

ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE

**LOCH LOMOND ANGLING
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**

**Hon President
To be appointed**

**Hon Vice -President
His Grace, The Duke of Montrose**

**M MacCormick, Chairman
E Edmonstone, Vice-Chairman
A Soutter, Secretary
Resigned, Treasurer**

**Committee
Elected by Ordinary Members of the Association**

K Adams	G McKenzie	W Miller
J Muir	D Watt	J Raeburn

**E Edmonstone – Representing River Endrick Proprietors
To be appointed by Montrose Estates - Representing the Montrose Trust
To be appointed by Luss Estates Company - Representing Colquhoun Trustees
Unfilled – Representing Vale of Leven Angling Clubs
W Miller – Representing River Leven Season Holders
A Armstrong – Representing Coarse Fishing Interests**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD
AT A DATE BEFORE 1 MARCH 2017. THE DATE AND VENUE WILL BE CONFIRMED BY
THE NEW COMMITTEE**

Report By The Committee

The committee has pleasure in submitting its report for the 2016 season.

This year the Lomond system recorded a catch of 222 salmon and 717 sea trout, however, only 32% of members have submitted an annual catch return to date (see below). Once again our fishing effort was affected by an unusually dry autumn which for the third year running led to lower than average catches on the tributaries in October. Members continued to show considerable restraint when harvesting sea trout, returning 92% of these fish, all salmon were of course returned on account of our category 3 status.

Category 2 Status in 2017 Confirmed

It is with enormous satisfaction that your committee can confirm that the Lomond system has been re-categorised as a category 2 water in 2017. This means that we will be able to harvest limited numbers of salmon next year and members will receive 3 tags with their 2017 permit which they will be able to use between 1 May and 30 September.

There is no doubt that our categorisation would not have changed if we had sat back and did nothing. This change of mind has only come about due to patient negotiation and influencing of key decisions makers, this is undoubtedly the hallmark of a good committee. Make no mistake this result has been over 4 years in the making and completely vindicates our decision to re-join the Scottish salmon fishing community after years in the wilderness. Any future committee might wish to reflect on this and act accordingly,

Before anyone becomes too complacent we have been told that categorisation in 2018 will be based on a combination of catch returns and a calculation of juvenile densities across our wetted area. This will by necessity mean that we will have to invest in the science on a greater scale than we have in the past as we do not have the relevant information around juvenile stocks and urgently require to capture this. In addition only 32% of members have submitted a catch return this year which is incredible. If we do nothing to tackle these gaping holes in our knowledge then in all likelihood we will be designated a category 3 and return to total catch and release in 2018.

A proposed work scheduled has been discussed with the Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT) it will be for the next committee to authorise the work. Members should note that the true picture of our historical investment in the Trust is shamefully low and will be discussed elsewhere in the report. In essence despite being one of the two organisations who set up the LLFT we have effectively starved it of resource since 2005 and only recently have we begun to re-invest in the science, albeit not enough to avoid us being put under real pressure with regards to a possible return to category 3 status next year.

There is no doubt that the Association will rely on the Trust in the future to help retain our category 2 status, this will have a financial implication for the Association but there again so too will returning to a category 3. Moreover, there will be no time for procrastination on this matter, surveying work has been hampered over the last 3 years by the weather, so work to secure our future categorisation must commence in the late spring of 2017. Again this is something that any future committee might wish to reflect and act on.

The Accounts

The committee have taken the unusual step of separating out the accounts from the main body of the report. This is to allow members to focus on various financial issues. The accounts document will be distributed under separate cover.

Chairman's Report

It is now almost 5 years since I took on the role of voluntary Chairman of the Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association and in many ways 2016 encapsulated the best of times and indeed the worst of times.

The best of times because we as a committee managed to make several key breakthroughs for you the members as well as securing category 2 status for 2017. The worst of times because 2 individuals, persons your committee thought of as friends, decided to undertake a course of action with what many might think as scant regard for the consequences of their actions or the impact it might have on the Association.

Given this will be my last Chairman's address as I will be retiring a year earlier than intended I will not only review what has taken place in 2016 I will look back at my time in office. I will not only mark the achievements of this committee but acknowledge where we could have done better as well as pointing out where I feel the new committee require to take action.

Unlike my predecessor who decided to write a mini-biography when he stood down in 2012 you will be pleased to hear I will restrict my comments to a few pages which will hopefully give a flavour of how far this Association has travelled in the last 5 years. Finally, I will end my commentary with a personal thanks to those who supported the committee and remained loyal over this time.

