

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE QUALIFIED PROPRIETORS OF SALMON  
FISHERIES  
NORTH & WEST DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 10:00 via Zoom**

**Attendees**

Ms Lana Richardson  
Mr Robin Irvine  
Mr Euan Anderson  
Mr Cathal Macleod  
Mr Gerald Osborne  
Mr Robin Vestey (Chairman)

**In attendance**

Dr Shona Marshall (West Sutherland Fishery Trust)  
Mr Steven Dora (Marine Directorate)  
Ms Anastasia Young (Bell Ingram – Clerk)

**Apologies**

Mr Dougal Lindsay  
Mr Alan Balfour  
Mr David Davies (Vice-chair)  
Mr Keith Dunbar  
Ms Sarah Harkins  
Mr Stuart Dillett

**1. Minutes of Meeting held on 10th November 2023**

The previous meeting minutes have been distributed and the draft approved.

**2. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**3. Annual Report 2023/24**

The annual draft report is based on Shona's activities and statutory work. The report provides an update from the board towards the end.

The Board have continued to work with West Sutherland Fishery Trust again this year.

Requests for the introduction of youngstock were received for the Inver only. RV highlighted that due to the hatchery, requests will continue each year. RV urged others to submit requests to the Board where required.

Amendments are required to the dates on pages one and three, AY will update and redistribute.

#### 4. Financial Accounts for the Year Ended 28th May 2024

AY presented the draft accounts for the year end 28th May 2024.

Income received totals £30,773, down slightly from the previous year.

Expenditure totals £32,709, up slightly from the previous year on insurance and subscriptions.

Assets total £20,000 and liabilities total £6233.

RV raised the importance of keeping sufficient funds to support the boards requirements and that any surplus funds should be used to reduce the assessments.

#### 5. Any Other Business

Shona shared the following information on behalf Keith Dunbar –

*For the second year in a row the long dry spell from April to the end of May seems to have had a marked effect on the 2024 fishing results. The spring drought in 2023 was even worse when the Garvie river almost dried up. This may have restricted smolt migration and contributed to the fact that not a single mature sea trout was caught in Loch Oiscaig this year. To my knowledge over fifty years that has never happened before.*

*When the deluge of rain did come in mid-June the rivers and lochs rose rapidly and a few sea trout seemed to have made a dash for it heading straight up to Loch Lurgain. The finnock catch which almost collapsed last year was a little better in 2024 with a very modest twelve fish being caught. Slightly better was the salmon catch which at five fish was the best since season 2019.*

*The disappearance of sea trout in Loch Oiscaig may be due to climate change increasing the productivity of the loch such that the young trout, which should have smolted and gone to sea, may just be remaining in the loch where they are finding sufficient food. There is some evidence to suggest this may be happening as I am aware of at least three ‘brown’ trout over 1 lb being caught in Oiscaig this year. Overall the brown trout catch was well up on last year.*

*The fishing effort increased this year with 39 rod-days compared with a five- year average of 45 rod-days. The catches and fishing effort are summarised:-*

	2024	5 Yr Avg
Salmon	5	2.4
Sea Trout	3	15.6
Finnock	12	32.8
Brown trout	264	n/a
Rod-days	39	45

RV queried whether the Osaig is stocked, SM notes it hasn't been for a few years. Steven Dora asked whether any trends have been noted. SM explained that it's tricky to tell at this stage from the electrofishing.

RI is enjoying learning about the Garvie and is interested in engaging with others.

AY received disappointed feedback on the change of meeting date. RV asked to change the meeting date to ensure his attendance, as requested by other Proprietors. AY suggested meeting dates are confirmed by email rather than during meetings moving forward.

Bell Ingram  
Chartered Surveyors  
5 High Street  
Beaulieu  
IV4 7BS