



RIVER AYR DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

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MINUTES

of Board Meeting

of

RIVER AYR DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

held at

The Mauchline & District Kilmarnock FC Supporters Club

8 Earl Grey Street, Mauchline, KA5 5AD

held on Tuesday 11 June 2024 at 7.00pm

1. Persons Present

<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>Stuart Brabbs (SB)</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>

2. Apologies

<i>Nick Wright</i>	<i>Sorn Angling Club, Board Member</i>
<i>Robin Wilson</i>	<i>Ladykirk Angling Club, 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 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. Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting (DOC 1)

The Minutes were approved on the motion of AH and seconded by GM.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

(a) Good Governance re District Salmon Fisheries Boards

The outstanding Fishery Assessments due by Cumnock & District Angling Association was discussed. The Board noted that, despite various previous calls

and correspondence with Alex Reid and Iain Walker, understood to be office bearers of the Association, over the last few years, the Arrears of Fishery Assessments from 2020/21 to 2023/2024 have not been addressed by the Association. The sum outstanding in that connection is **£2,380.70**

The Board noted that, whilst in the past the Fishery Assessments are usually paid by the Association (who are Tenant in 15 of the 16 beats, and Proprietor of 1 of the beats), the ultimate responsibility for payment rests with the Proprietors.

The Board agreed that, in the absence of payment by the Association, regrettably, the Clerk will need to be instructed to write directly to each of the Proprietors seeking Payment of the Arrears for each of their respective beats.

The Board also discussed the situation which arises relating to position of Alex Reid and Iain Walker as Board Members of the River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board. They were both elected as Members of the Board at the Triennial Meeting on 5 April 2022, as representatives of Cumnock & District Angling Association. Regrettably, the situation regarding the continued non-payment of the Fishery Assessments by the Association creates a conflict of interest with their individual responsibilities as Members of the River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board.

The Board agreed that the Clerk should write to Mr Reid and Mr Walker to offer them the opportunity to resign from their positions as Members of the River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board.

The Clerk advised that, in the absence of their resignations, the only appropriate course of action is for the Board to call a Public Meeting of the River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board, at which a formal Proposal will be placed before the Board to remove them both as Board Members. The Board noted that it would very much prefer not to have to proceed in this way, but it is considered that it has no other option to do so, in these circumstances.

If such a Public Meeting is called, the Board Members will be sent a Calling Notice and this will be published on the Board's Website and Mr Reid and Mr Walker will have the opportunity to attend that meeting to make representations and to vote on the Proposal.

(b) Proposed Co-Options to Board

There are still ongoing discussions regarding possibly additional Co-Options of Board Members to assist with the ongoing business of the Board.

(c) Solar powered Camera

This has now been installed and working well and is to be paid.

(d) Bird Count/Cull – Application for Licence

A Licence was obtained from Nature Scot to shoot piscivorous birds between 1 April to 31 May 2024 i.e. 8 goosanders and 5 cormorants.

The Board discussed that the cull is necessary due to the large population of piscivorous birds noted in the Ayr Catchment, particularly, it was noted that photographic evidence should be obtained for the Licence next year, showing the large number of goosanders in Ayr Harbour.

6. Report from the Clerk to the Board (DOC 2)

(a) Correspondence

The Clerk provide a written Report. There were no questions arising.

(b) Consultation Responses

There have been none since the last meeting.

(c) Financial Report (DOC 3)

The Clerk provided a written Financial Report. The Board agreed to an increase in budget of £1,000 + VAT per annum for the Clerk's Fees payable to Gilson Gray LLP. Ayrshire Rivers Trust indicated that their Annual Affiliation Fee would be fixed this year, but that there was an expectation of this being increased next year.

(d) Fisheries Welcome Pack

Has been produced and issued to Proprietors and Tenants. Will be updated periodically and issued to any new Proprietors or Tenants.

(e) Board Website

The website is being updated by CE Project Management, who will liaise with ART regarding the arrangements for transfer of the domain name management to ART (for which they will receive a nominal contribution + payment of any domain name renewal fees to third party suppliers).

(f) Code of Practice

There are no proposed changes at present to the Code of Practice.

(g) Fishery Assessments

The Clerk provided a detailed presentation on potential Fishery Assessment Rates. It was noted that the Board requires to secure sufficient funds from Fishery Assessments to cover necessary expenditure to meet the Board's statutory obligations for the purpose of the protection or improvement of the fisheries within the River Ayr Catchment Area; and monies to help fund projects on the river, whilst also providing for some degree of contingency.

Historically, the Board was aware that COVID-19 caused problems for everyone, including the fishing community. As a consequence of lockdown, falling catch numbers, lack of fishing effort and the fact that some clubs had been struggling, the Board has kept the rates as low as it can, whilst noting the requirement to generate income in order to carry out its statutory functions.

The Board also considered that, after review of the new Valuation Roll from Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (**AVJB**) with effect from 1 April 2023, there was a reduction of £22,395 (i.e. 43%) in the Value of the River to £29,520.

Therefore, after extensive discussion, and taking account of all of the above, the Board fixed the Assessment Rate at 85 pence per £ for season 2024/2025.

(h) Annual Catch Returns – App and other options (DOC 4)

The Clerk had prepared a Draft Report, still being finalised. It was agreed that this would be updated and discussed as part of the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors.

7. Report from Ayrshire Rivers Trust

A Report was presented by ART. There was discussion regarding a Project in the Mauchline Burn also known as ‘the Chalk river’ to solve issues of erosion, sediment and pollution of nutrients, fencing, green bank engineering. There is also a similar type project on the Glenstang Burn. ART are investigating options and funders.

8. Fisheries Management Plan

It was agreed this would be discussed as part of the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors.

9. River Watch Scheme

AH agreed to seek an update from Charlie McDade and report at the next Board Meeting.

10. Future Work of the Board

(a) Discussions with Clubs, Associations and Syndicates

There are ongoing discussions about engagement with Clubs, Associations and Syndicates and this is related to the discussion regarding potentially inviting other Co-opted Members to join the Board

(b) Project Work

ART were requested to provide recommendations to be recommended to the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors.

(c) Hatchery and other options

An update was provided regarding the possible smolt to adult supplementation project. The River Dee have investment and Scottish Government are treating this as a research project. The results from that will not be forthcoming for some years yet. The Board agreed to continue to monitor this through information provided by ART.

It was noted that one of the most proactive things that the Board has done in this respect is to obtain the bird licence from Nature Scot.

(d) Fish Counter

SB reported there were 500+ salmon last July

The salmon appear to be running in April and May.

After July, the numbers decline rapidly.

Significant improvements have been made to the fish counter and the results are still being verified.

11. Dates of Next Meetings

- (a) Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors: Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 7.30pm**
- (b) Annual Public Meeting: Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 8.30pm -**

12. Any Other Business

There was a discussion regarding the work undertaken by ART in relation to Giant Hogweed. Japanese Knotweed is also an issue. ART have undertaken significant injecting work and this needs to be tackled upstream mainly.

AH thanked those for attending and the meeting concluded at 21:36