

PERTH COMMON GOOD FUND COMMITTEE

1 May 2013

PERTH TOWN WATERS FISHING BEATS: REVIEW OF 2012 SEASON AND PROPOSALS FOR MANAGEMENT CHANGES**Report by the Depute Director (Environment)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report summarises the review of the Perth Town Waters Fishing Beats for 2012 season and recommends changes to the beats, fishing from boats and sale of permits in response to management issues.

1. BACKGROUND/ MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The fishery which the Council administers is typically known as the “Perth Town Waters”; the actual locations and numbers of beats are illustrated on the attached map (Appendix 1). The right to fish within this area was granted to “the people of Perth” by Robert II in 1375 and was subsequently embodied in Royal Charters. For the purposes of this definition, “the people of Perth” has been interpreted to be anyone living within the City of Perth ward boundaries.
- 1.2 In 1959 there was such local demand for fishing that a permit system was introduced (up until then access appears to have been free). As the Perth and District Angling Association (PDAA) was the only club associated with the Town Water, permit eligibility was extended to members of the PDAA. Members who live outwith the “City of Perth” ward boundaries can obtain permits but at a higher charge.
- 1.3 In 1988 the then Leisure and Recreational Department for Perth and Kinross District Council assumed responsibility for the issue of day and season permits and other administrative matters. Today this responsibility rests with the Community Greenspace Section of The Environment Service. Specific duties include the issue of permits, keeping records of permit holders, collating returns, and completing statutory information requests for catch returns of salmon and sea trout, as requested by the Scottish Government Fisheries Research Services.
- 1.4 The Town Waters fishery is one of the first to open within the Tay catchment area each year, commencing on 15 January and operating until 15 October (for this period in 2012 income from permits was £2,113.00). All revenue received through the issue of permits is passed onto the Common Good Fund.

- 1.5 The cost of visitor day permits is currently £10 between 15 January to 30 June, and £15 from 1 July to 15 October (last day of the season). Seasonal permits for £18 are only issued to local residents who stay within the Perth City boundaries or members of the Perth and District Angling Association (PDAA) who live within 15 miles radius of Perth. Perth and Kinross residents who reside out with the city boundary pay £36 for a season permit.
- 1.6 Both day and seasonal permits are issued for rod and line fishing only within Perth Town Waters fishing beats for salmon and fish of the salmon kind.

CATCH RETURNS FOR SALMON & SEA TROUT 2012 SEASON

- 1.7 In 2012 there were 87 seasonal fishing permits issued, a decrease on the previous two seasons; 2011 - 92 season permits, 2010 - 139 season permits. There were 35 day permits sold in the past season, a slight increase on the two previous years.
- 1.8 Rod and line fisheries such as the Perth Town Waters are not currently required to provide indices of fishing effort (no. of fishermen, no. of days fished, length of time involved etc) to statutory bodies. The number of permits issued, in itself, is not an indicator of the extent of fishing being undertaken. In light of this, no data has been collected, preventing any sound linkages to be formed between the numbers of fish caught and potential increased levels of fishing.
- 1.9 The total number of season permit holders to submit their catch returns in 2012 was 40 out of 87 permits issued. The total number of day permits catch returns in 2012 was 30 returned out of 35 issued.
- 1.10 Catch returns for salmon, grilse and sea trout caught and retained and released in the 2012 season is summarised in Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 2. The statistics presented within this section are obtained from permit holder returns (even if nil) made in response to the provisions of Section 64 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. Data published in the tables are as reported; the Council relies on anglers correctly classifying grilse and salmon categories.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Through the review of the 2012 season three management issues have arisen which the Council would like to address. These involve:
- (a) Blocked access to fishing beat 5
 - (b) A number of complaints about fishing from boats
 - (c) The potential increased administration fees proposed by VisitScotland for day permit sales.

