

MINUTES of A BOARD MEETING of THE RIVER UGIE DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY
held at Broad House, Broad Street, Peterhead on Thursday, 15th May 2025 immediately
following the Public Meeting of the River Ugie District Salmon Fishery Board.

Present:

Joseph Yule (Convenor) (**JY**)
Alexander Buchan for Lunar Fishing Company Limited (**ABL**)
William Stephen for Ugie Angling Association (**WS**)
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**)
Robert Paylor, Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (**RP**)

Apologies:

Simon Stephen for Ugie Angling Association (**SS**)
Alexander Buchan for Score Group plc (**ABS**)
James Ritchie for Ugie Angling Association (**JR**)
John Fraser for Ugie Angling Association (**JF**)

PRESENTATION FROM ROBERT PAYLOR (INNS)

RP presented a slideshow to the Board, detailing the measures that have been taken to control the spread of invasive species in the area throughout the last year. RP also went through the plans for the coming year, which include more spraying of invasive plants and control of the mink population.

MINUTES

ABL proposed that the Minutes of the last Board meeting held on 14th November 2024 be taken as read and this was seconded by DL.

MATTERS ARISING

FMS Proposal Regarding Conservation for Salmon & Sea Trout

JY asked the Board for their comments on the FMS proposals to introduce a 'catch and release' rule for sea trout as well as salmon.

ABL stated that he disagreed with the whole idea of catch and release. No point in catching a fish, causing it distress and then releasing it only for it to be caught again. It is better for anglers to keep the one fish they have caught and then stop fishing.

WS agreed with ABL's position. Allowing anglers to keep one fish keeps them happy, and it would also be very difficult for DW to police the catch and release policy.

DW suggested changing the rules for anglers so that they are only allowed to keep one fish instead of two – this in itself is a conservation measure, without having to introduce catch and release.

JY proposed waiting for the season to run before introducing the new limit for anglers.

ABL agreed.

JY noted that this would be up to the UAA to implement for the new season.

Proposal from River Ythan Trust (RYT) for UDSFB to form Trust

JY put the proposal from RYT to the Board for their comments.

DL asked if a Trust could influence the Board setting the rates. JY noted that he didn't think so. JY also mentioned that forming a Trust is something that has been discussed by the Board many times over the years and the general feeling has always been that it is not necessary. JY pointed out that the Board operates independently and would not want to risk potential interference from a Trust.

ABL agreed strongly with this position; the UDSFB is in a unique position compared to other Fishery Boards, with the majority of the river owned by one proprietor making it much easier to get things done.

JY acknowledged this, and added that the Board also has a good relationship with the UAA with little to no conflict unlike other Fishery Boards.

The general consensus was that a Trust is not required at this time, and there is no need for involvement with another River either.

Retirement of Bruce Milton as Clerk to the Board

JY asked the Board for their proposals on appointing a new Clerk to the Board, with Bruce Milton retiring from Masson Glennie on 31st December 2025.

ABL proposed LK and this was seconded by WS.

FINANCE AND RATES

LK produced a forecast for the 12 months up to 31st May 2026.

After careful consideration of the projections by the Board, DL proposed that the current rate of £2.20 in the pound be kept for the coming year and this was seconded by SB.

LK agreed she would issue the notices accordingly.

FISH COUNTER REPORT

Although the fish counter reports have not been made available for the last few months, ABL assured the Board that all the data was being saved and that the reports would be produced as soon as the person responsible for sorting through the data was able to do this.

A.O.C.B

Smolt Catching Report

WS provided an update to the Board on the smolt catching project. Things are going very well, with the trap working as it should. WS produced a graph showing the number of smolts being caught and noting that this number is rising as the temperature increases.

The next step would be to weigh and analyse the smolts being caught, however this cannot be done without a biologist. ABL had approached the Deveron Board about their biologist helping with this, however he is too busy. Both WS and ABL commented that it is frustrating that the smolts cannot be kept to analyse and rear as originally planned.

FMS Provision of Funds for Security Equipment

DW informed the Board that FMS is offering funding to Water Bailiffs to purchase security equipment such as thermal cameras etc. DW has submitted his requirements to FMS, and is hoping to receive the funding requested.

Offshore Cables

There was a general discussion regarding the cables coming ashore and the implications for the River. JY advised that he is putting forward his concerns for the River to the various companies involved in the cables projects at every opportunity.

ABL commented that it is all very well getting funds from the likes of SSEN, however this will not help in the event that the River is damaged. It is important to try to get mitigation measures in place as soon as possible once the cables are installed, as it may be difficult to prove that they are the cause of declining fish numbers.

JY commented that it would be useful to have as much information as possible on the current fish numbers in the River so that it can be used as evidence if there is a decline in numbers after the installation of the cables. If the companies are willing to provide the funding for River surveys, it might be a good idea to have them carried out.

Funding Applications

JY put forward JF's comments from his email of 12th May 2025 regarding applying for funding. There was a general discussion and it was agreed that the UAA should put its case forward to the various organisations offering funding.

WS suggested applying for funding to employ a freelance biologist for a day or two to assist with the smolt analysis.

NEXT BOARD MEETING DATE

The date for the next Board meeting was set for Thursday 13th November 2025 at 3pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5:30pm.



Joseph Yule
Convenor