TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD
MINUTES OF OPEN SESSION BOARD MEETING

BLAIRGOWRIE 23 JUNE 2026

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1. **Welcome & Introduction:** The Convenor welcomed the Board to the Open Meeting with a special welcome to 3 members of the public**.**

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2. **Present:** Lorraine Henderson, Convenor (LH), John Nevin (JN), Nick Bosswell (NB), Bobby White (BW), Ben Thomson (BT), Bob Mason (BM), Iain Wood (IW), Grant Kellie (GK), Andrew Parrot (AP), Iain Law (IL)

   In Addition:

   Key Staff – David Bamford (DB),

   Members of public - 3

   Apologies: Andrew Parrot, Amanda Nicolson

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3. **Declarations of Interest / Code of Conduct:** No Change

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4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 March 2026 - Kenmore:** Minutes from the previous meeting were approved, proposed by Bob Mason and seconded by Iain Wood.

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5. **Progress on Action Log: The action Log was addressed with all items deemed complete apart from the following:**

   a. Organogram – **Action** LH to supply as part of Public meeting presentations
   b. Volunteer Bailiffs – **Action** BM to continue liaison with FMS/IFM
   c. Joint Accountants (TRT/TDSFB) – **Action** LH to address
   d. Electrofishing – **Action** DB to produce calendar and locations
   e. Illegal Fishing on Loch Tay – **Action** LH to write to perpetrators

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6. **Convenor General Update:**

   a. **Financial Performance and Organisational Systems:**

      Debt Recovery - We have recovered nearly £24,000 from aged debtors, with an additional £15,000–£40,000 potentially recoverable, indicating significant progress in

debt recovery. It is worth noting that there is significant debt dating back, in some cases to 2017. It is unlikely that we will be able to recover much of this.
Levy collection stands at 44% of proprietors, totalling approximately £321,000, which is considered a positive outcome.
New uniforms and vehicle livery – New Uniforms have been delivered to boost team visibility, morale, and safety. All vehicles will display the TDSFB logo, phone line, and new email address.
A new HR system, "WorkSmarter," is being implemented to streamline processes, document sharing, and accountability; board members are expected to review and sign off on organizational values and policies.
A stricter purchasing protocol is now enforced—no unauthorized spending will occur until financial stability is confirmed. The financial review is ongoing to address past "unnecessary and duplicated purchases" and improve fiscal responsibility.
A new email system and folders have been established for optimum communications and better governance.

b. **Annual Public Meeting** The Annual Public Meeting is scheduled for 26th July, a Sunday, from 2–4 PM at Birnam Arts (formerly Birnam Institute). Last year's meeting at the Hatchery had only two member of the public attendees - a strategic shift in outreach is needed. Promotion is already underway via the website and Facebook, with expansion planned.

Action: BM to promote meeting on social media

c. **Consultancy Work** Consultancy inquiries and quote requests have increased significantly this year, where contractors working close to rivers, tributaries, burns etc require advice or actual work by Fishery Officers to ensure wild fish safety eg fish rescues. In recent years 50–60 quotes were issued, typically ranging from £600 to £3,000. Despite this, no dedicated consultancy income line has appeared in financial reports. We will ensure consultancy work is shown in the accounts. A major new opportunity involves Scottish Gas Network, where gas pipe exposure incidents have surged from 4–5 per year to 185 in the past year, primarily due to beaver activity undermining riverbanks. A spill incident and follow up surveys on the Dochart is expected to generate further income. Plans are in place to charge for initial consultancy quotes (deductible from final invoice) to compensate for staff time.

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7. Tay Catchment Manager's report

a. **Intern and Volunteer Bailiff Programs** Two interns, Paige Dodds and Diego Busto, are being fast-tracked with immediate training in electrofishing, scheduled for the following week. Once trained, they will support bailiffs in fieldwork, freeing experienced staff for enforcement. Paige will stay until September; Diego starts this week and remains until December. A volunteer bailiff initiative is underway, requiring volunteers to complete the official IFM online course and exam. Onboarding could begin in July , with trained volunteers available by Year end. The program aims to expand enforcement capacity, particularly in remote areas.

b. **Technology and Data Systems for Enforcement and Monitoring** Paige is leading the development of a new ArcGIS system to map poaching incidents, identify hotspots, track suspects and vehicles, and build an intelligence picture for proactive bailiff deployment. The system will allow automated report generation. Current reporting is inconsistent—

Ghillies often use WhatsApp or personal calls instead of the official hotline. This underreporting undermines funding and staffing justifications. All staff must now use only the official line, with informal reports followed up formally.

