



## River Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Clerk: Anthony Laing Administrator: Clare Walker

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### Minute of the FDSFB Board Meeting

Held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 10:30am in The Long Room, Logie Steading

#### Present:

Anthony Laing (AnL) (Chairman)

Andrew Howard (AH)

Philip Arkell (PA)

Alec Laing (AL)

Michael Barron (MB)

Robert Hoskin (RH)

#### In attendance:

Sean Mclean (SM) (Head Bailiff)

Elle Adams (EA) (Director, FNLRT)

Clare Walker (CW) (Administrator, FNLRT)

Ollie Smaje (OS) (Ecologist, FNLRT)

Guy Harris (GH) (Catchment Restoration Lead, FNLRT)

	Item	Action
1.	<p><b>Apologies:</b> Colin Glynne-Percy, Murray Wilson, Alex Leven, Campbell Ross, Colin Cawdor, Alister Taylor, Mark Laing</p> <p>AnL welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular, AL who joined the FDSFB at the previous meeting. AnL noted special thanks to Alasdair Laing who served the FDSFB for many years and who stepped down at the Triennial elections in August.</p> <p>AnL proposed to divide the meeting into two parts with the second part covering items 7-8 in private (Board members only) with these covering sensitive financial information. Following discussion of these items a subcommittee comprising AH, PA, AnL and MB will arrange a follow up meeting to hold further discussions.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting Held on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025</b></p> <p>The minutes were approved. CW to publish Board minutes to FNLRT website.</p>	<b>CW</b>
3.	<p><b>Matters Arising not Covered Below</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- CW has not yet completed drafting a communications policy for the Board but will aim to have this ready for the next meeting.</li><li>- After further investigation, FishLegal membership for the FDSFB would be £660 a year, which is significantly higher than the fee agreed at the previous Board meeting. After weighing up the benefits of membership it was agreed not to join at this time. It was noted that this could be revisited if required.</li><li>- OS updated the Board on the A96 Findhorn Bridge drainage upgrade. The developer has confirmed that the changes will channel run off through a filter membrane. The volume of runoff is small, and while the new filter will not be a fuel filter, it will still be an upgrade and is proportionate.</li></ul>	<b>CW</b>
4.	<p><b>Budget and Finance</b></p>	

	<p><i>a. Budget/Cashflow Update</i> – CW circulated an updated budget for the year to date and an up-to-date cashflow forecast to the end of the financial year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There are assessments outstanding for this year which CW will chase. They are all handled by the same agent and CW suspects a change of personnel might be the cause, AH provided a contact name to try.</li> <li>○ There are several things coming in under budget primarily vehicle related budget lines. This is likely to be a result of the new vehicle having lower costs.</li> <li>○ The financial reports are currently suggesting a surplus of £4000 at year end.</li> </ul> <p><i>b. Investment Portfolio</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CW circulated a statement from the FDSFB timed deposit account with Rathbones. This shows interest earned from Jan 24 to date of £3.75k. It was agreed that the newly formed subcommittee will review.</li> <li>○ The investment portfolio is currently at £254k. It was noted that it is producing around a 1% annual return. It was agreed that AnL and AH will investigate the current focus of the portfolio and discuss with Rathbones whether there are opportunities to produce a better yield.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sub</b></p> <p><b>AnL/AH</b></p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Report on Activities</b></p> <p><i>a. FNLRT Director's Report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEPA's investigation into the fish kill incident (which happened shortly after the last meeting) on the A9 dualling works is ongoing. OS and SM will be providing statements to SEPA this week.</li> <li>- EA, GH and OS attended Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) Regional meeting.</li> <li>- EA had made enquiries with FMS over whether funding was available to DSFBs to help with the costs of submitting consultation responses, FMS confirmed that there is nothing available at the moment, but that this is something they are working to lobby for.</li> <li>- EA and GH attended the recent public meeting about the planned Moray FLOW Park. The developers did not attend the meeting. FNLRT will pull together data from the AST Moray Firth Tracking Project to provide evidence of potential impact on migrating fish, in preparation for any future consultation.</li> <li>- Implementation of the riparian woodland scheme at Glenmazeran is currently underway and various other projects are in development, including a floodplain reconnection schemes and a proposal to remove historic rock armour on the main stem at Dalmigavie to create deeper, cooler holding pools for fish.</li> <li>- Scoping projects funded by the Nature Restoration Fund in the lower Findhorn catchment are well underway.</li> <li>- An application by FMS to the Marine Fund Scotland was successful, this includes some new equipment for the Water Bailiffs.</li> </ul> <p><i>b. FNLRT Biologist's Report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balfour Beatty (BB) applied for, and were granted, an extension to their CAR license for the Dalmagarry Burn realignment. OS did submit an objection to SEPA but the extension was granted, and the works were completed within the extension.</li> </ul>	

