Chairman’s Annual Report for the Bladnoch DSFB AGM Meeting on November 21st 2016 at The Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart.

Welcome to our AGM.

1. The Wild Fisheries Review which will abolish this board and affect how this river is run has been again delayed. However, in preparation for it the Board along with the neighbouring rivers have been meeting to see if we can agree a possible new structure when the time comes. Colin Richardson represented the Board at the first meeting. It appears that the 5 rivers Bladnoch, Urr, Dee, Fleet and Luce are agreed on a possible merger. Whether the River Cree will join remains at this time uncertain. More meetings are scheduled.
2. We have secured a broodstock license this year in the hope of restoring Bladnoch’s failing fish population. As you know, we are licensed to rear hatchery salmon provided that the stock in the river is adequate. Several pre-spawning fish have been found running whilst electro-fishing and several have been found in the trap. Matters have been complicated recently by high water.
3. Rod catches of sea-trout and salmon on the river have not yet been published. 2016 was a year of low water levels. These circumstances persisted right up to the end of the season. The Bladnoch has become a late river and these low-water conditions at the critical time did not suit us. Towards the end of the angling season salmon were seen but few were caught. We have no reason for supposing that 2016 has been a year with a good migration but there is consolation from the fact that back-end salmon were certainly present. The background across Scotland is of modest catches frequently limited by dry warm weather.
4. 2106 was the first year when no netting was allowed off Scotland.
5. The Kirkcowan Fishing Competition held in the summer had 25 active participants. A young lady angler caught her first salmon.
6. The GFT was active in commenting on several renewable energy schemes in the Bladnoch catchment and its viewpoint has in general been taken account of. No schemes have been brought forward to the Board for its attention.

7. The local SNH chief was asked if he would attend more Board meetings and replied that the organisation’s policy was to attend meetings when there was business or specific issues of relevance.

1. The Board welcomed the possibility of the Bladnoch being given an improved Conservation Category, moving from Category 3 to Category 2, and answered the government consultation to that effect. This would move Bladnoch anglers some of the way towards being able to retain for eating the occasional fish. In the Board’s view this would stimulate more use of the river’s angling.

Thank you