Review of 2016

As we started 2016 the Lomond system like almost every other west coast system in Scotland was faced with the impending imposition of category 3 (total catch and release) status due to wild fishery reform.

Despite gathering strong support and fighting what was regarded as one of the most effective local campaigns against categorisation the Scottish Government used their casting vote on the RACCE committee in April 2016 to push through the legislation that made us total catch and release this year.

As explained on many occasions in the past our category 3 status was a direct result of our previous declared catch returns failing to meet our conservation limits. This situation could possibly have been avoided if our members had submitted full catch returns over the previous 5 years. Those people who have consistently failed and continue to fail to fill in a catch return may wish to reflect on this and the impact that their actions have had this year.

Rather than become disheartened by this result we knew we still had a fishery to run and in the spring of 2016 managed to achieve three distinct firsts for the Association.

The first was the agreement reached with Scottish Water that saw the River Leven kept at weekend height i.e. bank to bank coverage, for the whole of the spring period. This was the first time since the 1970's that there had been no loss of redds due to a reduction in water levels in the spring. The future impact of this agreement will be the same as a sustained year on year re-stocking exercise on the Leven given that redds and juvenile fish will now survive. Hopefully, in 4/5 years this will lead to greater numbers of returning fish.

The second achievement was obtaining a license from SNH to control goosanders on the Endrick. Once again this should have a positive impact on returning fish numbers and a second licence was applied for in November. While some members may not agree with this course of action, given the current pressures on our fish stocks, both in freshwater and at sea, the committee believe that it is only right to tackle any negative influences as and when

we can. Quite why a control licence was never requested in the past is beyond me as the application system is both relatively straight forward and quick.

The third achievement was to finally secure the backing of the Scottish coarse fishing community around our right to charge for permits on Loch Lomond. This has resulted in a sharp increase in coarse permit income which fortuitously made up for a decline in game ticket sales. This result has been 3 years in the making and vindicates the position that we have previously taken on developing an inclusive approach that welcomes coarse and game anglers alike. You may be surprised to know that we have had proof for at least 10 years that we could legitimately charge for such permits, however, the previous committee chose not to share this information with the coarse fishing community and as a result it took time to build bridges losing out on several years of additional income in the process.

In addition we were also engaged in trying to secure our future within a post District Salmon Fishery Board (DSFB) world. It was clear that despite the substantial financial black hole within their plans that Government were (and still are) committed to the formation of Fishery Management Organisation (FMOs). Your committee were therefore faced with a stark choice: either the LLAIA entered into negotiations around a future FMO structure which we would be a part of or we could remain aloof and in all likelihood be shoehorned into an FMO by Government at the last minute. With the former we would have some influence in future decision making within the FMO, with the latter the Association would have little or no influence, and would be an impotent and side lined organisation who would just have to do as they were told.

After discussions with various parties, including engaging in a system wide strategic review with the Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust, we entered into preliminary talks with the Argyll Board. The reason that we chose to talk with Argyll was due to their existing structure which is a federated model guaranteeing the constituent Associations and bodies which form the Board maximum independence and freedom of action for. Given our members wished to retain our independence and given we could never hope to form our own FMO due to financial limitations this was seen as the best option open to us. However, as has been noted previously no agreement would ever have been entered into without the authority of the members, contrary to what others might insinuate or have you believe. This principle I believe must be adhered to be any future committee.

However, our biggest achievement of the last year was undoubtedly to turn over our category 3 status. We have commented on this earlier in the report but I would just like to point out that while others were playing internal fishing club politics your committee were focused on reversing the category 3 decision. I have no doubt which activity the members will appreciate most. However, members must reflect that this result has only secured the Association a breathing space the next committee need to quickly take stock of where we are and how we need to reform to ensure we retain our category 2 status.

On top of all of this the committee were also active in a variety of other non-headline grabbing ways. Our membership database is now perhaps one of the most sophisticated in the country and has allowed our bailiffs to be provided with a membership app that allows them to compare held photographs with permit details. We once again removed tons of rubbish from the Leven and it is probably now in the best condition in living memory meanwhile we have continued to support the LLFT and SCENE with our time and efforts despite the continued unjustified hostility shown in some quarters.

All in this has been some 12 months and I don't think anyone could have predicted how it would end. Has your committee made a difference for the better? – You bet we have and we are proud to be passing on an Association that is stronger for what we have achieved!

Review of the Previous 5 Years

This is a review that some people never thought they would read given my predecessor confidently predicted that it was 50:50 there would not be an Association within 3 years of me taking over as chairman of the club. To give him his due given the state he left the club in February 2012 he probably had a point. So I ask members to bear with me while I set the scene on the last 5 years by first looking at how things were when I took over the chairman's role. Without wishing to rake at length over the coals of the past I will limit myself to a number of salient observations on what we found in March 2012.

