

MINUTES of MEETING of THE RIVER UGIE DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD held at Broad House, Broad Street, Peterhead on Thursday, 5th May, 2016 at 3.15pm

Present: Joseph Yule (Convenor)
Alexander Buchan for Lunar Fishing Company Limited
David Low Mandatory for I J Booth
Alexander Buchan for Score Group plc
William Stephen for Ugie Angling Association

In Attendance: D. McLean for Bruce Milton, Clerk to the Board

Apologies: None

MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting on 5th November 2015 were taken as read. These were proposed by A Buchan (Score) and seconded by A Buchan (Lunar).

MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MINUTES

Salmon Conservation

The Convenor reported that this Board area had been classified as category 3 within the Scottish Government assessment and as a result the regulations mean that salmon caught cannot be kept and must be released, and that this will apply for the next 3 years. D Low asked if it made any difference how fish were caught and J Yule confirmed there was no exception. There was general concern that this restriction would apply for 3 years and A Buchan (Lunar) asked why the Ugie was classed as category 3 when some of the other, much larger, rivers had managed to obtain a category 1 status allowing them to keep some of their catch. J Yule explained that the category set was in light of evidence available and that it was based on rod catch figures and that the government had used R Esk figures as a base to establish a percentage that was deemed sustainable. As the number of anglers on the River Ugie is small then unfortunately this reduces the catch data.

A Buchan (Lunar) felt the rod catch figures were inaccurate and that we need to know the number of fish required to make the Ugie sustainable and then show using the fish counter that this critical limit is exceeded. The Convenor agreed that if the counter can show there sustainable fish in the Ugie then it should be possible to move out of category 3.

Fish Counter/Camera

A Buchan (Lunar) commented on some anomalies with the counter in relation to passing swans but that was being checked. The camera was working well but was very sensitive and would often take countless shots of flies.

ASSISTANT BAILIFF

A Stephen reported that the new Bailiff seemed enthusiastic and was always going about and appears to be a good choice. Discussions followed on the Bailiff's remuneration and it was noted that he had already claimed £3,000 out of the £4,000 budgeted at May last year. J Yule agreed to speak with John regarding invoicing for the balance of £1,000 for the period to 31st May 2016. It was also noted that the budget for John's bailiff work for the year to 31st May 2017 would be £5,000, as agreed by the Board in November 2015, and he would be expected to invoice the Board £2,500 in November 2016 and £2,500 in May 2017.

The budget for Bob Davidson's bailiff work for the year to 31st May 2017 will be £4,000 as agreed by the Board in May last year. D Low agreed to remind Bob that his fortnightly remuneration would change to £153.85 effective from 7th June 2016.

DRAFT ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MAY, 2016

There was placed before the meeting a Draft Profit and Loss Account and Balance Sheet projected to 31 May, 2016 prepared by the Clerk, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes. The Clerk explained the income and expenditure for the year as detailed in the Draft Accounts, and that, subject to Board approval, these would now be sent for examination and final preparation by Messrs Bain Henry Reid.

FINANCE AND RATES

The Board considered the projected expenditure for the year to 31 May, 2017 and the Clerk explained the projected expenses could be covered by the same rate as last year. If further expenses were anticipated then a rate increase would be necessary. A discussion followed on whether to fund the cost of night glasses but it was agreed to leave that for another year. D Low then proposed the rates remain as before which was seconded by J Yule. It was agreed the Clerk would issue rates notices at £2.44 in the pound.

AOCB

Conservation Plans

The Convenor explained that under the Scottish Government's Wild Fisheries initiative every river has to produce a conservation plan and that this is part of the process to install Fishery Management Organisations. To progress these plans the Government have appointed 7 biologists to assist and Lorraine Hawkins from the River Dee Board has notified us that she will be representing the following Boards: - the Esk, Ythan, Don, Dee, and Ugie. J Yule confirms although he has acknowledged her e-mail he awaits further information. There has been no indication, as yet, whether these Boards will be assumed into one FMO.

Hatchery Work

The Convenor reported the hatchery work was continuing although the latest national scientific evidence was that migrating smolts are being killed while still in rivers and very few are making it to sea. These reports were at this stage unable to identify if this is due to problems from genetics, toxicity, or predators. The general consensus however was that although there was no noticeable increase in fish in the river it was felt that adding new stock can only be beneficial and that the hatchery should keep going.

D Low reported that some Icelandic rivers had good success in restocking by waiting until fish were more mature before restocking. W Stephen commented that some local rivers had tried this but released fish were so used to being fed that they did not disperse on release but grouped together on mass awaiting feed and were then picked off by predatory birds.

Cutting back banks

A Buchan (Lunar) reported that although banks had been cut back there were mixed reports from anglers as to whether this was good or bad. He would review if simply cutting the path alone would suffice.

NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Annual Meeting of Proprietors and Board Meeting was set for Thursday, 3rd November, 2016 at 2.30 p.m. There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.30 p.m.

Joseph J. J. J.
12/5/16.