

**Tay Catchment Salmon Alliance**

## **TCSA Newsletter No 7**



***Dawn over Newtyle***

### **TDSFB Update**

Recent Emails from the TDSFB gave notice that all is not well at the Board. On 30 January, the Convenor wrote to proprietors saying:

*"I'm saddened to inform you that our newly appointed Director has decided that the job is not for him and will be finishing on the 23 February 2026, in addition to this our administrator has also put in her notice and has finished with the board."*

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*The board has a meeting on 3rd February 2026 and these points are the main discussion so that we can report back to you with a way forward for the running of the river."*

This was followed up by a mail from the Board on 4 February which stated:

*"Further to our message last week, we wish to update you on recent developments concerning the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board. Yesterday, we held a Board meeting where a letter was submitted outlining the reasons that the Administrator resigned.*

*We must also inform you that Mr David Godfrey has now stepped down from his role as Convenor and Ms Claire Mercer Nairne and Mr Toby Metcalfe have resigned from the Board. In the spirit of collaboration, the remaining Board members are working together to ensure continuity and to address the matters at hand, our priority is to our current staff and how we support them. We have invited the next two candidates, as determined by the election votes, to join the Board and support our ongoing work.*

*We will be meeting again next Wednesday to discuss the next steps and to determine the best way forward for the Board and you the Proprietors we serve. Following this meeting, we will provide you with a comprehensive update on the outcomes and any decisions made.*

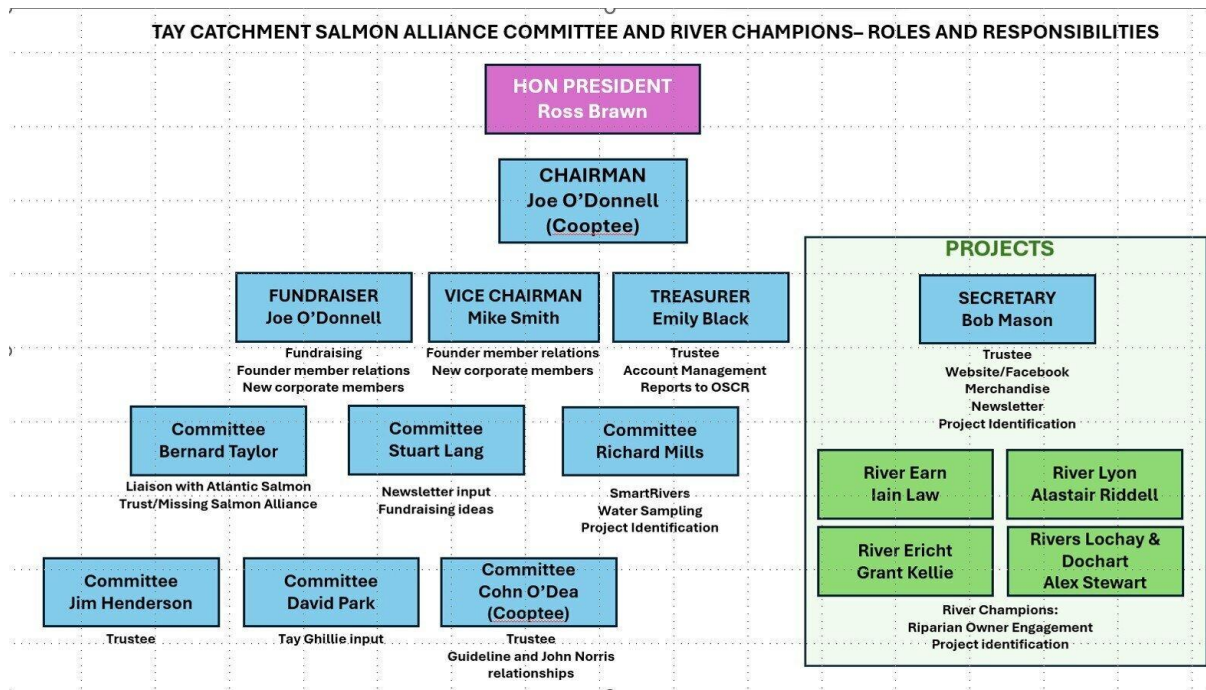
*We appreciate your understanding and continued support during this period of transition. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us."*

These mails indicate there are some real issues with the Board and decisive steps will be required to regain confidence of the proprietors who must trust the Board to deliver decisive actions to halt the decline of Atlantic Salmon in the Tay Catchment. Our invitee to the Board was present at the February meeting and listened to the reading of the admin assistant's letter. To say it was concerning is an understatement, and we hope that one of the first actions of the restructured Board is to initiate an enquiry.

We are now waiting for feedback from the Board after yesterday's meeting - we will send you the detail as soon as we have it.

## **TCSA Committee Update**

The situation with the TDSFB described above is serious and the TCSA stand by to help if required. Much needs to be done to fix many of the issues which will, inevitably, arise, and if we are able to help, we will. Our Chairman, Cohn O'Dea, has indicated that he is uncomfortable being in that position in light of the current disruption and would prefer to stand down to allow a person with more experience of managing such situations to take his place. With time being short, Joe O'Donnell, has volunteered to take the Chair in a cooptee role until, at least, the situation stabilises. The following diagram shows the current committee:



We thank Cohn for his outstanding contribution to the Tay Catchment Salmon Alliance and its forerunner, the Tay Ghillies Association. His energy, knowledge and sense of humour have been so helpful over the last few years and he, singlehandedly, kept us together until the formation of TCSA stabilised the way forward. Thank you, Cohn. We are pleased to note that he has taken a committee position as a cooptee, and we look forward to his input from the "back of the boat"!!

## TCSA Project Update

The last few months have been disruptive to our plans with the resignation of Dr Summers, the prolonged process to find a new Director, the resignation of the new Director, and the collapse of the current Board. However, we have committed to help fund a couple of important Board projects, namely the Smolt Mortality project in the Garry Tummel catchment and the fitment of new fry/parr tanks in the Summerhill (Almondbank) Hatchery.

As was notified previously, TCSA is providing £25000 to the Smolt Mortality project, with some £15500 already spent on tags and receiver batteries. Iain Law has secured other funding which means that the project is secured although we would also like to secure some contingency funding to make the funding situation more comfortable. The TDSFB has no funding available and neither has the TRT. The latter's position is not understandable because they had some £175,000 of unrestricted funds available in March 2025. The Smolt Project is the most important project in the Catchment for years and TRT involvement would have been extremely helpful.

On the Summerhill Hatchery project, Iain Law has pulled together funding from the Earn and Eden stakeholders to modify the new tanks for the hatchery (modifications were required because Dr Summers ordered the wrong type!). Iain has also secured most of the funding required for electrical and plumbing work during installation. Again, the TRT has not come forward with funding and the TCSA has promised £1000 to allow completion of the installation. These tanks will be used for fry and parr which will be stocked mainly in the Earn and Eden. The Marine Directorate show little enthusiasm for stocking in the Tay Catchment Special Area of

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Conservation - an approach we do not wholly agree with, given the parlous state of the Atlantic Salmon stocks.....