

MINUTES of MEETING of THE RIVER UGIE DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD held at Broad House, Broad Street, Peterhead on Thursday, 3rd November 2022 immediately following the Annual Board Meeting of the River Ugie District Salmon Fishery Board.

Present: Joseph Yule (Convenor) (JY)
Alexander Buchan for Lunar Fishing Company Limited (ABL)
Alexander Buchan for Score Group plc (ABS)
Stephen Buchan for Ugie Angling Association (SB)
David Low Mandatory for Mrs Booth, Ednie (DL)

In Attendance: Louise Kershaw for Bruce Milton, Clerk to the Board (LK)
David Will, Water Bailiff (DW)

APOLOGIES

James Ritchie (JR)

MINUTES

DL proposed that the Minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd June 2022 be taken as read and this was seconded by ABL.

UGIE ANGLING ASSOCIATION CHAIR

JY noted that Stuart Aird is no longer Chair of the UAA. Stuart wishes both the Board and the UAA well for the future. JY asked SB if a new Chair has been appointed yet. SB responded that there has been no individual appointment so far, and that at the moment there is a joint effort amongst the members to manage the Association. There is a meeting on 17th November to discuss the way forward.

SB also commented that there is no constitution in place for the UAA at the moment, and they will be looking to have one drawn up.

CONVENER'S REPORT

The Convenor proceeded to read his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

FISH COUNTER REPORT

ABL explained that there are a number of 'events' marked on the Counter that aren't actually fish. The Counter is very sensitive and often picks up static, leakages etc. which are recorded as 'events.' Therefore, the reports have to be gone through manually to ensure that the data reflects the fish numbers only. They have created a computer programme with set parameters to sift through the data, which has sped up the process considerably.

There have also been some issues with the wireless connection for the Counter. It can be temperamental, although the system is rebooted automatically every day. A booster for the wireless signal will be purchased shortly, however, which will hopefully help.

ABL continued that there are also occasions where the power will trip and a day's data will be lost. He sometimes has to go down in person to ensure that the system has rebooted. The wireless booster will help, however there will always be the occasional water board trip out.

JY stated that he thinks the Counter works very well in terms of showing year to year comparisons, and that the Board can be confident in the reports for showing trends.

DL, SB and DW commented that they had not been receiving the Counter reports. JY thought he had been emailing them to everyone, and confirmed he would double check this and ensure that everyone received them going forward.

WATER BAILIFF'S REPORT

DW gave his report to the Board, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

DL reported that there had been a suspected case of diseased fish. DW advised that he was not aware of any other instances of this, so hopefully this was an isolated incident.

ABS stated that he had witnessed poaching on Beryl Ritchie's land on more than one occasion. He wanted to know if DW had the authority to remove them. DW confirmed that no-one should be fishing without express permission from the landowner and/ or a licence.

DW urged ABS to contact him immediately if he witnesses any further instances of suspected poaching. DW reiterated that he can only take action at the time of the incident, not afterwards.

ABL commented that anyone fishing on Beryl's land should have written permission from her.

ABS confirmed he would take DW's phone number and give him a call if there are any issues going forward.

CASHFLOW FORECAST AND ACCOUNTS

LK presented the cashflow forecast for the next 7 months to May 2023. The projected bank balance as at May 2023 is circa £10,000. ABL was surprised that the figure was so high – it had been his understanding that the Board decided to increase the rates at the June meeting on the basis that this would be required to keep the bank account solvent.

LK advised that the rate of £2.40 decided upon at the June meeting was projected to provide a bank balance of £7,000 at the time of the meeting. The reason for the

updated projected bank balance being higher is due to Masson Glennie not charging a Clerk's fee for 2020/21 and only charging half the usual fee for 2021/22.

ABL commented that he does not think the rates should go up if it results in the Board having an unnecessarily high bank balance, and that the rates should be brought down again next year.

The annual accounts for the year ended 31st May 2022 have not yet been prepared by Bain Henry Reid. LK confirmed these would be available by the next meeting.

AOCB

DW suggested that the Board should consider investing in trail cameras. The video feeds can be viewed from a mobile phone, which would very helpful in poaching cases and other misdoings. DW would be able to view the video feed immediately if any reports are made, and take the appropriate action.

JY raised some concerns regarding the data protection implications of having cameras. He commented that a sign would likely need to be displayed wherever there is a camera. He was doubtful that they would be able to record people (especially children) without their permission or some kind of notice. The guidelines will need to be checked.

