

**MINUTES of THE COMBINED ANNUAL MEETING of QUALIFIED PROPRIETORS of
THE RIVER DEVERON DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY and ANNUAL PUBLIC OPEN MEETING
held via Video Conferencing using MS Teams on Thursday, 10th SEPTEMBER 2020 at 5pm.**

Present: **Mr A Allwood** (Muiresk), **Mr J Cruickshank** (Carnousie, Ardmiddle, Inverkeithny Glebe, Inverkeithny, Upper Netherdale, Lower Netherdale), **Mr R Shields** (Avochie), **Mr M R Marsden** (Duff House), **Mr R Breakell** (co-optee represents salmon anglers), **Mr F Henderson** (co-optee represents salmon anglers), **Mr R Cooper** (Mains of Auchingoul), **Mr M Hay** (Edinglassie).
Also in attendance: **Mrs S Roebuck** (Clerk to the Board); **Mr R Miller** (River Director); **Mr Marcus Walters** (River Operations Manager); **Miss Karen Muller** (Project Officer); **Dr Colin Bull** (Principal Investigator of the Atlantic Salmon Trust)

Apologies for Absence: **Mrs J Player** (Upper Inverichnie), **Mr D Borthwick** (co-optee represents salmon anglers), **Shabondy Corporation** (Beldorney), **A G Morison** (Mountblairy and Bognie), **J Shields** (Woodside, Coniecleugh & Inverisla) **D Goucher** (Eden and Lower Inverichnie).

Chairman: Mr Allwood welcomed Proprietors, Mandatories, Ghillies, Members of the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust and members of the public.

The combined annual meeting of Qualified proprietors of the River Deveron Fishery Board and Annual Public open meeting was held via video conference to meet current COVID-19 guidelines and as advised by FMS.

Appointment of Mr Andrew Allwood as Chairman for the Board. No objections were made, and all agreed. Mr Allwood thanked Mr Hay for all the hard work that had been done over the years.

Minutes of last Annual Meeting: Having circulated the minutes in advance for the last meeting held on 12th September 2019, it was proposed that they be taken as read and were unanimously approved.

Annual Report & Accounts: 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.

Future of the Board/Trust: Mr Allwood invited Richie Miller, River Director, to give a report on the work of the Trust. As the main activities are highlighted in The Annual Report, Mr Miller gave only a short summary on certain activities.

Mr Andrew Allwood thanked the Atlantic Salmon Trust and everyone involved for all the help they have been putting in to try and get answers on the decline of the fish population and what needs to be done. He expressed on behalf of the Board their thanks for all the valiant efforts of the volunteers and scientific colleagues of the Trust and especially the hard work put in by the Bailiffs and the deputies over the difficult summer period.

Mr Miller explained that the works over the last 12 months has been highlighted in the annual report and was posted out prior to the AGM. A summary of the FMP was also circulated.

Mr Miller elaborated on the future and discussed the top three priorities for the Trust:

Priority 1: The focus is on getting ready for the final barriers in Keith which did not seem to have been as big of a problem last winter but Mr Miller explained when the water levels are not consistent in the back end, then next to no fish can get over and that it would be better to get the fish through every year. Furthermore, the Trust is working with Chivas to build a fish pass in Keith which is now also a legal requirement.

Priority 2: The restoring of middle and lower tributaries; Forgue burn, Turriff burn, King Edward burn and a tributary off the Isla, the Crooksmill burn.

Priority 3: The Trust will continue the work with the Missing Salmon Project and hope to potentially look at any tagging effect and other work that Mr Colin Bull was to discuss during his presentation.

Mr Allwood asked about the time scale considered for the lower tributaries. Mr Miller explained that it could be possible to see remedial works taking place on the Crooksmill burn towards 2022. He also explained that works on the other tributaries e.g. Turriff burn in the lower section will begin to progress quicker. The Trust will liaise with landowners and get permission and a plan in place this year for the works to be done the following summer. It is generally a couple of years' process, but the Trust are working hard to move it on as quickly as they can.

Mr Cooper asked if anything is being undertaken that has not been a continuation of what has been done in the last 3 years. Mr Miller informed everyone that there is potential increased monitoring and research with AST in Autumn and next spring and that a lot of the work is continuation or ongoing work. The main new things will be to progress the habitat restoration in the middle and lower rivers and the work with AST. There are other known activities that will progress if the Trust are able to due to Covid-19, such as young angler days which were a big success and promoting the river.

Question & Answer Session:

The Chairman now welcomed questions and observations.
No questions were received by the Clerk.

Mr Miller responded to a general question of how the season is going so far. Since coming out of lock down the fishing has been reasonably encouraging in some areas. The Deveron has missed a lot of the water that some of the other rivers have had but after talking to three beats on the river Mr Miller reported that all three had increasing numbers of fish in comparison to this time last year. He also added that one of the beats had 80 fish so far with 20% caught in June, 42% caught in July and 38% caught in August which shows a spread over the summer.

Thanks:

Mr Allwood thanked Mr Miller and Mr Walters and all the team for looking after the river so diligently.

Meeting closed:

At 5:40pm. The AGM of the Trustees and a presentation by Dr Colin Bull, Principal investigator of the Atlantic Salmon Trust followed.