

MINUTES of BOARD MEETING of THE RIVER UGIE DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY held at Broad House, Broad Street, Peterhead on Thursday, 23rd November 2023 immediately following the Annual Proprietors Meeting of the River Ugie District Salmon Fishery Board.

Present:

Joseph Yule (Convenor) (JY)
William Stephen for Ugie Angling Association (WS)
Simon Stephen for Ugie Angling Association (SS)
Stephen Buchan for Ugie Angling Association (SB)
David Low Mandatory for Mrs Booth, Ednie (DL)
John Fraser for Ugie Angling Association (JF)

In Attendance:

Louise Kershaw for Bruce Milton, Clerk to the Board (LK)

Apologies:

Alexander Buchan for Lunar Fishing Company Limited (ABL)
Alexander Buchan for Score Group plc (ABS)
James Ritchie for Ugie Angling Association (JR)
David Will, Water Bailiff (DW)

MINUTES

DL proposed that the Minutes of the last Board Proprietors meeting held on 22nd June 2023 be taken as read and this was seconded by WS.

FINANCES REVIEW

LK produced a projected cashflow forecast for the next 6 months to 31st May 2024. The cashflow position of the Board is looking very healthy, particularly with the £2,250 received from Fisheries Management Scotland for the work carried out on the ARCS map.

No queries were raised.

MATTERS ARISING

UAA Constitution

DL raised a query regarding the UAA constitution, as it was his understanding that one was in place.

SB commented that the original constitution is out of date, and JF advised that there was a Mission Statement issued instead.

WS questioned whether this was valid, he thought that the Association was required to have an official constitution.

JF confirmed he would send a copy of the Mission Statement to JY to see what he thought.

JF also suggested that the UAA should perhaps bring back a feeding system as this would be useful for covering expenses etc.

Strimming

JY advised that there had been strimming taking place, in response to what people had been asking for. The trimmers are supposed to be kept in the black shed, and JY wanted to ensure that everyone is aware of their location.

JY also suggested that a can of petrol should be kept in the shed for anyone wishing to use the trimmers. Everyone agreed with this.

PROPOSALS FROM TOMMY MCDERMOTT OF TREX ECOLOGY

JY advised that 2 proposals have been put forward:

- 1) Fish habitat is examined to address causes of degradation. A decision will have to be made as to where the survey is done, and the cost will be circa £11k.
- 2) Redd survey is carried out, with training provided afterwards so that the Board can move forward with any changes required. Cost will be circa £8k.

JY went on to say that, in his view, this comes down to finances. The Board would be paying for the reports only, not any physical improvements being carried out.

JF mentioned that he could include these proposals in the next stage of the ARCS mapping to see if the Board could get some funding. JF felt that obtaining the surveys would at least provide an action plan for moving forward.

WS commented that there have been numerous proposals in the past, however the issue was always getting access to land (particularly when farmers were involved).

JF suggested that the Board needs professional guidance in order to make a real difference.

JF volunteered to pass on any queries to Trex, if they can be put to him by the end of the month.

SB pointed out that the companies currently putting pylons etc. over land could contribute to the funding.

JY agreed with this, and advised that at every public consultation meeting he has attended recently, the companies have expressed an interest in supporting community projects so this would definitely be worthwhile exploring. JY feels that if the Board received the funding, they should go ahead with the proposals.

WS commented that whilst he feels there is nothing wrong with obtaining the surveys, is there a likelihood that they will simply highlight what is already known? There is a risk that the Board could spend a lot of money obtaining the surveys, but be unable to actually solve any of the problems identified. WS went on to suggest sourcing a cheaper alternative for having the surveys carried out (Ritchie Miller, for example).

JY asked the Board for their views on whether to go ahead with the proposals or not.

DL's view was that the Board needs someone who is clued up to provide direction and outline exactly what needs to be done.

WS suggested carrying out an electro-fishing survey, as this would cost less.

JF thought that perhaps a day's survey would be worthwhile, and also mentioned seeking cheaper alternatives.

JY announced that the consensus of the Board appeared to be that there is a desire to learn more. The proposals are not being rejected, however there needs to be some investigation into cheaper options and also funding options.

PUBLIC MEETING DATE

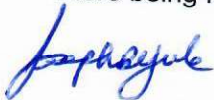
The date for the next Annual Public Meeting was set for Thursday 16th May 2024 at 3pm. A meeting of the Board will be held immediately following the Annual Public Meeting.

AOCB

There was a general discussion about the rising temperatures in the rivers and seas. DL reminded everyone that the Water Bailiff has the power to ban fishing if the water temperature becomes too high.

JY wondered if it might be an option to ask DW to report the weekly temperatures for the river so that it could be monitored.

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



JOSEPH YULE
Convener

Ugie District Salmon Fishery Board

Convener's Report 2023

2023 Has proven to be quite uneventful for the board and the River. Some anglers have put in their catches as they catch them, many anglers only put in their catches at the end of the season, and sadly some do not put their returns back at all. This gives us a false picture of the fish being caught and the effort put in resulting in lower estimates being recorded.

Windmills and Cables There are a lot of projects asking for planning permission from Scottish government to lay cables from offshore windmills to various onshore sites, to feed into the National grid. We have been in touch with each of these projects to remind them they have a duty to protect the salmon and sea trout in the river and in the sea. they have all been positive in their replies and have said they would keep the board informed as the projects progress.

The Fish Counter continues to provide valuable information. We continue to monitor and gather the data from the Counter, which we send to MSS to help evaluate, not only the adult salmon and sea trout returning to the Ugie, but also to play our part in the network of counters estimating the total salmon and sea trout populations in the whole of Scotland.

Electro-fishing Surveys the Scottish Government have again financed electro fishing of 14 different sites on the River. Although not fully complete, early indications are that the salmon juvenile population is very low, with the spread and numbers of Sea Trout being more encouraging.

David Will has recovered well from a serious illness and we are glad that he has been out and about again on the river, sharing his advice with new members and younger members, As well as reporting pollution spills, liaising with SEPA and when needed the Grampian police wild life officers.

The Scottish Government have decided to continue the ban against salmon netting in the sea, it is now considered very unlikely that any salmon netting will be re-instated anywhere in the sea around Scotland. The River Ugie has been placed in category 3 again for the year 2024, meaning catch and release for all salmon.

I wish to thank the board members, Louise Kershaw our Clerk and David Will for their input to the efficient running of the board and for their attendance at the meetings, allowing us to operate efficiently and effectively as a fishery board as we continue to look after the welfare of the Salmon and Sea Trout stocks in the River Ugie. John Fraser is to be thanked for the work that he does on behalf of the board and especially for putting the Ugie on the National mapping tool which requires not only knowledge of the river but also the IT skills to fill in the information to the database.



Joseph Yule (Convener) 23rd November 2023