



## River Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Clerk: Will Cowie

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### Minute of Meeting of the Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Held on Monday 21st May 2018 in the Long Room at Logie Steading at 10.30am

**Present:** Alasdair Laing – Chairman, Andrew Howard, Graham Bell, Robert Hoskin, Mark Laing, Anthony Laing,

**In attendance:** Sean Mclean- Head Bailiff, Donald Mackenzie- Bailiff, Robert Laughton – Director, FNLFT, Valerie Wardlaw – Administrator, FDSFB

**Members of the Public:** Liz MacDonald, John Prince

	Item	Action
1.	<b>Apologies:</b> Colin Cawdor, Tony Watts, Julie Balgonie,	
2.	<b>Minutes of Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017</b> Minutes were approved with the following amendment:  Item 6: Head Bailiff Report: The water levels were consistently high “after May/June” this season.	VW
3.	<b>Matters arising</b> <b>GoPro body cameras-</b> after further investigation by the bailiffs/RL it was decided not to buy this equipment. <b>Smolt Trap-</b> RL decided not to install the smolt trap in the Divie this spring, due to difficulties with personnel access and the volatility of the site. An alternative site on the Muckle Burn was being determined. However, low water levels this spring would not have allowed the trap to function at either site this year.	
4.	<b>Budgets and Finance</b> <b>Draft Accounts</b> for the year ending January 2018 were presented. The apparent decrease in income on the previous year of 11K is due to the way the pre-paid assessments were recorded by the accountant when the financial year end changed from May to January and do not reflect an actual drop in income. VW and the bookkeeper have repeatedly asked for a breakdown of this figure from the accountants, but have not been successful. VW to draft a formal letter to the accountant from the FDSFB requesting an explanation for AlaL to sign. FMS subscription is computed from the previous two years catch figures and was substantially lower in 2016 due to the ASFB subsidising subscriptions out of their reserves. AlaL will send AH an electronic copy of the Rathbones Investment Account annual valuation statement. AlaL to discuss options for the surplus with CC- whether to invest with Rathbones or open a deposit account. The Board approved the draft accounts. <b>Budget Update-</b> VW circulated an updated budget for the year. VW will amend the budget to remove the smolt trap expenditure. The Clothing allowance should be £600, not £1320. This figure included a budget for additional safety PPE which will not now be purchased, (stab vests/GoPro cameras). The equipment expenditure is over budget due to the purchase of the thermal spotting scope. Assessment letters will be sent out this week for payment by the 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2018. <b>Seasonal Bailiff-</b> AlaL welcomed Donald Mackenzie to the Findhorn DSFB;	VW/ AlaL  AlaL  AlaL/ CC  VW  VW

	he will be employed until the end of October 2018.	
5.	<p><b>River Matters</b></p> <p><b>Future Management Structure-</b> <i>the FDSF Board agreed to discuss this item in camera, and asked the members of the public to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion.</i></p> <p>The Scottish Government is offering assistance to DSFBs who are considering amalgamation; the deadline for funding applications is early June. It was understood that the Nairn DSFB had voted not to pursue amalgamation at their meeting in April. However the Lossie DSFB is still interested in investigating an amalgamation with the Findhorn. Up to 25% of the grant can be used to produce a detailed management and financial structure for a combined board, and would be used to make a case for board amalgamation to the Scottish Government. The FDSFB has statutory duties which it is required to undertake and needs to identify the most efficient and economic management structure to achieve these. The Board asked RL to identify and cost the statutory duties, the desirable activities, and any additional activities Board might fund out of interest, in order to estimate the costs for essential activities. The Board agreed to submit an application with the Lossie DSFB for funding for the scoping stage of amalgamation. If the funding application is successful, the board will set up a working group to take this forward. <i>Members of the Public were invited back into the meeting and were informed of the outcome of the discussion.</i></p> <p><b>Biosecurity-</b> the forms have been revised for 2018 and circulated to all proprietors and put in the <a href="#">Downloads</a> section of the website. VW to update the form with a Privacy Statement and ask proprietors to keep their angler's forms for the season and then dispose of them in order to comply with GDPR.</p> <p><b>Disease-</b> it has been a warm and dry spring with low water levels. Please inform RL or the bailiffs immediately if any diseased fish are spotted so that samples can be taken for analysis.</p> <p><b>Health &amp; Safety-</b> RL reported that Greens have reviewed the H&amp;S policy and procedures and initial comments considered it to be in good order, a report on the review and any updates to the policy would be available from Greens by the end of June.</p> <p>The new GPS locators are being used by the bailiffs with good coverage along the river. SMcL stated that the thermal spotting scope is proving very useful during patrols, as it enables the bailiffs to detect individuals when there is no line of sight.</p>	<p>RL</p> <p>RL/ AlaL</p> <p>VW</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>RL</p>
6.	<p><b>Head Bailiff Report</b></p> <p>SMcL distributed the Spring Catch figures, total= 116 (121 in 2017). Darnaway had an improved Spring catch, whereas the Forres AA are at half their anticipated Spring catch. The catch figures would need to drop significantly for a number of years to affect the grading of the river. The bailiffs had not seen significant signs of poaching activities until the beginning of May. Two anglers were caught fishing without a permit on a Sunday and their tackle was confiscated.</p> <p><b>Seal Counts-</b> the drone surveys have been very useful in giving much more accurate seal counts at the mouth of Findhorn Bay. There were over 700 seals in the most recent survey. RL to look into the possibility of extrapolating from the discrepancy between current drone counts and visual counts to amend earlier visual counts to give a more realistic picture of the numbers of seals in the past. Any carcasses recovered are sent for stomach content analysis. SMcL is providing information on the counts to Roger Knight for the Moray Firth Seal Management licence. The licence is for in river control</p>	<p>RL</p>

