



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

to be held on Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 7pm

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>Robin Wilson</i>	<i>Ladykirk Angling Club, Board Member</i>
<i>Charles McDade</i>	<i>Sorn Angling Club, Board Member</i>
<i>Stuart Brabbs</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>
<i>Carolyn Bryce</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>

2. Apologies

Nick Wright *Sorn Estate & Dumfries Estates LLP, Board Member*

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")*. No additional interests were declared.

4. Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting (DOC 1)

The Minutes of the previous Board Meeting on 11 December 2024 were approved unanimously as follows:

Proposed: Charles McDade

Seconded: Stuart Brabbs

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

None

6. Proposal to remove Iain Walker as a Board Member

Extensive correspondence had been entered into with Alex Reid and Iain Walker, the former office bearers of Cumnock & District Angling Association regarding the arrears of Fisheries Assessments. As a consequence of the conflict of interest arising, they had both been invited in writing to resign as Board Members. Alex Reid resigned prior to the Board Meeting on 11 December 2024. Further correspondence had been sent to Iain Walker by email and recorded delivery on 5 February 2025, again inviting him to resign as a Board Member. No response had been received. The Clerk explained that, in the circumstances, it was considered appropriate for the Board to remove him as a Board Member. The Motion was unanimously approved (all 4 Member present voting) to remove Iain Walker as a Member of the River Ayr District Salmon Fishery Board:

Proposed: Alan Hill

Seconder: Robin Wilson

7. Board Membership/Arrangements for Triennial Meeting

AH been liaising with the new Committee at Annbank Angling Club. They seem willing to engage and are encouraged to attend and be nominated as Board Members at the forthcoming Triennial Meeting. There are also discussions ongoing with Muirkirk Angling Club. Also, having spoken with Nick Wright, it is suggested that Kevin Weir, who does pest control in Sorn plus planting various trees and is considered to be very proactive, might be Co-opted as a Salmon Fisher's Representative at the Triennial Meeting. He is very keen to become involved and SB has spoken to him too.

For the forthcoming Triennial Meeting, IKC is to prepare a Mandate and publicise in advance. There is to be a defined date for return, which the Board agreed was to be 1 week before the Triennial Meeting.

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

The Clerk presented a Written Report and there were no questions arising.

9. Report on Fishery Assessments (DOC 3)

The Clerk updated on the position with still the outstanding arrears of Fisheries Assessment due by Cumnock & District Angling Association. The Board agreed, reluctantly, to instruct the Clerk to write to each of the individual Proprietors seeking payment, as required.

10. Financial Report (DOC 4)

The Clerk presented a Written Report and there were no questions arising.

11. Annual Catch Returns (DOC 5)

The Clerk presented a Written Report. He noted that there had been a poor response to sending Catch Returns on time.

There was a discussion regarding the reasons for this. There is an expected Re-valuation probably in 2026. Revaluation is based on historical data. The lack of catch returns means that AVJB will likely make assumptions about the Valuation of Beats

based on historical Returns. That is why the provision of Catch Returns is essential. This language is to be included in the Updated Code of Practice.

There was a discussion raised by CM regarding clubs managing to collect catch data and rod effort data. How do clubs meet that challenge? A good example given was that Sorn Angling Club have 85 members and managed to get 72 returns. A poor example was that there had only been 50 returns from 225 members at Mauchline Ballochmyle Angling Club. It was noted that the new Catch Return App developed by ART may assist Clubs and Members in completing their Annual Returns.

The Board commented that Clubs could make it a condition that, unless people put in a return, then they will not get to renew their ticket.

There was a discussion regarding the Annual Meetings and getting Clubs to send members to discuss these issues. a member

The Board also commented that the improvement in the Catch Returns being supplied may give other parties a more considered view of health of the river e.g. getting rid of Category 3.

12. Report from Ayrshire Rivers Trust (DOC 6)

ART presented a Written Report. Highlights included:

New App for Anglers – video and QR Code – hopefully available before next meeting

The River has once again been categorised as a Grade 3 (poor)

Offer to clubs – ART will issue a beat map in the river. Define boundaries.

Invasive weeds – ART recommend Himalayan Balsam pulling in July, particularly around the Sorn area.

The Clerk will be preparing a Fisheries Information Pack to all Members, Owners, Tenants and Clubs and will include up to date Code of Practice and information etc.

AI Counting – University of East Anglia writing software and they have been training the software. This will save thousands of hours for personnel reviewing footage. They are also developing a possible way of counting smolts going through the fishpass to count smolts out the river! They are miles off getting the count at present, but ART has invested £45k into this.

The Electrofishing report will be circulated shortly

ART are trying to understand impacts from developers e.g. Upper Burnock water – lower trout numbers.

Regarding Barriers – awaiting progress from SEPA. They spoke to Ochiltree Dam and have spoken to Roads Alliance – would be a rock ramp, rather than full removal. Ownership queries with SEPA.

Pollution – dredging and pollution – ART and the Board are frustrated by the lack of response from SEPA. It is not just our Board, but many of the Trusts across Scotland. This may require a joint letter from Boards. IKC/SB to further discuss.

Pink Salmon are likely to be coming into the river in 2025. It is important that reports are made ASAP if caught (likely to be in the lower river) and they must be humanely killed and samples taken and sent to ART.

Funding to FMS – more security for Ayr DSFB and other Ayr Boards.

Funding and agreements from upper landowners for planting - SB to call Nick Wright.

Spawning – it has been encouraging that a few salmon have been seen on the redds.

There is a tree planting application that ART are proposing to put together for the Board for grant funding.

Every club could apply to Biosphere for tree planting to put it into the important spawning areas. There are miles of the upper catchment areas which could benefit from this type of planting.

13. Code Practice (DOC 7)

The Clerk will present a revised Draft for approval at the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors.

14. River Watch Scheme

Gordon Millar – will be taking the lead. 2 volunteers who will run the scheme. Get some other volunteers from clubs on their own beats. Paperwork to be prepared by IKC. GM to arrange posters, poster holders, posts. Apparently there are 3 pending prosecutions due to the successful use of the cameras installed by ART on behalf of the Board.

15. Dates of Next Meetings

(a) Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors – Wednesday 26 March 2025 at 7pm

(b) Annual Public Meeting & Triennial Meeting - Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 7pm

16. Any Other Business

SB informed the Board about the FMS Bailiff's Conference and last date for enrolment of anyone interested is this Friday 14 February 2025.

AH to send to SB from NatureScot bit more information for bird licence.

There was a discussion regarding a Vaki Fish Counter which cost the Board £10k which apparently Catrine Community Renewables had removed without agreement or authority and abandoned at the riverside. ART had recovered. But this is a concern. Requirement that SEPA will account.

AH thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 20:33