c. **Fish Pass and River Infrastructure Blairgowrie** The fish pass below the bridge in Blairgowrie is severely deteriorated, with other issues at the weirs and river banks. . A PKC scoping report, produced by Arup through Bam Nuttall, highlighted the issues and a second report should highlight the proposed fixes. It is imperative that the Board is involved in the final design choices for the fish pass to ensure that there is provision for a fish counter and fish trap, and also to ensure that the weirs can accommodate safe fish passage. A smolt screen will be necessary during the smolt run to stop smolts entering the lade.

d. **Environmental Threats to Fish Populations and Migration**

Fish populations in the Dochart/Fillan system could be under severe threat from mining runoff (e.g., aluminium, low pH), confirmed by water sampling in April. The Board will investigate the use of automatic monitoring systems like Cyclops are proposed for continuous pH and water quality tracking due to short-term toxic flushes.

Action: DB to consult SEPA

On the Lochay abstraction by SSE has drastically reduced inflow to feeder streams, contributing to water temperatures reaching 26°C—lethal for salmon. Temperature loggers will be deployed soon to gather data. Discussions are ongoing with SEPA and SSE.

Action: DB

At Blairgowrie Smolts are drawn into the lade during low flows and risk being trapped or lost in the labyrinth of channels. See c" above.

e. **Stocking Strategy and Broodstock Consent Development**

Broodstock strategy is being revised with input from experts including Colin Bull and Dr John Taylor building on 50 pages of justification previously prepared by David Summers. The goal is to increase broodstock numbers with scientific and genetic support. There is concern over declining juvenile salmon numbers (0+ and 1+) in the Lochay system. Despite past requests for 20–40 fish, approvals have been inconsistent (e.g., only 7 granted). Plans include applying for broodstock from both Lochay and Lyon systems. International expertise is being consulted from Denmark, Finland, Norway, and the U.S. to ensure stocking programs avoid genetic harm. From a conservancy point of view, it is worth noting that gene cryopreservation of eggs and sperm as extreme conservation measures now feasible and potentially necessary.

Action: DB

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8. **Health & Safety Report:** A health and safety report completed in February by Greens identified generally good compliance but noted gaps due to transitional operations. The primary concern is lone working, especially for bailiffs in remote areas during night or bad weather. A formal Health and Safety Committee is being established, with its first meeting scheduled to define structure and ensure worker engagement. An 85-page manual reviewed by Greens is comprehensive but requires minor updates and gap analysis. There was general consensus

that we should be using AI (e.g., ChatGPT) for health and safety management, stressing that effective safety culture requires leadership and engagement, not automation. Training needs (e.g., COSH or NEBOSH) will be assessed, with emphasis on practical application over "box-ticking." Cost-benefit analysis of training options will be conducted due to budget constraints.

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9. **Office Manager's Report:** Contained in Convenor report

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10. **Any Other Business (AOB):**

    a. **Freshwater Mussel Survey and Conservation Efforts** Nature Scot reported that a two-year national survey is underway to assess freshwater mussel populations, driven by a 10-year cycle and a Scottish Government request to evaluate mussels for inclusion in Special Areas of Conservation. This year involves wading surveys; deep-water surveys are planned for next year. Contractors have been hired to improve completion rates despite weather challenges. Plans to share the survey results via social media and email are ongoing. The survey will also assess impacts from past construction works.

    b. **Invasive Species Threat: Signal Crayfish Spread and Impact** Signal crayfish are spreading rapidly in the Tay system, causing severe ecological damage. The general public are collecting the from rivers (e.g., near Bridge of Cally campsite) and transported for consumption, despite being invasive and disease carriers. No official signage or warnings exist at high-risk sites. We will work with Nature Scot to engage with campsite managers.

    c. **Fish Welfare and Handling Standards** Members expressed strong concern over poor fish handling observed in videos and photos, including dead fish, improper handling (e.g., unhooking fish in the boat), and unprofessional behaviour. Boats on Loch Tay were seen as the main transgressors, although certain Tay beats were also mentioned. These practices undermine the Board's reputation and conservation goals. For boat anglers, a U.S.-style humane fish box system was suggested as a better alternative to reduce stress and injury. It was also agreed that Samantha Data must stop posting photos which do not adhere strictly to the recommended catch and release best practices.

    Action: DB to visit LochTay

    Action: BM to contact Samantha Datta re fish photos on website

    d. **Co-location of staff** It was highlighted that having the Director and Office Manager working from the Hatchery offices was strengthening operational support. The office now functions as the de facto headquarters for TDSFB, improving coordination and staff morale and support.

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11. **Date of Next Meeting: September TBD Venue: Crieff**