

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of Urr District Salmon Fishery Board
held at The Douglas Arms Hotel, Castle Douglas
on Tuesday 15th March 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present

In the Chair: R J Bellamy

Vice Chairman: D J Biggar

Attendees: K Irving (CDAA)
J Comrie
W Charlesworth
R W Twiname
G Wallace
G Turner
B McIntyre
D McCallum (Police Scotland)
R Smith
B McGinily
E McCowan
J Ribbens (GFT)
A Armstrong
D Mulholland
B Maytum
W Marshall (DAA)

Clerk: W G N Gourlay

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Capt D Ferguson and Miss J Graham.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 10th March 2015

The Minutes were circulated to the meeting. They were approved unanimously as a true record by those who had been present and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

There were none.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave his verbal report, a copy of which is attached to this Minute, and in doing so made reference to the catch statistics which had been circulated. He explained the importance of proprietors making clear to their tenants the prohibition of killing salmon and grilse. He referred to the ongoing consultations under the Wild Fisheries Review and the possibility in the future of there being a two tier development and management levy on proprietors. He explained that the Board had been and continued to be fully engaged in the consultation process.

5. Accounts for the Year to 30th November 2015

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Clerk presented the accounts which had been tabled. The budget for the year had been a breakeven position, and preservation of the cash reserves at or about £8,500 and a minimum credit balance of £6,000. In the event, fees to Galloway Fisheries Trust for a response to the Lochurr Windfarm Consultation of £720 had been the major contributor to a deficit of £793.68.

At the year end, there were a substantial number of levies outstanding as the bills had only recently been rendered. All but one of the outstanding debts had been ingathered.

The accounts were approved on the proposal of Brian McGinily, seconded by Will Marshall, and signed by the Chairman.

6. 2016 Levy

The Clerk explained that a small additional amount of £320 would be required for the scale sampling and fish measuring project required to counter Marine Scotland's position on "grilse error". It was therefore agreed that the 2016 levy would increase from 45p to 46p in the pound.

7. Appointment of Office Bearers

The office bearers were agreeable to staying in post. All of the Board will resign at the 2017 AGM when re-election is due.

8. AOCB

- a) Noted that Dalbeattie Reservoir is to be reduced and treated with biocide by Scottish Water.
- b) Kevin Gibson has offered the use of his net to CDAA and DAA members for scientific study.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The 2017 AGM was fixed for Tuesday, 14th March 2017.

Following the formal business, informal presentations were given by:

- a) Chief Inspector David McCallum of Police Scotland who spoke to the enforcement provisions applying to the protection of fisheries and the regulations promulgated for the protection of salmon and grilse stocks. Inter alia:-
 - Only one witness is required to obtain a fishing conviction.
 - Dead or injured fish must be returned to the water.
 - Police Scotland will attend reports of wildlife crime including poaching but their resources to do so are stretched and reducing.

- b) Jamie Ribbens who explained the reasons for the inaccuracies in Marine Scotland's data; the myriad statistical adjustments from possibly flawed bases; "grilse error" which all contribute to the downgrading of healthy rivers. To combat these errors, the first actions are to redefine in each catchment the true extent of the "wetted area" and exclude lochs, sterile streams etc and to carry out analysis of the actual number of grilse (one sea-winter fish) by measurement and scale sampling.

Mr Ribbens had been invited to speak on Conservation Plans, in anticipation of the data that had been collected on the Urr and its tributaries would form the basis. However, the Scottish Government's format of a conservation plan had turned out to be a multi-column spreadsheet with tick boxes. The steering group had sent them away to think again.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.