

Fleet DSFB AGM

Minutes of Meeting held 28th. July 2016

Present:

R Gilbey
I Jardine
M Hannay
J Ribbens
J Graham

It was noted with great sadness the loss of our committee member James Girgan who died on the 10th. July. Jim probably caught more sea-trout and salmon on the Fleet than any other angler ever did or ever will.

The clerk provided an up-to-date set of accounts for the financial year 2015/2016, and these were duly approved.

Now that the board's finances are back in a healthy state, it was agreed that the current levy should be reduced by 25% next year, which nearly balances future annual expenditure.

The clerk advised that a rateable value review will take place this year by the local assessor.

The GFT representatives give a short presentation of their ongoing work on the Fleet catchment :-

Invasive plant control work continues (knotweed and balsam);

Electro-fishing is currently underway on the upper river. An overview of the historic findings will be provided to the board. Good numbers of trout have been found at the viaduct, however, no salmonids have been found there or further upstream. The little water of Fleet remains devoid of fish upstream of the waterfall at Drumruck;

The detrimental effect of deep peat drainage was discussed and how this continues to pose problems for water quality on the Fleet.

The Fleet has been classified in category three for fish population sustainability with a CL estimate of only 0.1%, (note 60% is considered as a viable threshold), this places the Fleet as having the poorest calculated figure in Scotland. The reasons were discussed and the lack of recorded rod catches is an issue. Proprietors are responsible for submitting these figures to Marine Scotland annually. Unfortunately the local fishing effort has been virtually turned-off, furthermore, with the total catch and release being imposed no local anglers are prepared to pay for fishing the river. This presents a problem because it is likely that the government will put a total ban on fishing on the river should there continue to be no fish catches recorded.

To try and remedy the lack of catches the clerk suggested allowing the locals to fish the MUF water free of charge subject to providing accurate scale and length measurements. Subsequently MUF has agreed to his request and the clerk is now trying to coerce local effort.

It was reported that an incident of gill netting took place across the mouth of the river. Further investigation by the clerk found that this incident was conducted in a responsible and legal manner by a local fishmonger pursuing bass and therefore is of no major concern. He is now aware of the board's knowledge of the matter.