	<p>After the channel was opened it became apparent that the channel design created a barrier to fish passage. SEPA have been engaging with BB to oversee implementation of remedial measures. Following a number of incidents of poor practice, including a separate breach of their CAR license, it was agreed that a letter from the FDSFB Chairman should be sent to BB's CEO and Transport Scotland to make them aware of the issues experienced. It was also agreed that, depending on the outcome of SEPA's ongoing investigation, a question to Parliament might be an appropriate way to raise the situation more widely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OS presented temperature data from the Findhorn showing temperatures regularly reaching in excess of 20 degrees again this year. Comparing this year's data to previous years appears to suggest that years where there are the greatest temperature variations coincide with particularly bad <i>saprolegnia</i> years. OS will share this data with the PhD research team at Aberdeen University.</li> <li>- Regular invertebrate monitoring continues in the catchment. Sampling downstream of the Forres waterworks triggered a report to SEPA due to numbers monitored falling below levels set by Buglife for the site. OS will follow up with Scottish Water on their monitoring of the outflow.</li> </ul> <p><b>Head Bailiff Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less fish this year, some returns are still to come in but numbers currently stand at 554 Salmon and Grilse (90% release rate) and 109 Trout and Finnock (94% release rate).</li> <li>- There has been low water all year and a large loss of fish to disease in Spring.</li> <li>- There were 21 enforcement incidents during the year, 17 of these were in June. MB asked whether incidents occurred all the way up the river and SM confirmed that poachers simply follow wherever the fish are within the river system.</li> <li>- A previous poaching case was heard in court in September and resulted in a conviction and fine for the perpetrator. Police Scotland praised the bailiff team on their evidence and impact statement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>OS/EA/ AnL</b></p> <p><b>OS</b></p> <p><b>OS</b></p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>River Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>2026 Conservation Code</i> – It was agreed to bring the biosecurity section onto the first page of the code to help highlight the importance that it plays in preventing the spread of pathogens and invasive species. CW to amend and circulate for approval over email.</li> <li>b. <i>Biosecurity</i> – OS has been ensuring that reminders to consider biosecurity are built into discussions with developers and contractors</li> <li>c. <i>Health &amp; Safety</i> – No incidents to report.</li> </ul>	<b>CW</b>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>FMS Good Governance Document</i> – CW circulated a document produced by FMS which outlines the governance and administrative obligations of DSFBs under the 'Act'. The guidance includes a compliance checklist which CW has used to assess the FDSFB's compliance. It was accepted that it should be made clearer that the Annual Public meeting is also the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors. It was questioned whether the requirement to publish</li> </ul>	

	meeting minutes includes normal Board meetings (these currently are published once approved), CW will check with FMS. <i>b. FishLegal Fee</i> – covered in item 3.	<b>CW</b>
10	<b>Dates of 2026 Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 10:30am (focus on finance)</li> <li>- Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 10:30am</li> <li>- Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2026 at 10:30am (APM and AMQP)</li> <li>- Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 10:30am.</li> </ul> <p>CW will confirm venues once arrangements have been made and will also send out calendar invitations.</p>	<b>CW</b>

All attendees left the meeting at 12:15.