



RIVER AYR DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

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MINUTES

of
Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors
+ Triennial Meeting of Qualified Proprietors
of

RIVER AYR DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

held at

The Mauchline & District Kilmarnock FC Supporters Club
8 Earl Grey Street, Mauchline, KA5 5AD
on Wednesday 26 March 2025 at 7pm

1. Welcome

AH welcomed all those present.

2. 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>Nick Wright (NW)</i>	<i>Sorn Estate/Dumfries Estates, Board Member</i>
<i>Charles McDade (CM)</i>	<i>Sorn Angling Club, 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 (CB)</i>	<i>Ayrshire Rivers Trust</i>
<i>Murray Ratcliffe (MR)</i>	<i>Annbank Angling Club</i>
<i>Mike Bullen (MB)</i>	<i>Stair House</i>
<i>Callum Allan (CA)</i>	<i>Sorn Angling Club</i>
<i>Linda Howie (LH)</i>	<i>Glenmuir Water Beat</i>

3. Apologies

<i>Robin Wilson (RW)</i>	<i>Ladykirk Angling Club, Board Member</i>
<i>Greg Bowie (GB)</i>	<i>Annbank Angling Club</i>

4. 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. Nick Wright declared that he also sits on the River Nith District Salmon Fishery Board. No additional interests were declared.

5. Draft Annual Report re The Activities of the Board for the year to 28 February 2025

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

AH presented his detailed Report. There was discussion around the highlights:

It has been an incredibly busy year. HD cameras are to have new sim cards installed. It is a very good system Working closely with Police Scotland – Wildlife Protection.

River Ayr Watch Scheme – Board Members and another fisherman to run the scheme + 7 volunteers from one club, also Sorn Angling Club and Annbank Angling Club. Posters on hard plastic. Hotline number – Board will pay. Coordinator will also have a phone.

Bird Control Licence – observations and bird counts by Alan Hill. There were general discussions about these issues and noted that there was a healthy trout population and the Board are keen to protect that also.

Looking at other projects. Next week issues re Bogend Burn at Catrine etc.

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

The Clerk presented his Report. LH asked for an explanation about Fishery Assessments and the Clerk explained the valuation process involving AVJB and he explained there have been changes in personnel at AVJB since the valuation was completed.

ART raised the possibility of there being some scope to take beats off the Valuation Roll and create sanctuary areas. This is something the Board will consider and discuss further at future meetings, in discussion with AVJB.

ART and Board can also give support to Proprietors – trouble with bank erosion etc. The work has been done already and we are seeing returns on this.

(c) Report on Fishery Assessments – IKC

The Clerk explained the position regarding the non-payment by Cumnock & District Angling Association and arrears of Fishery Assessments, despite the Board reaching agreement with them 2 years to receive payment. It was discussed that the Association was understood to have lost around £40,000 due to a fraud perpetrated on the Association and one person pled guilty to a value of around £12,000 and enquiries are still ongoing. A question was asked whether the Clerk could write to the Club, who may be selling tickets without written permission from Qualified Proprietors. The Clerk explained it is not, strictly speaking, for the Board to 'police' who has or has not been given written permission or who can fish beats. However, there was a discussion amongst the Qualified Proprietors that they are able to make it clear in writing that is the position they are taking.

(d) Consultation Responses – IKC

Covered in Draft Annual Report presented by the Clerk.

(e) Good Governance – IKC

Covered in Draft Annual Report presented by the Clerk.

(f) Code of Practice – IKC

Updated version in the Draft Annual Report presented by the Clerk.

Plastic signs have also been supplied through FMS: 'Stop the spread' and 'Pink Salmon'

This was unanimously approved as follows:

Proposed: GM Seconded: AH

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

ART presented their Report. Highlights were:

Invasive Weeds Control – this is the second longest working strategy on Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed. ART are seeking continued support from the Board and Anglers on Himalayan Balsam, which can be safely pulled at appropriate times.

AI at counter: Through the Marine Development Fund, they have been able to teach the computer what is an adult salmon and smolts. This may be able to provide an indication of smolts leaving the river and also adults coming in. Meeting next week on how go through results. To be tested. Accuracy dependent on water levels. Less onerous on staff time. Marine Directorate working on trying to verify the counter, because of review of footage to hone the process.

There was some discussion about consideration of a future project to count smolts – a smolt curtain - but would need funding. But once turbine turning, getting fish into the fish pass is difficult. In spite, smolts go out.

Also update re spawning beyond a culvert where work had been done.

Barriers – trying to do something with Burnock Mill Weir – see ART Youtube channel for successful method used elsewhere.

