



RIVER DOON DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

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MINUTES

of

Annual Public Meeting of the River Doon District Salmon Fishery Board:

Wednesday 24 April 2024 at 7:30pm
Western House Hotel, 66 Craigie Road, AYR KA8 0HA

1. 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>David Cosh (“DC”)</i>	<i>Doonfoot Fishings, Board Member</i>
<i>Martin Donachy (“MD”)</i>	<i>Woodlands, Board Member</i>
<i>Lawrence Dalgleish (“LD”)</i>	<i>Blackhill, Rozelle, Board Member</i>
<i>Stuart Dorward (“SD”)</i>	<i>Board Member (Salmon Fishers’ Representative)</i>
<i>Carlos Van Heddegem (“CVD”)</i>	<i>Holms Fishing, Board Member</i>
<i>Peter Kennerley (“PK”)</i>	<i>Auchendrane House, Board Member</i>
<i>Stuart Brabbs (“SB”)</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>
<i>Struan Candlish (“SC”)</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>
<i>Carolyn Bryce</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>
<i>Alan Shannon</i>	<i>River Doon River Watch Coordinator</i>
<i>Jamie Boyle (“JB”)</i>	<i>Cassilis Estate</i>
<i>Allan Ferguson</i>	<i>Holms Fishing</i>
<i>Ian Wilson (“IW”)</i>	<i>Drumgrange & Keirs Angling Club</i>
<i>Wendy Whiteford</i>	<i>Drumgrange & Keirs Angling Club</i>
<i>Bob Beveridge (“BB”)</i>	<i>MacManniston Beat</i>

2. Apologies

<i>Mark Colman (“MC”)</i>	<i>Smithston Fishings Club, Board Member</i>
<i>Alan McDowall</i>	<i>River Doon River Watch Patrol Coordinator</i>
<i>Mark Gibson</i>	<i>Craigengillen Estate</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*. All Board Members present were invited to declare new/amend existing interests. No other interests were declared or amended.

In addition, the Clerk notified those Qualified Proprietors and Members of the Public present of the requirements of the Meetings Protocol. It was agreed that those present would each be noted as representing the interests of their Beat or organisation; and any

other additional relevant financial interest should be declared under the 2003 Act. Allan Ferguson of Holms Fishing also declared that he works for SEPA. No additional interests were declared.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The previous Minutes of the Annual Public Meeting on 20 April 2023 were unanimously approved by those present – Proposed: MD Seconded: DC

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

There were no Matters Arising.

6. Presentation of the Annual Report of the activities of the Board for the year to 31 December 2023:

(a) Report from the Chair – Alan Macdonald, Chair (“**AM**”)

Was presented by AM and no issues arising.

(b) Report from the Clerk to the Board – Iain K Clark, Clerk to Board (“**IKC**”)

Was presented by IKC and no issues arising.

(c) Report on Fishery Assessments – IKC

Was presented by IKC.

A question was raised as to whether or not Bogton Loch was included in the Valuation Roll and it was noted that it is not.

It was noted that Hollybush House has been sold and the new Proprietor is not yet known

There were no other questions arising.

(d) Consultation Responses – IKC

Was presented by IKC. There followed a general discussion regarding the Proposed River Grading for the River Doon. It was noted that the River Doon is only 1.5% above the threshold for Category 3. The threshold is 60% and we are sitting at 61.5%.

The Board again emphasised the Board’s policy is 100% Catch & Release of all Salmon throughout the season.

It was noted that the FMS conference would be coming up and there would be discussions about sealice monitoring from salmon farms and volunteers were sought to attend and report to the Board, if appropriate.

(e) Good Governance – IKC

Was presented by IKC and no issues arising.

(f) Code of Practice – IKC

The Code of Practice had been agreed to be updated to include provisions relating to the humane killing of Grayling found in the River Doon. IW asked for the rationale behind why they should be killed. SB explained that they are not native to the River Doon and so are an introduced species. In fact, to introduce them to the River Doon (as is the suspicion) is an illegal act. In simple terms, they are not meant to be there, and the scientific advice is to eradicate them before they become a problem, competing for space and food with native species. SB did comment that, if they became established in later years, then the Board may have to change the advice, but the current advice remains to humanely kill any Grayling found in the River Doon.

(g) Scientific Report – Stuart Brabbs, Ayrshire Rivers Trust (SB)

Was presented by SB, with key highlights being:

Electro fishing survey – for details see the Report itself. The upper river does the best. This tapers off as you get closer to the sea.

eDNA sampling was carried out in Loch Doon. There are no signs of American Signal Crayfish.

Drumgrange & Keirs Angling Club - have been helping with tree planting and stabilizing erosion works. ART are to attend one of their meetings. IW commented that it had been a challenge to get the Club to agree to adopting 100% Catch and Release, but they did so. The Board indicated that they were delighted with the Club taking this approach and MD commented that they are to be congratulated in doing so.

Pollution Incident from the North Kyle Wind Farm - was identified and they were given a week to resolve. IW and other representatives of Drumgrange & Keirs went to up to see the site and spoke with the contractors, who have now put in mitigation measures – bales and nets etc. Whilst it is disappointing it happened in the first place, and the Contractors acknowledged their failings, it is encouraging they have put mitigation measures in place

Pennyvennie – ongoing pollution from mining – ART are monitoring.

