



RIVER STINCHAR DISTRICT **SALMON FISHERY BOARD**

Clerk to the Board: Iain K Clark, LLB (Hons), Dip LP, NP
c/o Gilson Gray LLP, 160 West George Street, Glasgow G2 2HQ
Direct: +44 (0)141 530 2025 **Mobile:** +44 (0)7908 022 304
Email: RiverStincharDSFB@gilsongray.co.uk
Website: www.stincharfishing.co.uk

MINUTES

of

Meeting of River Stinchar District Salmon Fishery Board

11 February 2025 at 4pm

The Auld School Community Centre, Pinwherry KA26 0RN

1. Welcome – Johnny Warrender, Chair (JW)

JW welcomed those in attendance.

The Board unanimously agreed the co-option of Francis Young, of Balnowlart Fishery to be appointed a Member of the Board:

Proposed: GH

Seconded: JW

2. Persons Present

Johnny Warrender	Benan, Pinmore, Board Member (Chair)
Iain K Clark (IKC)	Gilson Gray LLP (Clerk to the Board)
Gordon Hyslop (GH)	Colmonell Angling Club (Salmon Angler's Rep)
Roger Pirrie (RP)	Colmonell Angling Club (Salmon Angler's Rep)
Francis Young (FY)	Balnowlart
Struan Candlish (SC)	Ayrshire Rivers Trust

3. Apologies

None

4. Declaration of Members' Interests

In accordance with the Board's good governance obligations, the Board has agreed a Meetings Protocol and Policy on Members Interests. All Board Members have signed a Declaration of Interests. The Board maintains a Register of Relevant Interests, pursuant to Section 46E of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act"). All existing Board Members present were invited to declare new/amend existing interests. No new interests were declared or amended. Following the co-option of FY, he will be invited to sign a Declaration of Interests, to be retained by the Clerk to the Board.

5. Minutes of the Last Meeting (DOC 1)

The Minutes of the previous Board Meeting of 3 December 2024 were approved as follows:

Proposed: RP
Seconded: SC

JW requested the Clerk to provide the Board Packs to the Board with more time in advance of meetings to read and review; and also receipt of the Minutes from Meetings to allow review and action of agreed actions from the preceding meetings. RP suggested agreement of informal service level standards.

The Clerk agreed that generally he would intend to issue draft Minutes within 4 weeks after a meeting; and Board packs would be issued electronically 1 week in advance of Meetings.

As regards Actions from meetings, **the Clerk suggested and everyone present agreed, that they would take their own notes during meetings; and at the end of each meeting the Clerk would summarise the Agreed Actions. These Actions will also be noted in bold within the Minutes produced, for ease of reference.**

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

SC advised that the Board carried out the bird survey and received bird counts from GH and other volunteers. However, the application for a bird cull licence was rejected by NatureScot, due to lack of evidence

ART have spoken to other DSFBs in Ayrshire and they believe that monthly (or at least frequent) bird counts during the relevant period necessary. **GH will progress that and make an application with assistance from SC around end of September 2025.** That would mean the Licence would be granted from November through to end of March.

GH asked the Clerk for permission to pass on the contact details of the person at the other Ayrshire Boards who had been successful in securing a Bird Cull licence and **IKC agreed to make enquiries with Stuart Dorward of the River Doon DSFB.**

The Board agreed that it wanted to proceed with Smolt Shepherding again this year with an agreed budget of £1,760. **GH will speak to Robert Elliot to request that he carry out smolt shepherding from mid-April to May and request that he keeps records of birds discovered each morning. SC will prepare a pro-forma for record-keeping. GH agreed to arrange a meeting with SC to progress with this work.**

Pinmullan Burn – top of river, at South Balloch. SC spoke to Robert Dunlop. The Board had fenced the burn around 2010. He was agreeable to permit work be done. ART has made an Application to Galloway Biosphere funding of £1,000 to Board (roughly 20% of costs) ART will spend up to £5,500. He also has feeding rings which are not best placed. ART suggest that it is worth investing some funds to aid planting + feeding rings moved to save the water quality of the river. GH noted there is a 9 inch concrete pipe close to the ford which will need to be maintained. JW asked about current costs including labour for around 500 trees. Either ART will supply trees or seek quotes for native hardwoods. The Grant conditions are that the works need to be maintained for 5 years. **JW and SC to discuss further.**

7. Report from the Clerk to the Board - IKC (DOC 2)

The Clerk presented a detailed Written Report. There were no questions arising.

8. Report on Fishery Assessments – IKC (DOC 3)

The Clerk presented a summary of the Fishery Assessments as follows:

	RECOVERED BY GGLLP	% RECOVERED	Total Outstanding	No of Beats Outstanding
Arrears 2020/2021 to 2022/2023	£15,784.00	98.69%	£210.00	2
Of which Arrears 2020/2021 to 2023/2024 remaining Queried/Disputed			£210.00	2
Arrears of Fishery Assessments 2023/2024	£19,304.00	98.69%	£256.00	2
Fishery Assessments 2024/2025	£17,384.00	88.88%	£2,176.00	8
TOTALS	£52,472.00	95.21%	£2,642.00	

There was a discussion regarding the individual Fishery Assessments still remaining outstanding. It was agreed that a number of individuals would be approached personally as follows:

9. Financial Report – IKC (DOC 4)

The Clerk presented a detailed Written Report. GH raised the question about the continued membership of FMS. IKC explained the benefits of membership, including support in relation to various Consultations and advice; and support generally in the conduct of the business of the DSFB. The Board agreed this was a small investment worth doing

There were no other questions arising.