Pollution – keep reporting to SEPA

Bogend Burn – there is a meeting organised between ART, SEPA and AH for Board will be attending the meeting.

(h) River Ayr DSFB River Watch Scheme – IKC

The Clerk reported that, once the Board has provided the contact details of the relevant person to the Clerk, he will put together the relevant agreements etc and get the publicity issued.

(i) Annual Catch Returns – IKC

CM raised a query re Rod Effort and whether this was indicative of the health of the river. He believes it is critical to compare against Catch Returns – and the Clerk emphasised that the Board is encouraging accurate returns including Rod Effort.

The Clerk indicated it was too early to tell, but looking at the data so far, the Rod Effort seems to be at back end of the season, but suggestions from catch returns and counter that fish may be coming in earlier.

There was discussion about the difficulties that some Clubs and Associations have in recording Rod Effort and Catch Returns. CA and other representatives of Sorn Angling spoke about the process of using a Pro Forma for their club, enclosing an SAE for the Catch Returns and making continued membership conditional on that being done.

MS raised concerns about the accuracy of some returns which do not seem to accord with knowledge on the river.

Again, the Clerk indicated the importance of accurate Rod Effort and Catch Returns for the Board in making decisions about work to be done on the river etc.

6. Draft Statement of Accounts to 28 February 2025

The Clerk presented the Draft Statement of Accounts for the Board to 28 February 2025 for Approval. They were unanimously approved:

Proposed: AH Seconded: MS

7. Proposed activities of the Board for the next year – ART

AR presented their recommendations as follows:

Recommend spending on Giant Hogweed removal (which is dangerous): £6,000

Also noted that the Catch Return App can be used for reporting locations of Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed, which may allow more focus on the latter, which has been prioritised

Proposed: CM Seconded: MB

Nether Wellwood Green Engineering – larger area seeking funding of £3,000 compared to match fund £32,000 application – very prolific spawning area

Proposed: CM Seconded: GM

ART also mentioned another possible project: the Crossflats Project - Riparian Tree Planting – in existing fenced off areas – smaller project to be costed up – possibly seeking match funding in future.

The Board is also applying for Neighbourhood Funding Application for Barrier Easements and is awaiting stakeholder engagement.

8. Any Other Business

None

Triennial Meeting (chaired by IKC, as Clerk)

1. Retiral of existing Board

The existing Board Retired and were thanked for their efforts over the previous period.

2. Election/Re-election of Board Members for new Board

The Clerk explained the requirements for the appointment of the new Board.

The Clerk called for Nominees, noting that the existing Board had all indicated willingness to be re-appointed. The clerk had received nominations and Mandatory Forms, as required, including the proposed appointment of MR and GB of Annbank Angling Club. There were no other nominations made and so these Members were approved unanimously for appointment:

<i>Alan Hill (AH)</i>	<i>Barskimming Estate, Board Member</i>
<i>Max Stobbs (MS)</i>	<i>Mauchline Ballochmyle Angling Club, Board Member</i>
<i>Nick Wright (NW)</i>	<i>Sorn Estate/Dumfries Estates, Board Member</i>
<i>Charles McDade (CM)</i>	<i>Sorn Angling Club, Board Member</i>
<i>Murray Ratcliffe (MR)</i>	<i>Annbank Angling Club</i>
<i>Robin Wilson (RW)</i>	<i>Ladykirk Angling Club, Board Member</i>
<i>Greg Bowie (GB)</i>	<i>Annbank Angling Club</i>

Board Meeting (chaired by IKC, as Clerk)

1. Election of Convener/Chair

The Clerk invited the new Board, just appointed, to nominate a Convener/Chair.

Alan Hill indicated that he was willing to stand again in this role.

The Board unanimously agreed to the appointment of AH as follows:

Proposed: GM Seconded: MB

There was a discussion about the major differences in the way the river is being managed and the AH pointed out the improvements in the way the Board functions – and noted that it is now extremely well run. And this is making a difference

2. Co-option of Representative(s) of Salmon Anglers

The Clerk called for the nomination of Representative(s) of Salmon Anglers (as the Board are required to co-opt at least one such Representative). AH introduced Kevin Weir, who stays in the area and works on the river system in tree planting, is a keen fisherman, licence holder, and helps with fishery protection

There were no other nominations made and so these Members were approved unanimously for Co-Option:

<i>Gordon Millar (GM)</i>	<i>Mauchline Ballochmyle Angling Club, Salmon Fishers' Rep</i>
<i>Kevin Weir (KW)</i>	<i>Dumfries Estate, (Salmon Fishers' Rep)</i>

Proposed: AH Seconded: MR

3. Next Meeting: Annual Public Meeting: Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 7:00pm

AH thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded at 21:18