



## River Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Clerk: Anthony Laing Administrator: Clare Walker

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### Minute of the Annual General Meeting (Annual Public Meeting)

Held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at 11:15am in The Long Room, Logie Steading

#### Present:

Anthony Laing -AnL (Chairman)  
Alasdair Laing  
Mark Laing  
Edward Usborne  
Colin Glynn-Percy  
Andrew Howard

Robert Hoskin - RH  
Kenny Graham  
Richard Benyon - RB  
Colin Morrison - CM  
David Paton  
Colin Cawdor

#### In attendance:

Alister Taylor (AT) (Bailiff)  
Sean Mclean (SM) (Head Bailiff)  
Robert Laughton (RL) – Director, FNLRT  
Clare Walker (CW) (Administrator)  
Elle Adams (EA) (Living Alive)

Guy Harris (GH) (FWI Project Officer)

A	Item	Action
1.	<b>Apologies:</b> R C Tinsley, Michael Barron, Alex Leven, Campbell Ross  AnL welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.	
2.	<b>Minutes of AGM held on 14th August 2023</b> Minutes were approved.	
3.	<b>Matters Arising</b>  - The Scottish Government had previously indicated that the open season for all Scottish rivers is under review, however AnL had not heard anything further. RL will be attending the Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) Regional meeting on 21 <sup>st</sup> August, and he will raise this and ask whether FMS or other member have any updates.	<b>RL</b>
4.	<b>2023 Summary and Annual Report</b>  It was another disappointing year with 818 salmon and grilse caught. Despite this, there has been a positive start to this year's season with spring catches being up. Provisional river gradings have been published with the Findhorn classed as "Good" equivalent to Grade 1 in previous years. There were initial reports of fish with Saprolegnia infections in early May but subsequent wet weather and higher river flows appear to have prevented the wider spread of the infection. SM and AT are taking regular water samples to feed into the PhD research being carried out by Pieter van West at Aberdeen University into new strains of Saprolegnia. SM issues the Board with monthly update reports outlining activity undertaken on the river. This year has seen a rise in incidents, mostly to do with lack of permits however, there are ongoing cases which may result in arrests. AnL thanked SM and AT for their hard work over the course of the year.	

5.	<p><b>Consideration of Accounts for Financial Year to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024</b>  The draft accounts approved by the FDSFB at the meeting in May. The accounts were considered.</p>	
6.	<p><b>FNLRT Directors Report</b>  <b>2023 Season</b> – Catches were below average, although sea trout numbers were better. Findhorn and Nairn have been rated Good (Grade 1 under old classification system) while the Lossie is Poor (Grade 3). The gradings are still based primarily on catch data.  <b>Juvenile Surveys</b> – 15 NEPs sites were surveyed along with 8 sites on the mainstem.  <b>AST Tagging Project</b> – initial data has been released for the Atlantic Salmon Trust smolt tagging project which the Findhorn took part in. RL will circulate the published paper once it becomes available.  <b>FWI</b> – Using funding from London and Northeastern Railway a trial of the smolt trap was held in spring this year. The site in Tomatin worked fairly well apart from during very high water, SM and AT ran the trap with help from local landowners, keepers, volunteers and the community. The trap ran for 32 days with 1644 salmon and 30 trout caught.  <b>Electrofishing</b> – No NEPs this year, it is likely that this will settle into a bi-annual thing. This year there will be a mainstem survey of the Lossie.  <b>Rivers works</b> – The monitoring plan for Clashgour Windfarm began in February this year, SM and AT have been collecting samples for this. There are five other windfarms currently being proposed in the area. A contract has recently been awarded to Balfour Beattie for the A9 dualling project.  <b>INNS</b> – Giant Hogweed has been tackled on the Findhorn from Coulmony to Waterford, from Altyre to the mouth of the Mosset and Earlsmill to Dalvey Estate on the Muckle.  There have been 19 mink captures across the three catchments so far this year. The raft network has increased this year with the help of willing volunteers.  <b>Fish Disease</b> – SM and AT have been taking water samples to send to the University of Aberdeen. The samples pick up oomycetes in the water and will help track seasonal variations in populations, along with a range of other things.</p> <p>RH asked whether the increase in booking through Fishpal has impacted the number of catches reported, CM confirmed that, although many anglers booking through Fishpal don't submit catches at the time, they often wait until the end of the season before submitting catch data.</p>	RL
7.	<p><b>Findhorn Watershed Initiative Presentation and Project Update</b>  EA and GH gave a short presentation on the FWI and the progress that has been made towards the project so far. The main discussion points following the presentation were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will it take years to track changes in water temperatures? The project is establishing baseline temperature data throughout the catchment, and it should be easy to track changes over time, as well as compare tributaries and measure impact of schemes on temperature. RL confirmed that it is still an aim of the project to establish continuous temperature monitoring which could feed into the FNLRT website and enable anglers and other river users to check the temperature of the river online.</li> <li>- RB asked whether conversations were being had with other investors. EA confirmed that there is a growing list of people to reach out to to discuss</li> </ul>	

8.	<b>AOCB</b>  None	
	<b>AnL thanked the FDSFB and FNLRT staff for their work over the past year and closed the meeting at 12pm.</b>	