



RIVER DOON DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

Clerk to the Board: Iain K Clark, LLB (Hons), Dip LP, NP
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MINUTES

of

Meeting of River Doon District Salmon Fishery Board

Monday 17 March 2025 at 4pm,

Western House Hotel, 66 Craigie Road, AYR KA8 0HA

1. Persons Present

<i>Alan Macdonald ("AM")</i>	<i>Doonside Estate (Chair)</i>
<i>Iain K Clark ("IKC")</i>	<i>Gilson Gray LLP (Clerk to the Board)</i>
<i>Struan Candlish ("SC")</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>
<i>Mark Colman ("MC")</i>	<i>Smithston Fishings Club, Board Member</i>
<i>David Cosh ("DC")</i>	<i>Doonfoot Fishings, Board Member</i>
<i>Martin Donachy ("MD")</i>	<i>Woodlands, Board Member</i>
<i>Stuart Dorward ("SD")</i>	<i>Board Member (Salmon Fishers' Representative)</i>
<i>Peter Kennerley ("PK")</i>	<i>Auchendrane House, Board Member</i>
<i>Carlos Van Heddegem ("CVD")</i>	<i>Holms Fishing, Board Member</i>

2. Apologies

<i>Stuart Brabbs ("SB")</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>
<i>Lawrence Dalgleish ("LD")</i>	<i>Blackhill, Rozelle, Board Member</i>

3. Declaration of Members' Interests

In accordance with the Board's good governance obligations, the Board has agreed a Meetings Protocol and Policy on Members Interests. All Board Members have signed a Declaration and the Board maintains a Register of Relevant Interests, pursuant to *Section 46E of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act")*. All Board Members present were invited to declare new/amend existing interests. No such new/amended interests were declared.

4. Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting – (Doc 1)

The Minutes were unanimously approved as follows:

Proposed: DC
Seconded: MC

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

None

6. Report from Clerk to the Board (IKC) – (Doc 2)

The Clerk presented a Written Report. There were no questions arising.

7. **Fishery Assessments – (Doc 3)**

The Clerk presented a Report on Fishery Assessments and provided an update. There are two remaining Fishery Assessments with arrears and he will continue to press the two outstanding

8. **Financial Report - (Doc 4)**

The Clerk presented a Written Report. There were no questions arising.

9. **Annual Catch Returns - (Doc 5)**

The Clerk presented an updated Report on Annual Catch Returns and concerns were expressed that not all were being returned. It was agreed to discuss the importance of accurate Catch Returns at the Annual Meetings. Meantime, the Clerk and his Assistant, Peter Scanlan, will follow up in advance of those meetings.

10. **River Doon River Watch Scheme**

The Clerk reported that Alan McDowall was no longer able to carry out the role of River Watch Patrol Coordinator, due to taking on other work. The Board recorded their thanks and appreciation for the work he had done.

The Clerk had discussed matters with Alan Shannon, who is prepared to share the Patrols with another Volunteer, Russel Uriarte and recommended to the Board that they both would take on that role between them, in addition to Alan Shannon's role as River Watch Coordinator. The Clerk is to arrange a meeting with Alan Shannon and Russel Uriarte.

The Clerk reported on an incident of fishing for Salmon and apparently killing two Salmon prior to the commencement of the Salmon Fishing Season, which had been posted on Facebook by the boy's mother. Enquiries had been made with the boy's father, who was unreceptive. The Clerk reported the matter to the River Watch Coordinator, who in turn will discuss with Police Scotland. The Board was obviously concerned about this incident and believes this is a matter of education.

The Board agreed the River Watch Scheme should be part of the Agenda for both Annual Meetings. The Clerk is also to invite Police Scotland to attend the Annual Public Meeting.

11. **River Doon Code of Practice – (Doc 6)**

The Clerk presented a Revised Draft of the Code of Practice, which was unanimously approved by the Board.

12. **Report from Ayrshire Rivers Trust - (Doc 7)**

SC presented a Written Report and the following highlights were discussed:

Proposed Work - ART have been liaising with proprietors for permission to carry out work and will revert with Proposed Work for the forthcoming Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors.

Electrofishing Report - ART had prepared a full electrofishing Report which would be made available for the forthcoming Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors.

NEW River Doon Catch Return App - ART will be preparing a short video on how to download and use the App. The idea is to encourage everyone in syndicates, clubs and associations to use this to aid Annual Catch Return reporting. ART will make a live demonstration and launch the App at the Annual Public Meeting.

Tree Planting - ART will be working up Grant Applications to the Galloway Biosphere for tree planting. The expectation is that they will secure £2,000 i.e. £1,000 for Drumgrange & Keirs Angling Club themselves and £1,000 for the Board to support tree planting on the river.

Work at Waterside - As regards proposed work in the area at Waterside, the landowner's agreement is required. However, they have had difficulty in checking the ownership. The Board agreed to pay the outlays and additional fees for GGLLP, if necessary, to check for maps in the historic files from the former Clerk and, if necessary, to make searches in the Registers of Scotland and to make enquiries with the Insolvency Practitioners who are the Liquidators of the Scottish Coal Company.