ABL remarked that in his view, the personal touch is a better way of dealing with things, i.e speaking to people physically rather than watching from cameras. Respecting people's privacy is very important, and there is a risk that installing cameras could detract from the peaceful ambience of the river.

DW agreed with both JY and ABL, and confirmed that he does not wish to upset any anglers or to be seen to be spying on anyone.

JY stated that the Board has a good relationship with the majority of the anglers, and they would not want to jeopardise that.

DW and SB will explore the possibility of the cameras, and collaborate on coming up with some options for the Board to consider.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.00 p.m.



Joseph Yule
Convenor

UGIE DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

CONVENERS REPORT 2022

The Clerk to the board and the Chairman have been continuing the work of the day to day running of the board, dealing with correspondence from various bodies and taking on board the regular updates and advice from Fishery Management Scotland (Association of District Salmon Fishery Boards)

The Board has continued with the task of raising finances from the proprietors on the river, which have enabled us to carry-out our statutory duties. This includes the provision of a clerk to the board, a water bailiff to police the river and coast and we continue to retain the services of an accountant to audit our accounts.

Our Accounts for the last two years and our projected expenditure for the next twelve months will be discussed and hopefully approved at the board meeting later today. These approved accounts will be available for inspection some time after that meeting.

The proposed activities of the board for the next year will be to continue to do all we can to promote and protect the ecology of the River Ugie and to ensure the well-being of the stocks of wild salmon and sea trout in the River Ugie. We will work hard to continue to meet our financial obligations and comply as best we can with our statutory duties. We would like to continue to be open to working together in co-operation with Scottish Government, Marine Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council and other Salmon Fishery Boards. As ever we are grateful for the support and confidence of the Proprietors on the river and for the close relationship we enjoy with the committee and members of the Ugie Angling Association and the wider Angling fraternity.

Our water Bailiff, David Will will give us a report on the river and his assessment how the 2022 season panned out. On reflection it was a long hot summer with little rain, the river was below normal levels for long periods, not conducive for catching Salmon and Sea trout. Many of the fish caught were coloured both salmon and sea trout, many more than usual. We also haven't seen the usual back end runs of salmon we used to get on the Ugie.

With new members joining the board this year we are hopeful that the UDSFB will continue to play a full part in doing all we can to ensure the protection of the wild salmon and trout populations in the River Ugie.



Convener 3rd November 2022

Bailiffs report 2022

The fishing started with great hopes of good runs and tight lines for the forthcoming season.

Anglers started wetting a line in late April in the hope of an early fish. The brownies and seatrout kelt's as ever were keen to gain weight after the lean winter months and provided some sport for those keen to wet an early line.

The season progressed with anticipation in the hope that a rise in water levels would encourage the first seatrout to venture up river. Unfortunately this year was again very dry and the river remained at or below summer level until the last few weeks of the season. The lack of water gave anglers little encouragement to venture out and try their luck and as a result there were few anglers on the water at any given time and of course less time fishing means less fish landed. The few nocturnal anglers that did put in the hours through the summer nights were rewarded with hard earned but regular fish.

Well done to the committee who had work party's out regularly and were kept busy strimming banks and clearing Balsom throughout the summer. River weed was not targeted to any extent this year which is a good thing as if there is no weed for shelter fish will not hold in cleared pools. The river footpaths are the envy of many visitors to our river and it is often commented by visiting anglers that they would love for their own rivers to be so easily accessible.

Storms with very high winds had trees down all over the country and several trees were down blocking footpaths along some of the banks. This was only a temporary hindrance which was quickly rectified.

There were no serious incidents of poaching on the river itself other than the odd ladd trying their luck. Providing no fish have been retained the only option is to let them know where they can buy a ticket if they would like to continue fishing the river. I spent a lot of time in the buchanhaven area throughout the summer in order to dissuade the locals from targeting seatrout as they accumulated at the river mouth awaiting a rise in water levels. Again as long as the trout are returned no law had been breached. No fish were seen to be kept

while I was keeping watch though no doubt things may have been different in the absence of a witness.

As was the case last year there were no major pollution incidents to report.

Unfortunately, I had a report from Davie Low that a diseased fish was witnessed in the river. These can easily be identified by white patches on the back and flanks of the afflicted creatures. I would ask that if anyone sees such a fish to let me know the place and time of the sighting at their earliest possible convenience. The Ugie has not suffered from UDN (Ulcerative Dermal Narcosis) for some years and we hope this is an isolated case.

With angling now over for another season we can only hope that conditions will improve in the year to come.