

RIVER YTHAN TRUST (RYT)

Minutes of Directors Meeting of 17th January 2019.

Location- Haddo Estate Office.

Present.

Mark Andrew MA		Alec Paterson AP	Dr John Pirie JP
Michael Stewart MS	Jim Adie JA	Anouk Kahanov AK	Dr Mark Young MY

Apologies

Richard Macdonald RM	Charles Wolrige Gordon		

Item	Comment	Action
Chairman	MS took the chair and welcomed all for attending.	
Declaration of Interest	MS reminded the directors of their responsibilities to the charity and to state whether they had any declarable interests in agenda items. No declaration of interests made.	
Minutes of meeting of 14 th December 2016	MS asked if all were satisfied that the minute was a true record of the meeting. There being no dissensions, the minutes were approved, proposed by MA seconded by MY.	
Matters arising	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>MA gave an update of the current financial situation indicating enough funds are available to carry on meantime. Currently £ 7187.30 in the bank.</p> <p>Known future expenditures .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) subscription. (See RAFTS/FMS on page 2.) • AP asked MS and JA if they had any outstanding costs to claim in relation to the work they have been carrying out regarding the construction of the fish pass on the Keithfield Burn at Keithfield Lake – no outstanding costs at present. <p>General Funding Matters.2018/19 Financial Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The situation is that we have no income, therefore sooner or later, unless this changes, the River Ythan Trust will cease to exist • MA suggested we need to consider a fund raiser – possible fishing days provided by proprietors. • AP to look at other possible funding appeal routes. 	<p>All</p> <p>AP</p>