	<p>where seals are likely to be predated on salmon. RL to find out if there are seal counts from around Scotland and if these show increasing numbers of seals. The board agreed that the drone survey data was useful and to continue organising regular seal counts utilising the drone.</p> <p><b>Sawbills-</b> SMcL is completing the control under the licence to the end of May. They are using bangers to scare sawbills during the smolt run.</p>	<p><b>RL</b></p> <p><b>SMcL</b></p>
7.	<p><b>FNLFT Director Report</b></p> <p>RL reported that the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative has commenced- a four year INNS eradication project funded by HLF and SNH. A project officer, James Symonds, has been appointed to cover the FNL and Spey catchments, based at the Spey Foundation.</p> <p>RL, in conjunction with James and contractors, has treated GH from Daltulich Bridge downstream to the A96 bridge, including two raft trips through the gorge and utilising specialist rope contractors to treat the Darnaway cliffs. The Mosset is being treated by a group of regular volunteers.</p> <p><b>Juvenile Surveys-</b> The Scottish Government has commissioned a National survey this year which includes 30 sites on the Findhorn. RL will be completing these later in the year.</p> <p><b>Education-</b> RL has applied for Tesco's Bags of Help funding and will contact GB to discuss activities with support from Forres Angling Club once the total amount offered is confirmed.</p> <p><b>FNLFT Auction-</b> RL thanked everyone who very kindly donated lots- and those who bid for them.</p>	<p><b>RL</b></p> <p><b>RL/GB</b></p>
8.	<p><b>Catchment Developments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cairn Duhie WF has formal approval, but RL has not heard of any further developments.</li> <li>• Tom Nan Clach WF- the turbines will be arriving on site in the near future. RL to suggest a post contract monitoring programme.</li> <li>• Clash Gour WF- are likely to be applying for planning permission in November.</li> <li>• A96 Dualling- three crossings of the Findhorn and tributaries are being scoped- the final preferred route should be announced in October.</li> </ul>	<p><b>RL</b></p>
9.	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p><b>GDPR-</b> VW had circulated a Findhorn DSFB Privacy Statement and Data Handling Policy to comply with the regulations coming into force this month. The board approved of both.</p> <p><b>GB</b> asked that the Findhorn DSF board and FNLFT better promote the activities which directly help fish in the river. There has been a 25% decrease in local anglers joining the Forres AA, and feedback from members is that not enough is being done to protect the fish in the river. AlaL/RL/VW to formally list the activities undertaken and their impact on conserving and enhancing fish stocks. RL asked all anglers to send in photographs and information about sawbill sightings as this helps argue the case for further control. The Fishery Trusts undertake regular counts- but this only gives a brief snapshot; all sightings would build up a much more accurate picture of sawbill distribution on the river.</p>	<p><b>VW</b></p> <p><b>AlaL/RL/VW</b></p>
10	<p><b>Dates of 2018 meetings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August, 10.30am, venue t.b.c, Board Meeting followed by</li> <li>• AGM (APM) at 12.30pm</li> <li>• Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 10.30am, venue t.b.c. Board Meeting</li> </ul>	