



## River Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Clerk: Will Cowie Administrator: Valerie Wardlaw  
 Fisheries Office, Logie Steading, Dunphail, Forres, IV36 2QN  
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### Minute of the Annual General Meeting (Annual Public Meeting)

Held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2017 at Logie House, at 12.30am

**Present:** Alasdair Laing – Chairman  
 Andrew Howard  
 Anthony Laing  
 Mark Laing  
 Tony Watts  
 Graham Bell  
 Robert Hoskin  
 Julie Balgonie  
 Simon Woolton

**In attendance:**  
 Robert Laughton – Director, FNLFT  
 Valerie Wardlaw – Administrator, FDSFB

A	Item	Action
1.	<b>Apologies:</b> Ewen Brodie, Catherine MacPherson, Richard Benyon, Andrew Fleming, Edward Greenwell, Rosie Leschallas, Jamie Whittle (ASCT), Sean Mclean (Head Bailiff)	
2.	<b>Minutes of Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016</b> Minutes were approved.	
3.	<b>Matters arising</b> none	
4.	<p><b>River Reports</b></p> <p><b>Chairman-</b> Alasdair Laing          The <a href="http://www.fnlft.org.uk">2016 Annual Report</a> has been published and sent electronically to all proprietors, and is available from the River Findhorn section of the <a href="http://www.fnlft.org.uk">www.fnlft.org.uk</a> website. Alasdair gave an update on the political situation: The SNP made a manifesto commitment to fisheries reform and DSFBs, Fisheries Trusts, NGOs and Government have spent 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years devising a new system which gained broad approval. However in February 2017, the SNP decided not to enact major reforms, but to encourage amalgamation of small DSFBs. ML and RL are meeting with Fisheries Management Scotland and the Scottish Government tomorrow to find out what support might be available if the Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie DSFBs consider amalgamation. The Findhorn DSFB is looking at closer working relationships with the Nairn and Lossie DSFBs.</p> <p><b>River Director-</b> Robert Laughton          Project update <a href="#">here</a> and FNLFT progress report <a href="#">here</a>.          The extended period of dry weather this spring, and the lack of snow on the Monadhliaths, produced low water levels and high water temperatures leading to the fish deaths reported in May. Fish that were examined by RL showed signs of red vent and predation, but no angler damage. One fish was analysed and saprolegnia was confirmed. This is a naturally occurring mould in freshwaters that affects spring fish when water temperatures rise above 20°C. The only way to help prevent similar fish deaths in future would be to increase tree cover in the upper catchment to provide shade to keep water temperatures low.</p>	

	<p>Armadale Tracking Project- to tag grilse off the North coast of Scotland and install acoustic receivers in rivers to monitor migration back from the sea. Two receivers have been installed in the Findhorn and data will be downloaded at the end of the season. This year was predicted to be a poor one for grilse and the number tagged is substantially smaller than anticipated.</p> <p>Grading of rivers- this is still based entirely on catch data, although Marine Scotland Science is investigating the inclusion of juvenile fish data into their model in the coming years. One poor catch season should not downgrade a river, but a number of poor seasons may- if the poor catches are not replicated across Scotland.</p> <p><b>Head Bailiff- Sean McLean</b> Sean was unable to attend the meeting; however RL confirmed that although serious gang poaching has declined, small scale poaching is still an issue. Poaching and predation control are major parts of the bailiff's remit. The Bailiff reports seeing an increase in anglers on the river this year.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Consideration of Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017</b> The Accounts have been approved, signed and are available on the <a href="#">website</a>.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Proposals for 2017/18</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the potential of Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie DSF board amalgamations and managing the three rivers more efficiently will be pursued.</li> <li>• River Improvements- there are no barriers to fish passage and fish are accessing most areas in the Findhorn catchment, so there is little that can be improved. There are projects to restore peatlands in the upper catchment, which should improve water quality and may help buffer river levels.</li> <li>• The Fishery Management Plan is now out of date and will need to be addressed once any changes in management structures are agreed.</li> <li>• RL suggested that projects exploring smolt behaviour and angler effort would give useful information. Angler development programmes are a priority as current anglers are an aging demographic.</li> <li>• Increased marketing of fishing on the Findhorn is not yet necessary as most Findhorn fishings are let each year.</li> <li>• The Board could investigate amending the byelaw which precludes bait fishing in the Findhorn DSFB area, as this is a barrier to participation by new anglers- both young people and adults.</li> <li>• Forres AA is exploring the potential of the Mosset Burn in Forres to promote angling to young people as it is a relatively safe and accessible riverbank. This would be in partnership with Forres Community Council.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>AOCB</b> None</p>	
8.	<p><b>Date of future meetings</b> Dates for the 2018 Board meetings and AGM (APM) will be agreed and circulated shortly.</p>	
	<p><b>Meeting closed at 1.20pm</b></p>	