Matters arising	<p><u>RAFTS/FMS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAFTS organisation ceased to be in early 2017, the new organisation dealing with Salmon Fishery Boards and Rivers/Fisheries Trusts is Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) • FMS, which we have joined, is our link with Scottish Government and a source keeping us informed what is going on regarding conservation measures etc. • We feel our annual subscription at £1000.00 is excessively high when compared with other larger trusts and have contacted FMS to see if this can be reduced. • JP pointed out that situation was unique in that the River Ythan Trust pays more than the Ythan Salmon Fishery Board – he has discussed the situation with the FMS Chairman, who appeared sympathetic to our situation. • It was agreed that if there was no significant reduction to the FMS subscription, we should relinquish our membership <p><u>Website</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem with the domain name was changed to www.riverythantrust.co.uk sometimes works ok but not always – not yet resolved. • We had put the matter of the website on hold until we found out about possible amalgamations of local Fishery Boards because of the Wild Fisheries Reform – currently looks certain that there will not be any amalgamation of the Ythan Board with another. • Following discussion, it was agreed to try to set up a joint website with the Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board. • It was also agreed that uploading information to the website should be as simple as possible to enable Trust members to participate. <p><u>Facebook Page</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still live but needs updating. <p><u>Publicity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only publicity has been about our involvement with the Ythan Biodiversity Volunteers regarding INN plant control. <p><u>OSCr/Audit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2017/18 audit is complete and OSCr submission will be submitted soon after the AGM minutes are completed. 	<p>RYT/YDSFB</p> <p>AK</p> <p>AP/MA</p>
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Matters arising	<p><u>Fishery Management Plan</u></p> <p>SEPA and Rural Diffuse Pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had assumed that SEPA had commenced their survey of the Ythan and tributaries (farm visits) in spring 2018 – unfortunately this was not the case. However, they have just recently completed the coastal area which includes the Water of Cruden, Slains Burn, the Foveran Burn and Tarty Burn. • Following our 27th June 2018 SEPA River Basin Management Planning (RBMP) meeting in Aberdeen attended by MA and AP, we have given SEPA our suggested priority list of (mainly tributaries) waterways we wish them to tackle first. • We have collated all RYT habitat survey information and this was passed to SEPA at the 27th June 2018 meeting. (First passed to SEPA in spring 2013.) • In late November we were advised by Peter Wright of SEPA’s Land Unit, that work will commence early January 2018, using 6 separate SEPA Inspectors, likely to commence around Ellon on the lower river and then moving upstream. • All our 2012 survey data has been passed to Duncan Pirie at SEPA’s Fraserburgh Office. • SEPA are willing to consider commencing with YDSFB/RYT recommendations – MA and AP to advise. • Much of the diffuse pollution comes from livestock watering stations and cattle poaching – we do not know if/when watering stations could be improved or removed - could take years. <p><u>INN Plant Surveys, Water of Cruden Catchment, Slains Burn and Coastal Streams.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeenshire Council did fund NESBReC carry out INN plant surveys on the above – AP received the data from them in spring 2017 – all information now passed to SISI. <p><u>Electrofishing.</u></p> <p>Marine Scotland Science National Electrofishing Sampling Project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such is the concern regarding the decline in salmon stocks that Marine Scotland Science has instigated and funded a project using electrofishing procedures at randomly selected locations, including 16 sites in the Ythan catchment in order to understand the current situation. (2018). May be extended for future years depending on funding being available. • This year, the work has been carried out on behalf of the Ythan Board by a team from the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Charitable Trust. (DBIT) • Results have been circulated to Trust members – all 16 sites surveyed had trout present, 10 had juvenile salmon present. • The results at least indicate water quality is good. 	MA/AP
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Matters arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JP commented that he was disappointed that no juvenile salmon were found around Mains of Towie farm on the main stem, also that there appeared to have been some dredging there in recent years • JP had requested the Deveron Trust that he be advised when/where the electrofishing was taking place but received no reply. • AP will contact the Deveron Trust to advise JP on electrofishing this year. <p><u>Debris Obstacles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further work carried out since the last meeting. <p><u>Manmade Obstacles</u></p> <p>Bronie Burn Esslemont Weir.