



River Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Clerk: Will Cowie

Administrator: Valerie Wardlaw

Fisheries Office, Logie Steading, Dunphail, Forres, IV36 2QN

01309 611220 admin@fnlft.org.uk

www.fnlft.org.uk/river-findhorn

Minute of Meeting of the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors (AGM)

Held on Monday 14th December 2015 in the Long Room, Logie Steading, at 12.30am

Present: Alasdair Laing – Chairman
 Andrew Howard
 Ewen Brodie
 Anthony Laing
 Dan Newcombe
 Robert Hoskin
 Billy Strathdee
 Julie Balgonie
 Donna Skelly

In attendance:

Sean Mclean- Head Bailiff

Valerie Wardlaw – Administrator, FDSFB

Robert Laughton – Director, FNLFT

	Item	Action
1.	Apologies: David Sneddon, Philip Mackenzie, Mark Laing, Colin Cawdor, Alastair Gordon Cumming, Tim Boles, Angelika Cawdor, Ian Wills, Richard Benyon, Edward Crookes, Richard Tinsley, Rossie Leschallas, Lady MacPherson,	
2.	Minutes of Meeting held on 24th November 2014 Minutes were approved.	
3.	Matters arising none	
4.	Year 2015 Report Chairman- AlaL reported a busy year working on the Wild Fisheries Reform. The Board has just agreed to investigate forming a Findhorn Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Management Organisation when the new legislation is introduced in 2017. The catch data show a better year for anglers, especially for the middle beats; catches in the lower beats were poorer due to high water levels allowing salmon to swim straight upriver. River Director (report here) The FNLFT continues to provide monitoring contracts for Wind Farm developments- with no issues caused by construction this year. The data collected for the Berry Burn project will be published and will provide useful information on best practice for construction for future developments. Predators- there is now a control licence in place for sawbill ducks, and counts will continue. Seal counts continue, however implementing the control licence is increasingly difficult due to the public nature of Findhorn Bay. INNS- The FNLFT continues to work with volunteers and proprietors to control Giant Hogweed, however the infestations on the Lower Findhorn are extensive. Progress has been made through the SEPA funded project which has funded distribution surveys and co-ordinated control. 94 km of river bank have been treated over the last 4 years. There is a	

	<p>funding gap in 2016, with a new project starting in 2017. AntL reported the source of GH & JK must be upstream of Coulmony as they have to control plants. RL will investigate. DS suggested Proprietors could be encouraged to check agricultural and commercial leases for clauses on controlling noxious weeds if a particular tenant isn't controlling INNS on their property. The Moray Council is responsible for controlling INNS on the Flood scheme land.</p> <p>The River Festival was a great success raising awareness of the river and the work of the FNLFT. The FNLFT thanked AlaL and Logie Estate for hosting the event and hope it can be repeated in the future.</p> <p>Head Bailiff SMcL presented the catch data and said it had been an average year, but much improved on last year. 2296 salmon and grilse were caught compared with 1164 last year. There was an overall release rate of 82%. The bailiffs recorded 13 poaching call outs during the season, with most being holiday makers rather than career poachers.</p> <p>The seal quota is proving increasingly difficult to implement due to the public nature of Findhorn Bay.</p> <p>Training- bailiffs attended fish identification, spray training and a day with Police Scotland at Balmoral.</p> <p>The bailiffs will be using wildlife cameras to monitor predators as well as to detect poachers. They will be writing to proprietors to obtain permission for placing the cameras, where required. VW to send RH details of the cameras.</p> <p>Two beats did not send in catch returns- Dunphail is currently checking their catch data and will forward it to SMcL once confirmed.</p> <p>The Board asked DN to resolve the ownership of the Coulimomy & Dunphail beat as soon as possible.</p>	<p>RL</p> <p>VW</p> <p>DN</p> <p>DN</p>
5.	<p>Consideration of Accounts to 15th May 2015 The Accounts were approved by the meeting.</p>	
6.	<p>Wild Fisheries Reform AlaL updated the meeting on the WFR progress which has two strands- the reforming of the management of all wild freshwater fish species and the control of the killing of wild salmon. The latter has just gone through a consultation process on using conservation limits to identify rivers where additional control measures may need to be imposed to protect fish stocks. The Findhorn has been awarded grade 1 status and so will not have additional control measures imposed. However the board has agreed to amend the voluntary Conservation Code for 2016 to recommend a release rate of 75%. New legislation should be drafted before May 2016 detailing the management structure of Fisheries Management Organisations, however legislation is unlikely to be put in place until 2017. VW will circulate notice of the draft legislation to all proprietors when it becomes available. ASFB/RAFTS have developed a template for potential FMOs to use to decide if they are big enough to be a sustainable FMO. The Findhorn board will be working with the Nairn & Lossie DSFBs and the FNLFT on a FNL FMO.</p>	<p>VW</p> <p>VW</p>
7.	<p>Proposals for 2016 RL reported that the regular juvenile fish surveys are scheduled for the Lossie. However he would like to survey Coignafearn and discuss a</p>	

	<p>larger monitoring project with them. The Conservation limits approach needs more data to add to catch and juvenile fish surveys and so RL is looking for a smolt trap to borrow.</p> <p>The Board has agreed to set up a trust for the FDSFB reserves to ensure the money is available to be spent on projects to improve the Findhorn in future.</p>	<p>RL</p> <p>RL</p>
8.	<p>AOCB DS asked if the board were aware what is planned for the Crown Estate owned beats. There is no information on this as yet.</p>	
9.	<p>Dates of Future meetings The Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors (AGM) is to be moved earlier in the year in the hope that it will be more convenient for proprietors to attend. The Triennial elections are also due. Moray Estates have offered to host the AGM- date and venue t.b.c. but likely to be the 21st August 2016. In addition, DS offered to host future meetings at Coignafearn.</p>	