10. Scientific Report – Stuart Brabbs, Ayrshire Rivers Trust (SB) – (DOC 5)

The Report was available to the Board as part of the Board Pack. SC highlighted the following:

Timed electrofishing: the methodology was changed in 2012 – standardized. It seems there is a fairly strong trend across Ayrshire rivers that there may be a cycle of 4 years where the numbers of fish are higher. If that is the case, the hope is for a higher count this year (2025). ART saw fish redding and spawning earlier in the year. **The full electrofishing report is to follow from ART.**

There was a discussion about the Japanese Knotweed injection work that ART had done. **SC agreed to circulate a map of the locations of that work to the Board. ART will pick up any areas not covered as part of the further Japanese Knotweed work done for the Board.** They will generally speak to landowners to get cooperation. There is also an opportunity to explain what the Board is doing generally.

ART have submitted a funding application with Carrick Futures for funding for Japanese Knotweed across the Stinchar catchment. This would be 3 or 4 years funding, if they get it. We will hopefully know in 3 or 4 weeks. This would primarily be for work on the River Stinchar, but could potentially cover work on the Duisk too.

SC reported that the Catch Recording App developed by ART has been trialled successfully on other rivers. **ART are producing a video and it will be introduced on**

their website. Once this is available from ART (SC to coordinate), IKC to include in Fisheries Pack to be issued to all Qualified Proprietors, Tenants, Clubs and Associations, and information included on the Board's Website.

National Park Proposal – there is an ongoing consultation. The Board noted that ART are unclear what the benefits will be, but **ART they will keep the Board informed of developments.**

Bailliffing Equipment – the Board agreed to make an expression of interest for funding available for e.g. cameras etc, through FMS. **ART would inform them accordingly**

11. Annual Catch Returns – IKC – (DOC 6)

The Clerk noted that, frustratingly, despite several reminders, several Proprietors and Fisheries have not sent back their returns. **IKC will continue to chase these down, to allow full reporting at the Annual Meetings.**

12. Board Membership – JW/GH

There was a discussion about Board Membership. As noted above, FY had been co-opted as a Board Member. Pam Dunlop of Glengennet Fishery was also co-opted unanimously by the Board:

Proposed: JW

Seconded: RP

JW to provide IKC with her contact details. IKC to invite her to attend the next Board Meeting.

13. Code of Conduct – IKC (DOC 7)

IKC drafted and presented a revised Code of Conduct, with input and assistance from RP, which was updated to reflect modern practices, in particular regarding catch and release and fish handling, taking account of the latest Guidance published by FMS. The Board unanimously approved:

Proposed: RP

Seconded: GH

IKC to include in Fisheries Information Pack, together with details of River Watch Scheme (see below), to be issued within the next few weeks.

14. Fisheries Protection/River Watch Scheme – IKC

There was a further discussion regarding Fisheries Protection. The Board is aware (through the Clerk, who is also Clerk to the River Doon DSFB) that this topic was previously considered extensively by them and for a number of reasons it was considered inappropriate for the Board to employ Water Bailiffs on the river, due to issues regarding employment, insurance, accountability etc.

However, the Board agreed that it would like to introduce a River Watch Scheme where volunteers would be invited, in cooperation with Riparian Owners to be the eyes and ears on the river.

Jack Warrender had indicated would be happy to organize this, liaising with IKC, as River Watch Coordinator. The Board would set up the scheme (and had previously budgeted £1,000 + VAT for the Clerk to draft the Agreements, publicity, and coordinate the scheme + initial set up costs, including Mobile Phone, printing etc, Jack would man the dedicated telephone line and have a number of contacts with whom patrols could be coordinated and rally assistants from where they could be found.

JW also commented that this is an opportunity to support people on the river generally.

With appropriate support and volunteers, it is to be hoped that the River Watch Scheme can be brought into operation for the forthcoming Angling Season.

JW (Johnny Warrender) agreed to send IKC contact details. IKC is to prepare paperwork and publicity

It was noted that FMS have a Fund and **ART will put in an Expression of Interest for funding to support the enforcement measures e.g. for thermal binoculars, remote cameras, drones etc.**

15. Piscivorous Birds Application – GH (DOC 8)

Actions agreed as noted above under Matters Arising.

16. Any Other Business

It was noted that the Website infrastructure had been updated by CE Project Management as their last piece of work for the Board. **IKC and Peter Scanlan (his Assistant) will work together now to upload various documents and content to the Website over the coming weeks and months.**

It was noted JW received a large number of boxes from the former Clerk to the Board, which relate to the historic records of the Board. The Board agreed that these should be retained and **JW agreed to retain on behalf of the Board.**

Gilson Gray received a bundle of paper records from the Former Clerk's Law Firm covering the more recent years, most of which have now been saved electronically, although the balance will be placed in storage. Thereafter, moving forwards, **the main public-facing records will be maintained by the Clerk and Gilson Gray, and, when approved, uploaded to the Board's Website, similar to the approach taken on the River Doon DSFB Website.**

As agreed above, IKC then read out a re-cap of the Actions from this meeting (**noted in bold above**), so that everyone could note and action in advance of the further meetings.

17. Dates of Next Meetings

(a) **Board Meeting** – the Board agreed that it did not require to arrange a further Board meeting at this time.

The following further Meeting dates were agreed.

(b) **Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors: Tuesday 6 May 2025, 7pm**

(c) **Annual Public Meeting: Tuesday 3 June 2025, 7pm**

JW thanked those for attending and the meeting concluded at 18:15