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEPA have employed a specialist firm to carry out a feasibility study to come up with proposals to ease fish passage – their final report should be available 4th February 2019. Subject to getting Scottish Government funding, they hope to let out a design and build contract to deal with the issue in 2019. • AP to attend any meetings regarding this subject. <p>Fordoun Burn Bridge of Lewes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA and AP met with Duncan Pirie of SEPA on site recently – Duncan agreed to investigate with other SEPA team members. • Duncan Pirie of SEPA has discussed the matter briefly with Scottish Water (their sewer pipe caused the original problem) and they are considering removal of the sewer pipe, however a solution to the problem is far more complex than that due to erosion issues to properties adjacent to the site. • JP mentioned Rootie Linn, a series of rock formations around 700-800 metres above the Bridge of Lewes that may be an obstacle to fish migration in low water, due to a build-up of debris – it was agreed that this be looked at and any debris removed this year. • JP also advised that the improvements for fish passage below the main road bridge in Fyvie has become compromised by build up of gravel coming downstream – JP advised he would be happy to clear it himself. <p>Keithfield Burn Outfall Keithfield Lake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Stewart and Jim Adie have this year been actively working on the erection of a pool and weir fish pass and have completed over 50% of the work – we now have the remaining timber available to complete the project in spring/summer 2019. • JA advised that MS had, on his own, carried out a considerable amount of time rebuilding parts of the old walls of the channel. • MS and JA are to be commended for their dedication and effort. 	<p>AP</p> <p>AP</p> <p>RYT Volunteers</p> <p>RYT Volunteers</p> <p>MS/JA</p>
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Matters arising	<p><u>Scale Sampling.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some scale sampling carried out in 2017. Only 8 sets of scales, mainly from the HHAC members. • No scale sampling carried out in 2018 – little angling took place above Ellon until very late in the season. <p><u>Education.</u></p> <p>Salmon in the Classroom. (SIC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP is no longer fit enough or has time (very time consuming from the end of February to the end of May – constantly on call). • Even the Don Trust/Fishery Board with three Bailiffs available have ceased their similar projects. • Generally, it was agreed that SIC was very well received by the various schools that participated in the past. • It was felt desirable that we resume a single school project in 2020 (too late for 2019) if we could find a person/persons to take it on. • MY is happy to do the PowerPoint presentation, MS and JA are prepared to set up the aquarium. • One suggestion is to approach the Ellon Man’s Shed to help, MS/JA are to speak to someone they know in Ellon to see if they may be interested in becoming involved. • AK commented that we have already carried out previous projects (8) successfully. <p><u>Biosecurity Plan.</u></p> <p>Mink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control work has recommenced as part of the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative – in the case of our area, Ythan catchment, Water of Cruden and Slains Burn, led by Karen Muller of SISI from the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Charitable Rivers Trust Office. <p>Ythan Biodiversity Volunteers (YBV) Invasive Giant Hogweed (GH) Control 2018 and 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GH control for 2018 has been completed earlier than usual due to the exceptionally good weather and our contractor having an extra man available for the work. • Funding for the contractor in 2018 was via the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF) the “Approved Body” being E B Scotland Ltd, the SLCF funding supplier was Easter Hatton Environmental Ltd. Balmedie. Aberdeenshire, the Contributing Third Party Funder being the Ythan District Fishery Board, Tarves. Aberdeenshire. • Since the YBV commenced GH control in 2014 the amount on the Ythan and tributaries, including the Tarty Burn has been reduced by a massive 98%. 	MS/JA
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Matters arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a truly remarkable result, carried out initially by a combination of a contractor + volunteers, and in 2017 and 2018, largely by a contractor • Since 2014 the YBV raised around £30k from various sources including Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Landfill Community Fund with other small (relatively) donations from the Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board and others. • However, if the GH is going to be eliminated totally, this work must continue for several more years. • Currently, the YBV has not yet sourced enough funding to allow contractor control of GH for 2019, but the River Ythan Trust Secretary is investigating possible sources on their behalf – it gets more difficult as the years slip by. <p><u>Scottish Invasives Species Initiative. (SISI)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a project the River Ythan Trust has been involved with (along with other rivers trusts) since it was first mooted by the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) in late 2015, to try to get a project together to control invasive species (plants and North American Mink) over a large part of north and north east Scotland. • Funding is via the Heritage Lottery Fund and Scottish Natural Heritage. • The project became live in spring 2018 and will run for until autumn 2021 – this is not a project that will currently replace the INN plant control work by the Ythan Biodiversity Volunteers – there are insufficient funds and personnel at present. • SNH is the project leader, working through the Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Charitable Trust (DBIT) to cover the Deveron and Ugie also in our area (River Ythan Trust) – the Ythan catchment and the Water of Cruden/Laeca and Slains Burn. • There is full-time officer (Al Reeve) and a seasonal officer (Karen Muller) based at the Deveron DBIT Office near Rothiemay, Huntly. Karen is tasked with dealing with the River Ythan Trust (RYT) area and Ugie area for six months of the year. She is responsible for surveys/organizing /training volunteers and supply of PPE and herbicides in these two areas. • SISI do not currently have any funding to pay for contractor control – the aim of the project is to enlist volunteers to carry out INN plant control, led by Karen. • The River Ythan Trust are closely involved and have provided SISI with all information relating to known invasive non-native plant locations and landowners in the River Ythan Trust area including the Water of Cruden/Laeca/Slains Burn. • Japanese Knotweed control (a relatively small problem) in the Ythan Catchment and Tarty Burn in 2018.has been carried out by SISI. 	AP
