

**Minutes of the Public Meeting of
The Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board
Held on 10th February 2026
At The Schivas Steading, Newton, Methlick at 2pm**

1. Present:

Paul Adderton	- ADDA Machar Pool
John Pirie	- Ardlogie
Charles Wolrige Gordon	- Esslemont – Chairman
Eric Ritchie	- Ramornie
Dominic Fairlie	- Cromleybank
Edward Arthur	- Schivas
Andy Crawford	- Angler (Schivas)
Wayne Smith	- Ellon Castle (Boat of Fechil)

2. In Attendance:

Gwen Chalmers	- Clerk to the Board
Mark Andrew	- Former Clerk to the Board
Jim Kerr	- Don District Salmon Fishery Board Superintendent
Anouk Kloppert	- River Ythan Trust
Nicholas Taylor	- ADAA
Robert Paylor	- SISI Project Officer (Ythan and Ugie)
James Begg	- Allathan Associates

3. Apologies for absence:

Fred Pell – HAC

4. Appointment of Clerk to the Board

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting and introduced Gwen Chalmers of Allathan Associates at Maud who had agreed to take on the role of Clerk with effect from that day. He thanked her for taking up the position and offered the support and assistance from the Board and wider angling and river community.

5. Consideration of the Reports by the Bailiffs

Mark Andrew asked if everyone had seen the report which had been published on the Board website and sent to Board members and others by email.

Jim Kerr provided a summary of the 2025 season, which had been one of the poorest for many years due to the low water conditions throughout the summer and autumn which had kept salmon below Ellon for most of the season. Estuary sea trout fishing had been good with many large fish caught. Due to the low and warm water conditions, dead and diseased fish had been observed at Ardlethan and other beats. 15 dead salmon and 8 dead sea trout were reported but there were probably more. The disease ceased after water levels rose.

Obstructions (mainly trees) had been removed on the Ebrie, Littlewater, Fordoun and main stem (Methlick) and the Mill of Elrick hydro sluice had been taken out of action. Weed cutting had been carried out in the Ebrie and Fortree burns.

The Board had once again hired a boat mounted seal scarer from Peterhead which had been moored at Boat of Fechil thanks to the kind assistance of George and Wayne Smith. This had worked to deter most seals from ascending further upriver. A small number of seals had passed the scarer (either by swimming past with their heads above water or by failing to be deterred by the sound) and had caused a nuisance to anglers in the Ellon waters (particularly at Ramornie). It has been agreed with Lunar fishings and the Ugie D.S.F.B to hire the boat and seal scarer in 2026.

The gravel loosening carried out by the Bailiffs had met with some success, but the area cleared at Seggat had not been used by spawning fish. This could have been caused by the low water conditions.

6. Programme of Activities for 2026

These were identified within the report. Emphasis would be placed on tree removal where these were causing impassable obstructions, clearing potential spawning gravel areas of ranunculus, easing compacted gravel beds for spawning and clearing any other impassable obstructions.

Survey work would continue On the 10 identified spawning areas (on tributaries and the main stem of the river over 1km each), Piscivorous bird surveys from Gight to the estuary enabling an application for control to be submitted. Wayne Smith volunteered to assist with control and Charles Buchan offered to do so too.

7. Proposals by those attending:

No additional proposals were made but all agreed with the plans suggested by Jim Kerr in his Proposals for 2026 report.

Paul Adderton asked for the Service Level Agreement and work of the Bailiffs to be applauded for working well to the benefit of the River Ythan.

8. SISI Work in the Ythan Catchment

Robert Paylor reported on progress made over the last 12 months of invasive species control within the catchment. Hogweed has largely been eliminated within the catchment (the control has been ongoing since 2014) but individual plants still emerge from Gight upstream. Japanese Knotweed has only 10 – 15 sites which are being controlled. Himalayan Balsam is found and controlled upstream of Methlick and Mink are monitored by 44 rafts in the catchment of which 30 have traps. 6 mink were caught in 2025 with individual animals caught on the Tarty, Ebrie, Raxton and a pair on the Skeugh burn. This is a higher number than usual and demonstrates the importance of continued vigilance and control. SISI funding has been secured for 2 more years.

The Chairman thanked Robert for his presentation and for the continued progress of eradication of INNS within the catchment.

9. Date for next Meeting

The Chairman proposed that a summer meeting would be held at Newburgh on 30th June 2026 – venue to be confirmed.

10. Any other Competent Business

No further business was raised so the Chairman closed the General Meeting.