Brockloch Burn – ART have now completed the works there – green engineering, fencing and tree planting. This was a very degraded section of burn, but still produces good numbers of Salmon.

Netherton Burn – this is a very important tributary. There was previous poor management, but the new owner is keen to work with ART and the Board. The culvert has been cleared, due to a collapsed weir. With support from the Board, ART have put in fencing to exclude livestock and are putting in solar pumps + tree planting and trying to stabilize the bank, with all the licenses in place.

Between these two projects - £45-50,000 of investment into those two sub-catchments.

Culroy Burn – As a result of investment from 2016/2017, this is now looking really well. There is a big increase in trout numbers, and potential for salmon to get there,

they will fry. The importance of trees providing shade in the summer months was emphasised.

Pink Salmon – It was noted that in 2025 there is an expectation of Pink Salmon potentially coming into the river. They were found in the River Ayr and River Stinchar in 2023. If they are found, they should be humanely killed and anglers should inform the Board. The details are in the Code of Practice.

Farmed Salmon – Again the details are in the Code of Practice – humanely kill them and take samples. You should take photos, send a message, and take samples.

INNS control – The Board had agreed to pay for Japanese Knotweed control again. There was also a call for Proprietors and Anglers to assist in pulling Himalayan Balsam. Jamie @ Casillis – ART – from CHapelton Burn down – offer from ART to help

Fencing – this project is ongoing. ART are making headway with this. They have support of the Board to carry out fencing, with associated planting of trees. This can be expensive – the trees, guards, and stakes, and planting all have to be paid for – approx. cost of £5.50 per tree. ART have propagated 7-8,000 seeds i.e. they are good range of native trees. The Board funding will purchase guards and stakes. They will try and do this in tandem with fencing, such as the example of the section done in Holms.

Skeldon Mill – ART had to go back to SEPA to ask them to resolve the issues with the fish pass. The owner agreed to timber baulks but then complained. ART are looking about doing something different.

7. Presentation of Annual Audited Statement of Accounts to 31 December 2023

The Annual Audited Statements of Accounts to 31 December 2023 prepared by Azets Accountants and approved at the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors on 14 March 2024 were presented by IKC and there were no issues arising.

8. The proposed activities of the Board for the next year

(a) Updated Budget – IKC

A report was presented by IKC and the Budget explained. There were no questions arising.

(b) Proposed Works for Discussion – SB

The Budget and Works were approved at the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors on 14 March 2024:

Japanese Knotweed - £1,500
Himalayan Balsam – get anglers to do it
Fencing £2,000
Tree Planting £1,500

Total Allocated: £5,000

ART presented a Report, explaining that there was a focus on where works can be carried out to provide clear benefits for the river e.g. the Culroy Burn works are a good example. This is based on the science e.g. fencing in priority areas preventing poaching by cattle and livestock, which had been reducing water quality.

Tree planting is another priority, because of climate change and increased water temperatures, it is important to provide cool, clear water for Salmon

It was noted by ART that this Board is very proactive in doing that and other Boards are seeing what we are doing here.

Invasive weeds are also targeted because they cause erosion and where there is no soil cover, this causes degradation of the banks and problems of silt in the river etc.

9. Question and Answer Session:

(a) River Doon River Watch Scheme – Alan Shannon (“AS”)

AS presented a short Report and noted that, if anyone sees or suspects an illegal act, they should call Police Scotland on 101 and Alan Shannon, River Watch Coordinator on the dedicated mobile number:

07469 819 345

AS will take a record of the incident and coordinate with Police Scotland and pass details on to the Clerk and the Wildlife Protection Officers

IKC noted it is important that Incidents provide proper information e.g. date, time, location and any car registration number and description of persons. Any photographic evidence would also be helpful.

DC raised concerns about a lack of previous response from Police Scotland, due to resourcing issues. IKC noted that we have to go through the procedure of reporting, or otherwise it is a waste of time. The more information that is provided in the Reports, the better. We have now established good relationships with the Wildlife Crime Officers.

4 Incidents were reported in 2023, all of which information was passed on to Police Scotland.

IW noted that Drumgrange & Keirs Angling Club had now taken on the Craigengillen stretch, as tenant with Craigengillen Estate. Historically there had been a free for all. The Club had faced the dilemma of immediate reporting the aggravating any particular incidents. The Club members had decided to engage with the population in the first instance, rather than reporting and to encourage any persons found to be fishing illegally to join the Club. BB commented that it would be appropriated to put up posters making it clear that illegal fishing may result in prosecution.

ART will speak to Mark Gibson at Criagengillen Estate and the River Watch Coordinator and River Watch Patrol Coordinator will engage with a view to putting up posters as well as carrying out increased patrols in this area.

(b) Annual Catch Returns – IKC/SB

A report was presented. There were no questions arising.

10. Any Other Business - AM

As agreed, the Board had procured a donation from the Board Chair of 4 tickets for racing in the Gold Cup for September, to be donated to Drumgrange & Keirs Angling Club in recognition of their cooperation in adopting the Catch & Release Policy and so they can offer as a prize relating to the changed arrangements for the Salmon Competition.

11. Next Meeting

TBC

AM thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 21:09.