £31,500 had been paid over to the Trust.

Report by Mr Miller & Mr Walters on DBI Trust work Mr Miller, Director and Senior Biologist 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 handed out (**available on request from the Clerk**).

Water Quality - Mr Walters reported that there had been no further results since the previous water testing in which cypermethrin had been detected in all 3 samples from the main stem. This year sampling will be increased to eight sampling points, to allow for more precision on exactly where cypermethrin is entering the water.

FMS have also been having high level discussions with SEPA and are trying to put pressure on solving these water quality issues.

SEPA have offered to come to the next board meeting and give an update on their most recent work.

AST missing Salmon Project 2019/2020 – AST are producing individual reports with data which should be passed over to the Trust in the coming months. AST are proposing to carry out the same program of smolt tagging next year on the same rivers covered in 2019. They plan to pay for all 100 tags for the Deveron, and it is likely that the Trust will undertake the tagging, under license. AST would like also to examine the goosander diet before, during and after the smolt run, to determine how dietary changes might be impacting on smolt survival.

Dorenell Windfarm – 2020 will be the last year of the wind farm company paying for smolt tracking and electrofishing, and the water monitoring program will also cease in December. The management plan was agreed for a period of “up to 2 years”, so, effectively, they are stopping it a year short. Mr Hay suggested sending a letter to Dorenell to ask them to reconsider. The information gleaned has been very useful to the Trust and a further year of study would be most helpful and not outside the scope of the original agreement.

Glenkeith weir – Mr Miller reported that there had been progress in dealing with this obstruction on the River Isla and that SEPA were now involved. SEPA carried out four electrofishing studies upstream and downstream. Having compared these with the Trust’s existing surveys, SEPA concluded that the status of the water course above the weir is to be downgraded to “Poor”. This means Chivas will now be legally obliged to insert some kind of fish passage in that structure within the next 24 months.

Rod Catch (Provisional) – Still waiting on three small beats to come back with figures. The rod catch for 2019, at around 1,500, will be the second highest since 2013, and compares to the ten year average of 1,849 and the long term average (1952-2019) of 2,397.

The Scottish Government has given the River Deveron a Conservation Status Assessment of category 2.

The Morison Trophy- The Morison Trophy winner for 2019 is Mr Ronald Ewen. Mr Ewen caught and released a 25lbs spring salmon from Lower Netherdale in March.

Opening of River Deveron 2020 – The river opening will be held on the 11th February 2020. The Morison Trophy will be presented by Marina Gibson, an ambassador for the prestigious Orvis fishing company, Atlantic Salmon Trust and Fishing for Schools.

AOCB

Mr Allwood suggested posting an educational video on the website of how to release fish with the minimum of damage. This was unanimously agreed.

Mr Hay had attended the annual FMS meeting in November. A comprehensive report had been commissioned by Scottish Enterprise to investigate the impact of the decline in salmon numbers on rural businesses.

FMS will be reducing the Deveron's subscription by 10%, owing to the reduced rod catch, which will allow for more money to be spent on the river.

AOCB – 2020 Meeting dates:

Dates are now confirmed as:

Thurs 9th April, Thurs 2nd July, Thurs 10th Sep (AGM),

Wed 2nd Dec.

Meeting closed at 2.30pm

Mr Hay thanked everyone for attending.

Next meeting – Thurs 9 April, 12 noon, Castle Hotel.