Blocked Access to Fishing Beat Five

- 2.2 Fishing beat Five known as Incherrit located near Kinfauns Castle (see appendix A), was accessed via a lay by on the Dundee Road and informal crossing of the railway line. Network Rail shut the access in 2010 by erecting a 2.5m high fence in response to their new safety policy for public access across railway lines and have confirmed this is a permanent closure. The beat itself has never been one which has been particularly popular or well used.
- 2.3 Unfortunately there is currently no other safe access by foot to the beat with only a very narrow, generally overgrown strip of privately owned land existing between the railway line and the river for over a mile either side of the beat. To the west, part of the bank at the old Pyerod fishing bothy is now private garden ground effectively blocking any public access. In addition there is a backwater and boggy ground which extends around the north of the beat and to the east, between the river and railway line, which prevents access from this direction. The only possible access by foot therefore would be between the high and low water marks within the river channel itself and for reasons of safety, it is proposed to temporarily suspend this beat from the permit for foot access. It may be possible to negotiate access at some point in the future if the land owners were willing to clear their land and allow the public onto it. Even then there would not be any official place to park within reasonable distance of the beat.

Fishing from Boats

- 2.4 A number of complaints (approximately 10) have been made by anglers fishing from the bank about the increased use of boats for angling. The main problem seems to be that one or two boats tend to put down an anchor and fish from the best fishing places for long periods of time. This prevents larger numbers of anglers fishing from the bank.
- 2.5 Anglers on boats also pay for permits to fish on Council beats, however, the use of boats prevents other anglers from using the beat from the bank. As such, it is proposed to monitor the situation more closely so that it can be determined if any future course of action to resolve the problem is required.

VisitScotland Fish Day Permits

- 2.6 VisitScotland have to date sold Council Fishing Day Permits for which they received a commission of 8.33%. They have advised us that they have decided to increase the commission they require to 10%. As only 9 permits were sold last year by VisitScotland and the Council sells fishing permits from Pullar House it is proposed to stop selling permits through VisitScotland. Day permits can be obtained from Pullar House Monday to Friday during office hours. Day permits have and will continue to be posted out to anglers wishing to fish the river at weekends prior to their visit. This proposal will streamline permit sales and avoid paying additional commission.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

3.1 This report has set out the catch returns for the boats covered by permits issued by the Council. It has also addressed a number of management issues which have occurred during the fishing season. The proposals, if accepted, should ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for subsequent seasons in terms of access to and use of the beats and sales of permits.

3.2 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the review of fishings for 2011/2012.
- (ii) Temporarily suspend use of beat Five on the Council's Fishing Permit for access by foot, for reasons of safety.
- (iii) Discontinue the use of Visit Scotland to sell Fishing Permits for the Council.

Author(s)

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Approved

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Date 19 April 2013		

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ANNEX

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The undernoted table should be completed for all reports. Where the answer is 'yes', the relevant section(s) should also be completed

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan

1.1 The draft Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013-2023 sets out the five strategic objectives. This report contributes to:

- Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Single Outcome Agreement

1.2 The proposals also meet the following local outcomes in the Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government:

2. Our area will have improved infrastructure and transport links
3. Our area will have a positive image locally, nationally and internationally
10. Our people will have improved health and well-being
11. Our communities will be vibrant and active
12. Our communities will have access to the key services they need

13. Our area will have a sustainable natural and built environment
15. Our services will be responsive, of high quality and continually improving.

Corporate Plan

- 1.3 The Council Workforce Plan supports the Council's Corporate Plan 2013-18 objectives of:
 - Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
 - Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no staffing or property resource implications associated with this report. There may be a slight increase in income as a result of the removal of the commission paid to Visit Scotland.

Workforce

- 2.2 The proposals in this report have no workforce implications for the Council.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 The proposals in this report have direct land and property implications. The Depute Director (Environment) has been consulted, and has indicated agreement with the proposals.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
 - Assessed as **relevant** and actions taken to reduce or remove the following negative impacts: whilst the proposals will affect people there were no specific impacts associated with people or groups with equalities characteristics.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

- The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

- The proposals have been assessed in terms of the requirements to manage the Council's Greenspace assets in a sustainable long term way. The proposed alterations to the management of the fishing beats are considered to be sustainable.

