



RIVER AYR DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

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MINUTES

of

**Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors
and Annual Public Meeting**

of

RIVER AYR DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

held at

The Mauchline & District Kilmarnock FC Supporters Club

8 Earl Grey Street, Mauchline, KA5 5AD

on 17 July 2024 at 7:30pm

1. Persons Present

For Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors:

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|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Alan Hill (AH)</i> | <i>Barskimming Estate, Board Member (Chairperson)</i> |
| <i>Iain K Clark (IKC)</i> | <i>Gilson Gray LLP (Clerk to the Board)</i> |
| <i>Gordon Millar (GM)</i> | <i>Mauchline Ballochmyle Angling Club (Salmon Fishers' Rep)</i> |
| <i>Max Stobbs (MS)</i> | <i>Mauchline Ballochmyle Angling Club, Board Member</i> |
| <i>Robin Wilson</i> | <i>Ladykirk Angling Club, Board Member</i> |
| <i>Charles McDade</i> | <i>Sorn Angling Club, Board Member</i> |
| <i>Nick Wright</i> | <i>Sorn Estate & Dumfries Estates LLP, Board Member</i> |
| <i>Adrian Laird Craig</i> | <i>Heilar Beat</i> |
| <i>Mike Bullen</i> | <i>Stair Beat</i> |
| <i>Calum Allan</i> | <i>Sorn Angling Club</i> |
| <i>Scott Davidson</i> | <i>Muirkirk Angling Club</i> |
| <i>Robert Hyslop</i> | <i>Muirkirk Angling Club</i> |
| <i>Stuart Brabbs</i> | <i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i> |
| <i>Struan Candlish</i> | <i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i> |
| <i>Carolyn Bryce</i> | <i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i> |

Additionally joining for Annual Public Meeting:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Robert Scott</i> | <i>Mauchline Ballochmyle Angling Club</i> |
| <i>John Easton</i> | <i>Mauchline Ballochmyle Angling Club</i> |
| <i>Louis Smith</i> | <i>Mauchline Ballochmyle Angling Club</i> |

2. Apologies

None

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 present 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")*.

In addition, the Clerk notified those 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*. No additional interests were declared.

4. Presentation of the Annual Report of the activities of the Board for the year to 28 February 2024:

(a) Report from the Chair – Alan Hill, Chair (AH)

The Chair presented his Report (an updated version would be made available). Highlights included:

The river has never been cleaner. The Board continuously works with ART to keep the reiver clean and work on improvements to the river.

But there is only a 2% return of smolts. He attended SG Meeting last week + someone in Norway gave a presentation where there were 2 Million tonnes of mackerel taken in fishing grounds sitting south of Iceland which is right in the middle of the smolt runs. He noted that we are more susceptible to global warming. Through the Atlantic Salmon Project they fitted transponders to smolts. They had found transponders in the mackerel. That appears to be a worrying trend. It is estimated that 4Million Tonnes have moved across from Iceland towards the Faroes and the mackerel are eating the smolts. Essentially, the fish have moved further North and no-one is fishing for them there. There were 3 different Norwegian factory ships full of mackerel.

Back at a local level, as Chair, he wants to try and link with the clubs as much as we can.

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

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

(c) Report on Fishery Assessments – IKC

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

(d) Bird Cull

A Bird Control Licence has been secured from NatureScot, particularly to deal with goosanders and cormorants, who are eating the small trout and salmon fry.

(e) Consultations

There was a proposal for increased abstraction from the Catrine Dam. ART put in a response objecting. There has been some feedback. This is not done and

dusted yet. The Board may need proprietors to issue letters of objections and even kayakers etc may need to object.

(f) Code of Practice

This is to be updated for next Season to deal with:

- Pink Salmon
- Non-Invasive species
- Red Skin disease
- FMS Reporting
- Report to ART

(g) Scientific Report – Ayrshire Rivers Trust (ART)

SB of ART presented a Report. Highlights included:

ART have developed a Catch Report App. AH has been trialling and will continue to do so over the remainder of the season. The essence of it is that you upload details to the app, including photos, GPS button (coordinates) and record catch returns. This also could be used to report birds on a separate page (which could be developed).

