



River Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Clerk: Anthony Laing Administrator: Clare Walker

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<https://www.fnlrt.org.uk/fisheries-boards/river-findhorn/>

DARFT Minute of the Annual General Meeting (Annual Public Meeting) Held on Monday 18th August 2025 at the Long Room, Logie Steading, at 11.00am

Present:

Anthony Laing (AnL) (Chairman)

Alasdair Laing (AL)

Campbell Ross (CR)

Colin Cawdor (CC)

Andrew Howard (AH)

Michael Barron (MB)

Robert Hoskin (RH)

Mark Laing (ML)

In attendance:

Sean Mclean (SM) (Head Bailiff)

Elle Adams (EA) (Director, FNLRT)

Clare Walker (CW) (Administrator, FNLRT)

Pieter van West (PVW, Aberdeen University)

Alister Taylor (AT) (Bailiff)

Ollie Smaje (OS) (Ecologist, FNLRT)

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

A	Item	Action
1.	Apologies: Colin Glynne-Percy, Murray Wilson, Alex Leven, David Paton AnL welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. A particular welcome was given to Pieter van West who kindly agreed to speak at the AGM.	
2.	Minutes of Meeting held on 19th August 2024 Minutes were approved.	
3.	Matters arising - No further correspondence has been received from Scottish Government concerning the proposed review of closed seasons on Scottish rivers. AnL agreed to look back through past correspondence for a contact and provide this to FNLRT for the team to follow up on. - AnL informed the Board that David Paton has decided not to stand for re-election at the upcoming triennial elections. He felt that his input was not being given due weight in consideration of Board business and AnL feels it is important that that is acknowledged and reflected upon.	AnL
4.	2024 Summary and Annual Report The 2024 summary and annual report was circulated along with the AGM notice and is available from the website here .	
5.	Consideration of Accounts to 31st January 2024 The Accounts have been formally approved by the Board in May 2025, and are available here .	
6.	Project Update and Proposals for 2026 - EA has taken the helm of the FNLRT following the retirement of Bob Laughton in March 2025.	

	- EA attended the Wild Salmon Connections conference in January 2025 and had the opportunity to deliver a talk on the Findhorn Watershed Initiative (FWI), which was well received by attendees who were particularly interested in the holistic catchment scale approach of the project. CW will circulate the link to recordings of the conference. - OS, FNLRT Ecologist, will be continuing FNLRT's program of juvenile surveys, disease monitoring and other activity, including the potential for renewing the smolt trap on the Findhorn following the pilot at Tomatin in Spring 2024. - Invertebrate surveys continue – two levels of survey are carried out, one a basic survey and another higher level survey, both of which provide useful baseline data as well as acting as good indicators of overall river health and water quality. These surveys rely on a dedicated network of citizen scientist who volunteer with the Trust. - The temperature network is still in place with plans to expand. - 'Schools go to Fish' program was delivered to 3 primary schools in the Heldon Community Council area in March and May with help from the FDSFB bailiffs, volunteers from the Findhorn Bay AA and Kellas Fishery. - GH has progressed 8 riparian woodland habitat restoration schemes to either completion or due for implementation which represents 185 hectares of habitat and 14.7Km of river shading. - These schemes will provide shade, improve parr habitat, water quality, shelter and holding locations and improve grazing management on spawning burns. Partnership work has been a critical element of the project so far. - Funding for scoping in the lower catchment has been awarded, this will consider the SSSI, conservation grazing, riparian woodland and deer management. - Last Autumn volunteers assisted in collecting tree seed from key sources in the upper catchment which have been grown on at a local nursery, some of which are earmarked for planting at Glenmazeran. This ensures local genetics are used. In a poignant twist, some of this seed was collected from Dava moor, these source trees were sadly destroyed in the extensive wildfire earlier in the year. - The SISI project continues with Giant Hogweed season complete and Japanese Knotweed control about to begin. - A number of community engagement events have taken place in the past year including meetings of the Deer Forum, Upper catchment human ecology research publication events and environmental film nights. - Work is nearing completion on a Nature Finance Strategy with help from Leah Reinfrack who has been recruited as Bioregional Finance Officer for FNLRT - 'The River Within' corporate partnership with Chivas Brothers Ltd. (CBL) has contributed substantial funds to facilitate the implementation for several woodland creation schemes. There are plans to pursue other similar partnerships alongside aspirations of rolling out projects to the Nairn and Lossie catchments in future. CC asked what level of input CBL have within the partnership – EA confirmed that CBL have a hands off approach towards the projects they fund, the partnership does not include any provision of carbon credits or similar nature credits, although each project is pitched to CBL who then decide on whether to fund. EA believes the partnership	CW
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	is unique within the network at the moment. AH asked whether the landowner would be responsible for schemes after completion in a situation such as the Dava wildfire. GH confirmed that the landowner MOUs contain provision for 'acts of God'. MB asked whether any of this funding is channelled to the FDSFB – EA confirmed that any work done on these projects by the FDSFB staff is paid to the Board. - Upcoming Projects – Plans to implement the Nature Finance Strategy; project rollouts to the Lossie and Nairn; follow ups on previous work in Findhorn Bay and revision of the management plan are all on the horizon in the coming years in addition to the project currently underway. - The FDSFB are invited to contribute through continued collaboration, signing MOU agreements and donating to the FNLRT. - SM asked whether work within the bay would address erosion/siltation issues. EA confirmed that those aspects are beyond the current scope and has, so far, focused on sea grass meadows and water quality. CC congratulated the FNLRT team on the success of the Trusts charitable activities.	
7.	Guest Speaker – Peiter van West, Aberdeen University – Saprolegnia PvW gave an update on the progress of the research PhD currently being undertaken by Aberdeen University, part funded by the FDSFB.	
8.	AOCB None	