Legal and Governance

3.5 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted.

Risk

3.6 There is no risk to the Council arising from this proposal.

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 The Head of Legal Services and The Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of the report.

External

4.2 The Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board and Fisheries Research Services were consulted in the preparation of the report. Consultation with VisitScotland has been ongoing for several months.

5. Communication

5.1 The permits and information issues with them will be updated accordingly.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report; (list papers concerned)

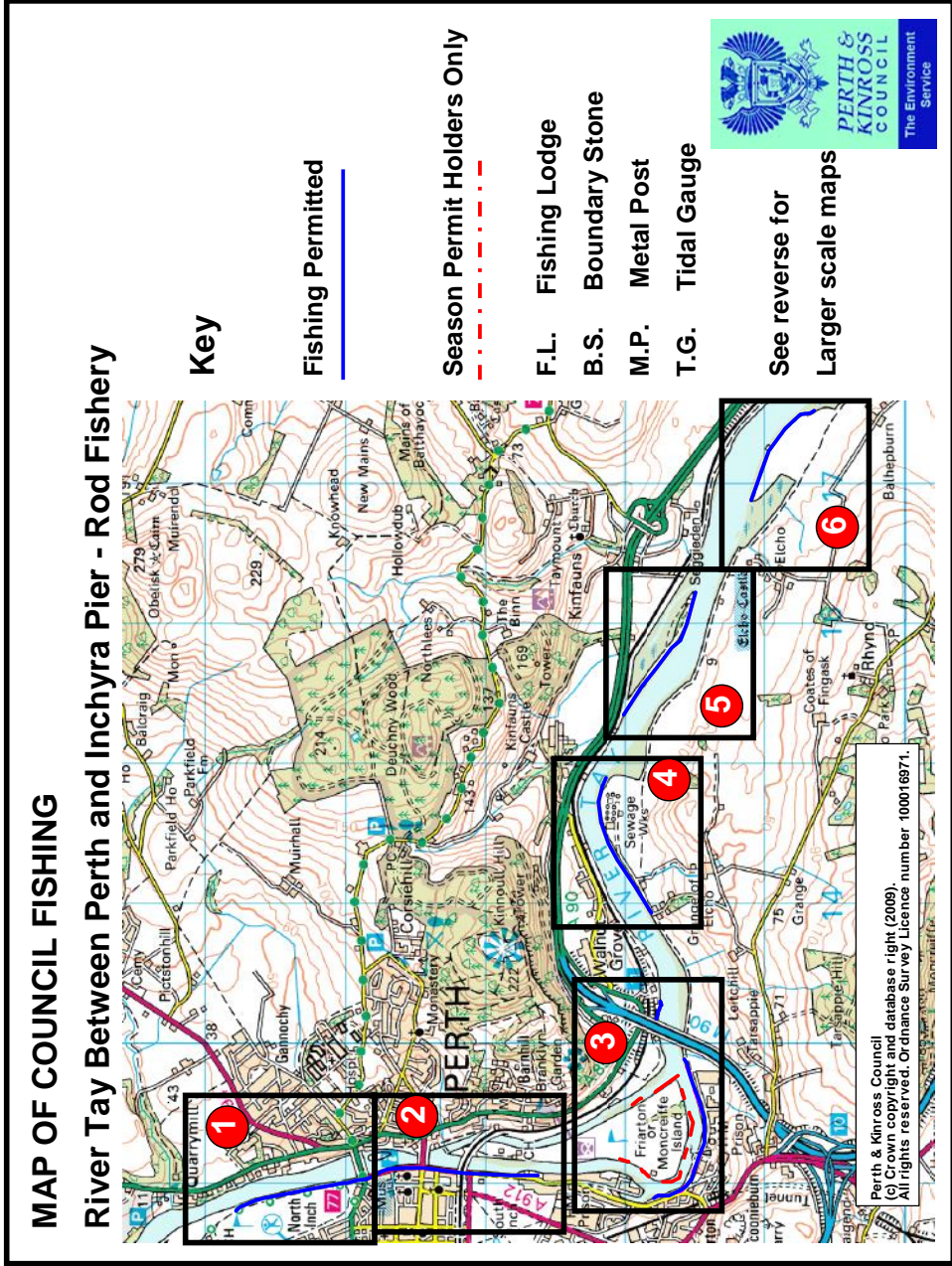
- Report to the Common Good Fund Committee in February 2010 -
PERTH TOWN WATERS FISHING BEATS: REVIEW OF 2009 SEASON