ART has worked on a National Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) to attract 'green washing' funding. The calculate £7.5M of investment is required in the River Ayr catchment. This may be attractive to big funders. ART are coordinating with Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) to bring outward investment into the river

The FMP will be uploaded to Board's Website, when it has been updated.

Invasive Weeds – the Board continues to support ART on this. The Board agreed to pay £4k this year for Giant Hog Weed and Japanese Knotweed control – particularly on the Lugar and downstream areas.

Nethermills Counter – is still being developed. The data will not be produced in real time.

It was noted that Grilse are getting smaller – 68cm is breakpoint between Salmon and Grilse. ART suggested this being marked on rods.

More Multi Sea Winter Salmon are coming in. They seem to be selecting night time to run the river. There could be several fish in the pool between the two weirs. There are some big fish running at this time of year.

The Counter is only recording 30.6% accurately at present. This is still being updated/improved.

We are not seeing Sea Trout – less than 40 over 2 years – virtually non-existent in this river. There was very heavy lice infestation on sea trout.

They have possibly identified a Pink Salmon last year – and it is believe they were in river last year.

Electro fishing. They are not seeing good figures – bit better than last few years – middle and upper marginally up – lower margins – zero fish – combined pollution inputs.

It was noted that someone had been putting brown trout in the river. This shouldn't be done without a licence.

Louis Smith noted an issue with silt in the river – at last spate and reported pollution to SEPA.

There was a discussion about the Burnock Burn and possible source of pollution, also the Bogend Burn, which have been reported repeatedly to SEPA.

Damaged habitats – CAR (Controlled Activity Regulations) – ART work non-stop to seek enforcement from the various persons.

Pink Salmon – may now also be coming in on even years – they were apparently found in the Spey. That is why the Code of Practice is to be updated to reflect this.

5. Presentation of Annual Audited Statement of Accounts to 28 February 2024

The Clerk presented the Audited Statements of Accounts prepared by Azets Chartered Accountants. There were no questions arising.

The Accounts were approved:

Proposed: Mike Bullen

Seconded: Charlie McDade

The Clerk emphasised the need for Fishery Assessments to be paid timeously. There is approximately £22,000 of income annually compared to around £20,000 of regular Expenditure, so it is critical for cash flow that all Proprietors, Clubs and Associations make payment when required.

6. Proposed activities of the Board for the next year

Proposed Works

ART have prepared two Fisheries Management Plans (one for the Board and one for Scottish Government. There was a discussion about the cost of £17-18,000 to do work on Mauchline Burn, including fencing to get animals out of the river etc. There was also a discussion regarding proposed work to the Bogend Burn, Catrine and the Burn at Stair.

There was a possibility of an extra up to £3,000 being allocated for the treatment of Japanese Knotweed. That is to be discussed at the next Board Meeting.

There was also a discussion regarding fencing for some of the burns. The Board would be asked to make contributions towards funded projects which ART are applying for.

It was noted that in relation to treeplanting, ART have their own Tree Nursery and therefore costs can be significantly reduced and we would be planting indigenous trees.

River Watch Scheme

A discussion took place about the Board setting up a River Watch Scheme similar to that by the River Doon DSFB.

A Camera has been installed at a completely discreet and secret location. It is monitored 24 hours and accessible by 5 individuals. The Board is looking to purchase more to place these throughout the catchment. Toby Bradshaw at Crown

Estate Scotland is assisting with signage noting the offences and CCTV in the area.

The Board is speaking to one club and the intention is to pass on details to new River Watch Coordinators who are to be appointed. The Clerk will help formalize the arrangements and prepare a 'Start Up Pack', when the River Watch Scheme is set up. Volunteers will be sought and there may be a training day. SB has also called Police Scotland and they are canvassing local police offices. The recommendation is always to call Police Scotland and ask them for an Incident Reference Number and to Report to the River Watch Coordinators. CM indicated that we are looking for outcomes and to see a positive impact of such measures.

7. Any Other Business

It was noted that there are poachers active on the water. The Clubs are going to get together and the Board will be meeting with Sorn Angling Club and Mauchline & Ballochmyle Angling Club. As noted above, it is to be hoped that the cameras being installed and the steps being taken to establish a River Watch Scheme can address these issues

AH thanked those present for attending. The meetings concluded at 21:57.