

**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, 28th SEPTEMBER 2023 at 5pm**

Present: **Andrew Allwood** (Muirsek), **Jim Cruickshank** (Laiters, Carnousie, Ardmiddle, Inverkeithny Glebe, Inverkeithny, Upper Netherdale, Lower Netherdale, Laiters Estate), **Matthew Marsden** (Duff House), **R Shields** (Avochie), **Gordon Morison** (Mountblairy, Bognie), **J Gardiner** (Marnoch Lodge, Mains of Auchingoul), **Mr Higgins** (Lower & Upper Coniecleugh), **George Anderson** (Ghillie at Eden and Lower Inverichnie), **Mark Hawkins, J & D Goucher** (Eden and Lower Inverichnie), **A & V Cheyne** (Mayen), Geoffrey Porritt, **Kane Bedford** (Ghillie, The Wrack), **Carl Malpass** (Deveronside Fishing), **Sarah Cruickshank** (Deveronside Fishing), **A Stancioff** (Dunlugas)

Also in attendance: **Mrs S Roebuck** (Clerk to the Board); **R Miller** (River Director); **M Walters** (River Operations Manager); **Alison Baker** (Restoration Director, Atlantic Salmon Trust).

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

Apologies for Absence: **Rory Cooper, J Player, Frank Henderson, Richard Breakell, Mr A Sharp, Mrs D Sharp, I Hofman.**

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 8th September 2022, it was proposed that they be taken as read and were unanimously approved.

2023 Proposed Activities

- Major restoration programme on the Kind Edward Burn.
- Pernod Ricard have agreed to build a fish pass (Glenkeith Weir).
- The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative has been renewed for another 3 years.

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 – Updated Map of The River Deveron Mr Allwood reported the Map of the River Deveron is being updated by Bowlts. This will be available to purchase soon.

Future of the Board/Trust: A presentation was given by Mr Marcus Walters during the Annual General Meeting of the Deveron, Bogie, and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust.

Questions asked:

Mr Cruickshank: PIT tag Array information, is that UpToDate?
Mr Walters responded, that the information is up to date and can be accessed at any time to see what fish that were present that day. The bit

that isn't up to date is the data analysis of it, that is broken down by MW at a later time.

Mrs Goucher: Commented that the stock in the river is low and the proprietors are keen to see some positive actions.

Mr Walters responded, The Deveron isn't unique in what is happening and the challenges we are facing, and majority of the problems are out at sea. The river is producing fish and around 20 years ago 15% or more would have made it back, now it is maybe less than 3% or 4%. The challenge is how can we withstand that change.

Mrs Goucher: Is the Trust being supported by the Scottish Government?

Mr Walters responded, they supported us in the capital for the equipment for the monitoring and they had a salmon strategy published last year. It highlights the work they are planning to do, to try and restore salmon populations.

There does seem to be more funding available through the Nature Restoration Fund with Nature Scotland to do more restoration work.

Mr Goucher: The King Edward burn, the silt seems to be coming from the quarry.

Mr Walters reported this is unlikely. Also agricultural field margins are lacking the farmers there are not breaking any rules, they are using the field margins up to what they can. The King Edward burn is suffering from a historical lack of neglect. It has been over time straightened to maximise production but due to the climate change and the power of stream runoff the Trust's survey on the King Edward and found a lot of the habitat gets destroyed. There is nothing to slow down the water.

Project Deveron

A talk was given by Alison Baker, Restoration Director from the Atlantic Salmon Trust during the Annual General Meeting of the Deveron, Bogie, and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust.

Questions asked:

Mrs Goucher: Do you have data on seal population?

Ms Baker responded, The Atlantic Salmon Trust does not engage with this, but Fisheries Management Scotland is actively engaged with Scottish government on the licensing or non-licensing to deal with seals in the river that come in.

Mr Goucher: What about Abstractions?

Ms Baker explained, We are hoping to bring in a member of staff to work with landowners and abstractors and having that conversation which will give a little bit of extra resource.

Mr Cheyne: What can we learn from Norway/ Iceland / Canada and their fish population in the comparisons of what's happening in the UK?

How can we push to get something done, to find out more statistical data.

There is no scientific data to back anything up.

Ms Baker reported, there is a lot of international information exchange, those countries further north are not suffering quite so badly as the ones further south. Some of that might be due to marine temperature.

Thanks: Mr Allwood thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed: At 6:30pm, followed by refreshments.