

# Esk District Salmon Fishery Board

## Minutes from the Esk District Salmon Fishery Board Annual General Meeting of Proprietors

10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at the Northern Hotel, Brechin

### Present:

Malcolm Taylor (Chairman)	H Campbell Adamson (Stratcathro Estates)
T Andrews (Finavon Castle Water)	J McDougall (Montrose & District AC)
H Jackson (Balgarroch-Balglassie Fishery)	D Swanston (Pert Fishings)
Mary Stansfeld for Martin Stansfeld (Kinnaber)	J Simpson (Kirriemuir AC)
D Strachan (Kirriemuir AC)	M Kowalczyk Snr (Kirriemuir AC)
M Kowalczyk (Kirriemuir AC)	K Craig (Brechin AC)
S Robertson (Brechin AC)	N Anderson (Gallery)
M Halliday (Esk DSFB)	S Hawkins (Esk DSFB)
N McMullan (Esk DSFB)	C MacIntyre (Esk DSFB)

**Welcome:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM and outlined the format of the meeting.

**Apologies:** Chalres Gow; Bob Ritchie; Colin Gibb; Tom Sampson; Rick Gleeson.

**Minutes from the 2016 AGM.** Proposed as a true record by H Campbell Adamson, seconded by S Robertson.

**Matters Arising.** The purchase of the North Esk salmon nets is progressing, with netting due to finish at the end of the 2018 season. The Esk DSFB is very happy with the outcome of these negotiations.

**Chairman's Report.** This is contained in the 2016 Annual Report and copied below.

I think we all approached the 2016 season with trepidation, following the worst floods experienced in the Esks, Bervie and Luther catchments in living memory. The damage to the rivers and the banks will undoubtedly have an impact for many years, with beds being washed out and pools obliterated. On a positive note, some beats gained pools which inexplicably fished well all year.

The inability of Marine Science Scotland to provide regular and accurate data on the number of fish ascending the North Esk remains an area of serious concern. In these days of science based management plans for the catchments, it is vital that we have as much accurate data as possible. The Board will continue to press the Government for additional funding to repair the counter, and provide staff to analyse the data to ensure that we can manage the rivers to the best of our abilities, but the lack of regular and accurate data is a concern.

Having spent a considerable amount of time and effort on the Wild Fisheries Review it is disappointing the Scottish Government have abandoned the majority of the proposals. Much of what was proposed made sound management sense, but the lack of funding was a major failing of the proposals.

We continue to monitor the Morphie Dyke. If major structural issues affect the remains of the Dyke a CAR licence will be applied for especially for remedial work if undermining of the north arm occurs or if fish get

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caught below the collapsed part of the structure. To date there have been no issues and there are spring fish right through the system.

I would like to thank the Trust for their continued work in the catchments. We have managed again to run the Board with a full complement of bailiffs and by prudent cost control we have managed to keep the levy to one of the lowest in Scotland. Thanks must go to the Clerk, Dr Marshall Halliday for his work with the Board and the Trust and for managing the scientific work undertaken in the catchments, and to the bailiffs Nigel McMullan and Steve Hawkins for their continued hard work supporting the work of the Board.

Marshall Halliday is to retire in June and we wish him well in his retirement, but must thank him for his work for the Board and his enthusiasm in finding funds for the ERFT to carry out the improvements to the catchments and the feeder burns. Marshall's successor as Director is Craig MacIntyre, and we look forward to working with him to the benefit of the fish stocks in our rivers.

**2016 Annual Report.** Approval of the report was nominated by J Simpson, seconded by S Robertson.

**Accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.** Approved by H Campbell Adamson, seconded by N Anderson.

**Appointment of Auditors.** The appointment of Walker Harris as auditors was approved.

**Salmon Fishing Levy for 2017.**

The salmon fishing levy will remain at £1 in the £ for 2017, with a 50% rebate for proprietors of the Rivers Lunan, Bervie, South Esk, Westwater (North Esk), and net and coble fisheries. The increased rate of £1 in the £ is to fund the buyout of the North Esk river nets, and 2017 should be the final year of the higher levy rate.

The revaluation of salmon fishing rights by the District Assessor for 2017 has been completed. As is customary for the Esk DSFB, the 2017 salmon fishing levy will be based on the 2016 valuation of salmon fishing rights. This is to allow for any appeals of the revaluation to be concluded before applying the 2017 revaluation to the salmon levy.

The Aberdeenshire District Assessor has applied a zero rating to all coastal salmon netting rights, and it is likely that the Tayside DA will follow suit. The zero rating is on the basis that as coastal netting for salmon is not permitted under the Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulation 2016, and therefore the salmon netting rights essentially have no value. The Esk DSFB disagrees with this assessment, as compensation for cessation of netting activity due to the Regulations included payment of salmon fishing levy. The Esk DSFB will discuss this with Scottish Government.

**AOB.** No further items were raised for discussion.

**M Halliday retirement.** M Taylor said that the AGM was the final official act for Marshall Halliday before his retirement. Marshall was thanked for his many years of service to the Esk DSFB, and to the rivers within the Esk District. Marshall was presented with a farewell gift, which included a framed painting titled "Clova in the Autumn".

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C MacIntyre

July 2017

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