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site Plan

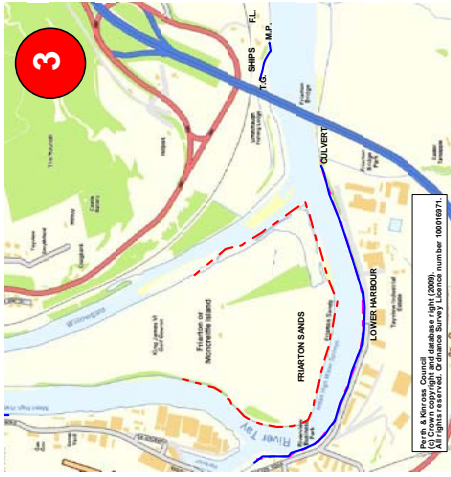
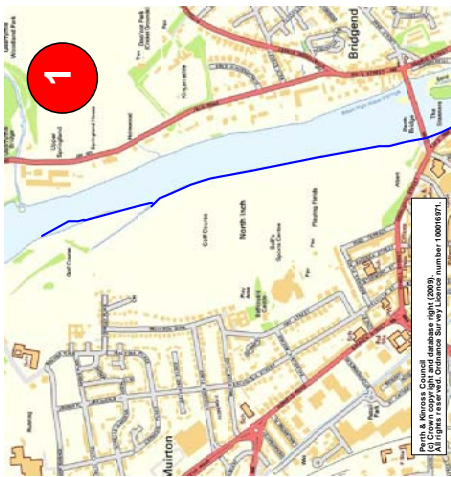
Appendix 2 – 2012 Season Returns for Fish Caught and Retained

Plans of Perth Town Waters Fishing Beats



MAP OF COUNCIL FISHING

River Tay Between Perth and Inchyra Pier - Rod Fishery



Appendix 2

Table 1: 2012 Season Returns for Fish Caught and Retained

	Weight	Salmon	No Caught	Grilse	No Caught	Sea Trout	No Caught
Jan	lbs						
Feb	lbs						
Mar	lbs						
Apr	lbs						
May	lbs						
Jun	lbs					5.50	2
Jul	lbs			12.25	2	6.00	3
Aug	lbs			14.00	2	3.25	1
Sep	lbs	21:00	3			10.50	3
Oct	lbs	18:00	2	8.00	1	2.00	1
	Total	39.00	5	34.25	5	27.25	10

Table 2: 2012 Season Returns for Fish Caught and Returned

	Weight	Salmon	No Caught	Grilse	No Caught	Sea Trout	No Caught
Jan	lbs						
Feb	lbs						
Mar	lbs	45.00	5			5.00	2
Apr	lbs	6.00	1			4.00	1
May	lbs					10.50	4
Jun	lbs	13.00	1			4.00	1
Jul	lbs	38.00	4	35.00	7	2.00	1
Aug	lbs	29.00	3			2.00	1
Sep	lbs	29.50	2	27.00	4	15.50	5
Oct	lbs	25.25	2	10.00	2	4.50	2
	Total	185.75	18	72.00	13	47.50	17

