

**Minutes of Annual Public Meeting of
The Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board
held on 29th January 2019 at the Haddo Estate Office**

1. Present:

Robert Dey (Chairman)	Aberdeen & District Angling Club – Machar Pool *
C I Wolrige Gordon	Esslemont Estate *
V Leeming	M Bruce & Partners *
E Ritchie	Ramornie *
N Barnett	Haddo House Angling Club
A Kloppert	River Ythan Trust Director
J Adie	River Ythan Trust Director
M Stewart	Haddo House Angling Club *
J Pirie	Ardlogie *
A Paterson	Aberdeen & District Angling Club – Ardlethen *
K Mackenzie	Newburgh Angling Club

(* denotes Board member)

2. In Attendance:

P Wright	SEPA – Specialist – (Land Unit)
L Hawkins	CEO Dee District Fishery Board
J Urquhart	River Dee Trust – Biologist
J Kerr	River Superintendent Don District Salmon Fishery Board
K Muller	SISI Officer based with Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board
M H T Andrew	Clerk to the Board

3. Apologies for Absence:

There were no apologies

4. The Chairman introduced the Report by the Clerk and the Accounts for the year to 25th July 2018 which had been available on the website for over a month and asked if there were any queries or questions. None were forthcoming.

5. The Clerk introduced Peter Wright of SEPA who made a presentation on the work that SEPA was about to conduct on the majority of land covered by the Ythan catchment.

He advised that five SEPA inspectors, including himself, from the Land Unit, would be undertaking individual inspections of all farms, forests and other rural areas of the catchment in order to identify activities, installations and practices which were likely to cause pollution or damage to the waters in the District and which failed to comply with SEPA regulations over the next 12 months. These would include cattle waterings, positions of fuel stores, buildings and middens, the margins of water courses, fences, chemical and fertiliser applications close to water courses. They were aware, thanks to data collected and supplied to them by The River Ythan Trust, that there were 350 cattle waterings within the District. The inspectors would be requiring land managers to change activity and remove installations which had a damaging impact on the water course within the next 12 months. They would be promoting AECS funding for alternative systems where appropriate.

He reported that the initial priority catchment was the Raxton / Keithfield system as these burns had failed badly on water quality and diffuse pollution indicators recently. He advised that their first inspections in the Dee catchment had been carried out five years ago. The majority of land managers / occupiers had carried out the necessary works but around 5% had done little or nothing to comply and he advised that if this continued, enforcement action would follow which could lead to a fine or impact their basic payments. The same system of allowing time for change would apply to the Ythan but could be less than 5 years.

Mr Wright answered a series of questions posed by attendees and advised the Clerk that he would be available to return to the group in 12 months' time to report on what had been found and what action taken over the catchment.

6. The Clerk introduced Karen Muller of SISI (The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative) who made a presentation on her work in the Ythan and Ugie catchments.

She advised that thanks to work by The River Ythan Trust / Ythan Volunteers, Giant Hogweed had been largely eliminated over the catchment but that other invasive species, including Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed remained a concern. She was able to provide funding for training volunteers to control these invasive species both on and off their own land.

She explained that she had taken over from the 'Mink Control Officer' and that although mink had been very rare in the catchment for some years, it remained important to remain vigilant for them. She was encouraging volunteers to take up mink rafts. There were 39 rafts operated in the catchment at present. Mink were at that time being caught along the coast between Macduff and New Aberdour. A handout was to be sent to Proprietors with their assessments shortly.

7. **Proposals made by Salmon Anglers, Tenant Netsmen and members of the public**

The Clerk asked for comments on the Service Level Agreement between the Board and The Don District Salmon Fishery Board whose bailiffs were, during the year to 31st March 2019, not only carrying out the usual river patrols and inspections of authorisation to fish but had also undertaken redd counts on nine sites of 1 km each over the period October – January, were carrying out surveys of piscivorous birds from Gight to Newburgh to enable the Board to apply for a licence to control numbers if these were having an impact on fry and parr numbers, and recording seal numbers and reporting 'up river' seals to the Board's marksman when appropriate for action by him. There was general satisfaction by members present but continued concern about seals, particularly those that had occasionally 'settled' in Ellon town waters where lethal control was not possible.

It was suggested that the Bailiffs carry out more visits to proprietors to appear more obvious than they were and that they could undertake targeted river restoration work if necessary.

8. **Date for Next Meeting**

To be confirmed – late June 2019.

9. **Any Other Competent Business**

None.