



River Earn Improvement Association



Minutes of the A.G.M. held at Crieff Hotel 25th March 2014.

Apologies- Drew McIntyre, Bernard Walker, Craig Ramsay, John Robertson.

Present – 17 members

1. **Chairman's Welcome.**--- Colin Lowson welcomed the 17 members for making the effort to turn out and by making their views and ideas known, assist in the development of the R.E.I.A.. He then offered his thanks to his committee for their collective efforts over the past year, commenting that it has been one of good progress within the Association.
2. **Apologies**---The Secretary made particular reference to a great supporter of the Association, Joe Johnston who sadly passed away last year. There were 4 apologies related to the Secretary and it was also known that others were attending the T.D.S.F.B. Open Meeting at Dunkeld.
3. **Minutes Of 2012 A.G.M.**----These were read by the Chairman, Proposed as accurate by David Milburn and seconded by Duncan Clarke.
4. **Matters Arising.**---- None requested.
5. **Chairman And Secretary's Report.**---- The Chairman read the annual report previously circulated to the membership and made comment on several issues. He explained the nature of the temperature barriers on the river, principally around Coqhualzie and how these could benefit beats below in the Spring to the detriment of beats above. He thanked Proprietors who willingly gave catch data to the association and that there was no mandatory requirement for them to do so. Last seasons figures may have surprised more than a few who fish the river as they appeared better than was expected with 742 salmon and 302 sea trout reported, with a highly commendable C&R rate of 89%. He commented that whilst other rivers were struggling in recent years, the Earn remained remarkably stable. He then went on to talk about the website and appealed for more photos and reports to be passed to the Secretary for inclusion on the web. The Chairman then went on to confirm that the Association's major expenditure **chainsaw project** was now up and running and gathering

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momentum. All 4 volunteers were now fully trained, certificated, insured and equipped and projects have commenced around the Machany on Strathallan Estate to clear blockages from what is a very important spawning habitat. It is important we deal with even minor blockages quickly to ensure free access to the redds for all migratory species. Special thanks go to Derek Trevis, Ian Pollock, Jim Perritt and John Young for each giving up a week of their own time to attend the relevant courses and of course their time in pursuing the project clearances also.

The Chairman then turned his attention to our ongoing battle with **Invasive Species** on the river. He stressed that although Landowners had a responsibility to control knotweed and balsam, very few actually did due to the obvious cost implications. The Association are not obliged in any way to deal with this problem but have taken a decision to embark on a yearly spraying programme which helps manage the problem and prevent the spread of these nuisance plants. This will be our 4th year in the cycle and there have been encouraging results with many stands being eradicated. It is not an inexpensive pursuit, however, but the Committee feel it is worthwhile expenditure and does improve our collective enjoyment whilst at the riverside. Grant funding has become difficult to access, initially cash support was received from R.A.F.T.S. to assist our work, over the last 2 years assistance was received from T.S.D.F.B. this year's funding is not yet finalised. Overall, the Association have invested £12k from external sources and reserves and are committed to continue the work. In the year ahead, we are to pursue funding also from the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park who are responsible for control of these species on Loch Earn and the tributaries. David Milburn of Lochlane and Laggan offered to assist in future discussions with N.P. officers on behalf of the Association, if requested, a gesture which was well received by the Chair.

The Chairman reported there were now 31 Earn salmon being held in Almondbank Kelt Reconditioning tanks and hopefully these will assist in augmenting our fragile spring salmon run.

The **2014 Competition** has been agreed and circulated to all members. Once again our thanks go to our sponsors and all Proprietors who have donated towards our extensive prize list.

An appeal was made for members to advise of their email addresses to allow us to reduce outgoings on stamps, paper and ink.

The Chairman then talked about the objectives outlined on the Association flyer which was recently distributed. He also highlighted the recent decision by the E.A. in England and Wales allowing more effective control of avian predators and hoped this would be adopted by ScotGov. He expressed dismay



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at the recent acquisition of the Ythan nets by Usan and cited the news that A.D.A.A. had apparently not been advised of the impending sale. In the face of continuing expansion of the wild fish mixed stock interceptory netting, encouraged by ScotGov, we can only strive to keep our own river healthy. The Chairman ended his report by asking for volunteers to serve on the Committee in future.

6. **Treasurer's Report.** ----Ian Dalglish opened by announcing a £250 donation to N.A.F.S. by the Association to help Orri Vigfussen and his supporters in their international fight to save wild salmon. H reported that income remained static last year and that major outgoings for the various projects resulted in a nett reduction in reserves of £7.5k. However, the balance remains healthy at £28k currently and we look forward to receive requests for funding of worthwhile projects.

Paul Turek suggested an increase in annual subscription to £20.

Peter McDonald suggested we need to build the membership base first of all which was generally agreed.

The Treasurer advised that he was able to add 25% value to the subs via Gift Aid contribution.

David Milburn asked about membership levels and the Treasurer advised that it had dropped from around 100 last year to 80 this year but was very fluid and difficult to continually track those who had lapsed. Increased clarity was requested for next year.

At this point the Secretary made reference to a great supporter of the Association, Joe Johnston, who had sadly passed away last year and paid tribute to his contributions.

David Milburn then asked about Standing Order uptake levels and suggested the S/O form should be sent out with the subs requests. The Treasurer replied that the take up rate was very low and that the form could be included as requested.

David Milburn asked why he was not able to pay his Proprietors donation via PayPal and was advised that it had been set up to receive only the value of £15 and that this would be rectified to allow Proprietors to use the facility more extensively in future..

The accounts were proposed by Duncan Clarke and seconded by John Young.

7. **Election Of Office Bearers.**---Nominations were requested from the floor of which none were received. Status quo was proposed by Peter McDonald and seconded by Paul Turek.



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8. **A.O.C.B.**---Derek Trevis asked for local volunteers to help on tributary clearance projects.
David Milburn talked about the Flyer and considered the river had a good story to tell , with spring catches on one of our beats not only rivalling but eclipsing many top Tay beats.
Colin Lawson asked for current river reports to be submitted for publication on the website and the need to better engage with anglers.
Tom Monaghan suggested he would contact Trout and Salmon to investigate the possibility of an article or editorial on the river.
Derek Trevis talked about the recent big fish caught at Dunning which should be publicised better.
Paul Turek expressed disappointment at the low turnout present at the meeting.
Bob Mitchell asked about promoting youngsters into the sport .
John Young said there were proposals for 3 schools in Strathearn to be included in the “Salmon in the Classroom” project sponsored by the Tay Board and Foundation. He could not name specific schools but would find out at the next Board meeting and report back. David Milburn offered further support for this activity and other proposals to engage junior anglers in our sport.
Duncan Clarke was presented with a bottle of the finest malt whisky by the Chairman in recognition of his 10+ years service as Secretary on the Trout Liaison Committee.
9. There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00p.m. and once more thanked everyone who had made the effort to attend and contribute to a lively and interesting meeting.
The date of the next A.G.M. will be advised to all members individually and posted on the website.



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