Previous work on fencing - Where work was done previously on fencing, a large tree came down due to Storm Eowyn, but the fencing was relatively easily repaired. Invoicing from the contractors is expected to be received at a value of £9,200 compared to the £10,000 budget approved last year.

National Park Proposal – ART has responded to the National Consultation, but there is still a lack of clear information so far.

Timber extraction at 'the Funny Wood' – ART are in discussions with Mark Gibson, the proprietor of Craigengillen Estate.

Chapelton Burn - Neighbourhood Systems Funding System Application for Grant Funding will be made by ART to assist the Board to help secure costs towards CBEC Report.

Contribution to ART – This year's 'Donation' (rather than Invoice, as means no VAT to be charged) will be assessed in June 2025 and will be increased by RPI (held at the same level for the last two years).

Japanese Knotweed – ART did a bit last year and they recommend that the Board allocate around £2,000 for this year. The Board agreed.

Waterside Green Engineering and Wild Fisheries Fund - ART proposed an allocation of £3,000 of match funding from the Board this year, compared to around £20,000 total costs, which will protect two spawning redds. The Grant Application will possibly require to be submitted through the Board. The Board agreed to this allocation and the Clerk will work with ART on any such Application.

Fencing on Drumgrange Burn in the Patna area – ART recommended £2,500 each year for the next 2 years (a total £5,000) be allocated, towards a total cost of £10,000. The Board agreed.

Mossdale Burn Fencing – this is a possible area for future work.

Grant Applications - As was apparent, ART are working with the Board on leveraging grant funding through matched funding and submitting grant applications to appropriate grant-making funders.

Weir Removal Work - MD drew the Board's attention to the work done by ART (noted on their Facebook page) on the Border Esk, which is a particular type of small weir work and asked whether the Board should consider a similar approach in the Doon Catchment? The approach taken on the Border Esk works best on mass fill concrete and would be considered, as appropriate on the River Doon. The idea would be to 'notch' weirs to allow smolts to escape and help avoid the bird predation issue. The Board discussed the Patna weirs, but noted that the ownerships are in dispute; and the Board requires permission from the landowners, before the relevant applications could be made to SEPA and funding the costs would need to be considered.

Smolt Migration - The Board discussed the low water at this time, and concerns about smolt migration from the river to the sea. The Board instructed the Clerk to seek double freshets in accordance with new arrangements about which DRAX had contacted the Board and SEPA because of health and safety concerns (essentially lower volume freshets over a more extended period of time) weekly until the end of April, to ease the safe passage of the smolts and to help counteract the piscivorous bird predation issue. This is also combined with the bird count/bird cull arranged with the relevant licence from NatureScot.

13. **Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors + Annual Public Meeting**

(a) Dates:

Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors: Thursday 27 March 2025, 7pm –

Apologies in advance were proffered by MC, CVD & SD

Annual Public Meeting: Thursday 17 April 2025, at the changed time of 6pm

Apologies in advance were proffered by MC

(b) Calling Notices – these went, but there was a formatting issue with the email and a fresh email will be sent.

(c) Draft Statement of Annual Accounts to 31 December 2024 - (Doc 8)

The Draft prepared by Azets was presented. MC raised a query re Tax increasing compared to interest and IKC agreed to check with Azets. Otherwise, the Board was happy for these to be presented to the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors on 27 March 2025.

(d) Theme(s)/Discussion Topics?

The Board discussed a number of topics relating to:

- Catch Returns
- Demonstration/Presentation re NEW Catch Return App
- River Watch Scheme
- Hatchery

SD suggested that the work being done by Drumgrange & Keirs Angling Club is a good example of the type of work which can be done. An invitation is to be made to Police Scotland to attend the Annual Public Meeting regarding the River Watch Scheme.

14. **Draft Annual Report**

The Clerk noted the following responsibilities:

Deadline for submissions: Friday 21 March 2025

- (1) Chairman's Report – Alan Macdonald ("AM") - done
- (2) Summary of Work Done
 - a. Report from Clerk to the Board - **IKC**
 - b. Report on Fishery Assessments - **IKC**
 - c. Consultation Responses - **IKC**
 - d. Governance - **IKC**
 - e. Annual Catch Returns – **IKC**
 - f. Draft Annual Accounts - **IKC**
 - g. Code of Practice - **IKC**
 - h. River Watch Scheme – **Alan Shannon – Report**
 - i. Scientific Report - **ART**
- (3) Future Work of the Board
 - a. Report on Expected Budget - **IKC**
 - b. Proposed Works for Discussion/Agreement - **ART**

15. **Any Other Business**

DC noted that FMS under their old name (i.e. before they became FMS) used to produce a Catch Return for all the Rivers in Scotland. He was particularly disappointed SG do not report the Catch Returns in an intelligible form that are collected through the Scottish Government Marine Inspectorate. There was a discussion as to whether it would be appropriate for the Board to write to SG Marine Inspectorate or whether the Board should ask FMS to consider whether they could collate the Catch Returns again for Scotland.

16. **Dates of Next Meetings**

- (a) **Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors: 27 March 2025, 7pm**
- (b) **Annual Public Meeting: 17 April 2025, 6pm (changed time from 7pm)**
- (c) **Mid-season Meeting?** The Board would defer this for further consideration.

AM thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting concluded at 17:42