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Matters arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SISI’s Karen Muller has been retained (unexpectedly) by SISI/ DBIT overwinter and part of her work is to attempt to recruit volunteers for GH control on the Ythan and Tarty Burn. <p><u>Training for Spraying Pesticides.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, funding for training volunteers is available via SISI or the North East Invasive Non-Native Species Project. <p><u>Wild Fisheries Reform. (WFR)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WFR as we had hoped for, died in February 2017 - The Scottish Government refused to put up any funding, leaving the smaller fisheries boards and trusts, including the Ythan District Fishery Board and River Ythan Trust in no better a position to fulfil their functions than previously. The Scottish Government have issued mandatory requirements that, arguably increase the workload of fishery boards. • We had hoped that the outcome of WFR would be an amalgamation of the Dee, Don, Ythan, and possibly Ugie fishery boards, and hence closer relationships between the various trusts, both financially and sharing of skills and staff – this did not come about. • Following the Wild Fisheries Reform, at some time in the next year or so, the YDSFB will be required to produce a Fisheries Management Plan for the Ythan – the exact requirements are not yet fully known, however the inhouse skills/labour to produce this are not available within the YDFB and the RYT – a lot of the basic information is contained within the RYT Ythan Fisheries Management Plan 2011 – 2015. It is important however to ensure the plan is as simple as possible – no point in producing a plan with targets that are impossible to achieve. • Regarding possible changes to angling methods – nothing has been forthcoming from Marine Scotland Science to date. <p><u>Marine Scotland Science. Salmon Scotland Regulations.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ythan remains Category 3 river and the moratorium on retaining any salmon or grilse remains in place and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. • The most recent edict from Marine Scotland is that they require angling effort involved in be recorded for each day spent angling for salmon (blank and successful) be recorded in annual catch returns – the ADAA and others are engaged with FMS and hopefully Roseanna Cunningham/Gillian Martin – the ADAA and many other angling clubs are opposed – feel their members will refuse to participate. • This latter item was discussed – JP was of the view that the information would be very helpful in getting a better picture of salmon stocks - generally it was felt that angling clubs would find it almost impossible to comply - for private fishing beats, less so. 	
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Matters arising	<p><u>Scottish Wild Salmon Company (USAN) Netting Activities at Newburgh.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change, there will be no coastal netting at Newburgh in 2019. <p><u>Scottish Government (Marine Scotland) Seal Haul-out Site at Newburgh.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you are all aware, the protected seal haul out site is now in place on the north side of the Ythan Estuary opposite the old Lifeboat Station. • It has been alleged, that due to the presence of seals upriver in Ellon, that proprietors there have had great difficulty in selling permits for their fishings this year. • Anglers report, that when salmon are present, seals move through Ellon at dusk and return downstream at dawn. 	
AOCB	<p><u>Ythan District Salmon Fishery Board.</u></p> <p><u>Dee/Don Bailiffs Duties.</u></p> <p>As most of you know, the river Don and Dee Bailiffs have been working for the Board for some time. The board decided that they would change the bailiffs' duties to make more efficient use of their time – less time to be spent on policing and more on other duties shown below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out surveys on numbers of fish eating birds on the Ythan during the period September 2018 – May 2019. • Set up a system to record the numbers of seals in the river above Logie Buchan Bridge. • Carry out redd counting (salmon and trout) over a total of nine selected 1km sites throughout the catchment from late October through to January 2019. This to be an ongoing practice during the spawning season for the next few years. <p><u>Sea Trout Smolt Monitoring.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This River Dee Trust project funded largely via the Vattenfall EOWDC project will be carrying out a sea trout smolt monitoring exercise on the Ythan in 2020, following their movement downstream and along the coast, to gain more information on both predation and sea movements. <p><u>Control of Invasive Non-Native Plants. (INN Plants)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AK is looking into the possibility of Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) students being trained in knapsack sprayer qualifications (including the necessary training for work on/near water) with the view that in exchange they commit a certain number of days/annum as volunteers controlling INN plants – AK to investigate. • In addition to gaining additional skills, the qualification gained would look good on their CV's • Funding possibilities to be explored – SISI, North East INN Project, Vattenfall AOWDC Community Fund – perhaps others. • AP suggested that AK meet Karen Muller of SISI to discuss. 	AK

Next meeting	There being no other matters raised, MS thanked all for attending and declared the meeting closed. To be advised.	AP.
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