The handover from my predecessor consisted of collecting from him a large number of bin bags. They were stuffed full of random assorted pieces of paper, job number 1 we had to create order out of chaos. A lot of the paperwork never made it to a bin bag and kept a large brazier well stocked for quite some time, but that is another story. Suffice to say we were left no record of how the club was managed between 1995 and 2012. Job number 2 was to confirm our financial position, past and present, and the members owe a large depth of gratitude to Ritchie Campbell and Tam Dorian who did so much in this regard. What we found was that the previous committee had effectively spent the lot before they stood down. The situation was so bad that they had even managed to become overdrawn in February 2012 despite having over £100,000 in hand on 1 December 2011 and having received £10,000's of membership renewals in the intervening 3 months. Job number 3 was to appoint a new bailiff team and this is where I regret not being radical enough in suggesting to the committee a complete overhaul of the then structure. I now find myself, with the gift of hindsight, agreeing with my predecessor who stated that it was bailiffing, or in our case bailiff management, that held the committee back from achieving its true potential. This warning is something that any future committee might wish to reflect on as they start out on their journey.

Once installed as chairman I produced a blue print for stabilising the club with the express aim of turning around its fortunes. This was shared with the committee and looking back on it I can now comment on how successful we have been over the last 5 years with regards to the priorities identified.

Partnerships

This was to my mind a key element to modernising this club given how isolated we had become under the previous committee. Working hard we re-established our relationships with the riparian owners, RAFTS, DSFB, the Scottish pike fishing associations, the LLFT, the Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (SCENE), SNH, LLFROG, the National Park, Scottish Government, SEPA and Scottish Water.

Most, if not all, of our achievements over the last 5 years have emanated to some extent from our improved relationships with key stakeholders. The enhanced water flows on the Leven, our successful challenge to our category 3 status, obtaining a licence to cull goosanders, the welcoming on board of coarse fishing representatives to name but a few, all have stemmed from improved relationships with external organisations. In my opinion any future committee has to view the maintenance of such relationships as a key priority because without the support of these bodies successfully implementing meaningful change will be that much harder if not almost impossible to achieve.

Administration

As my predecessor freely admitted he was not an administrator and that was quite apparent when I took over as chairman. However, sometimes it is easier to build from a clean foundation than adjust an existing structure and that is what we did.

Rarely is much said about how the back office works but if it was not fit for purpose you would soon know all about it. The move to a virtual office was pivotal in this, calls were taken and passed on, mail received and no one inconvenienced. Taped minutes are now taken at all committee meetings, an up to date membership database has been maintained and we now have a Leven members' database to allow us to reach out to associate members. The next committee might wish to extend this service to coarse ticket associate members.

Thanks to Graeme McBrearty, a non-fishing IT specialist and good friend of the Association, we have a number of bespoke computer programmes that have benefited the club. Graeme simplified and automated permit production, set up the catch return programme on our web site, developed the photograph database app for our bailiffs, installed the river web cameras and has helped out in a number of other ways including PayPal administration.

As we hand over to the next committee we are proud to leave behind an efficient and effective administrative structure that our predecessors could only have dreamed of.

Finance

When taking over as chairman I was very much aware that members demanded that the committee would be completely transparent around our finances. This I believe we have achieved. The appointment in 2014 of Barr Bell and Company, a practising member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS) has underlined our commitment to transparency around how your money is spent.

A resume on finance would not be complete without making a few comments on the role of treasurer. As you might expect this post carries unique responsibilities and the integrity of the post holder must be beyond doubt. In addition the treasurer must avoid any suggestion of a conflict of interest and as such I believe, with the benefit of hindsight and given the events of the last few months, that this post holder should not be involved in any other role within the Association which might have a call on members' money. Any future committee might wish to reflect on these points and act accordingly.

People

As things currently stand the Association should have at any given time 2 paid employees, these are our full time bailiffs. Over the last 5 years the committee has sought to professionalise how we bailiff the system by paying our staff an industry compatible wage, offering appropriate courses and professional development and most recently enrolling our staff in the new Government pension arrangements. In return we ask for commitment and loyalty and a fair degree of flexibility when it comes to the busier times of the year. We have therefore achieved what we set out to do.

However, what we have not got right over the years is bailiff management. The model which we adopted in 2012 was centralised control by one or two individuals (to manage 2 members of staff). Can I say now that this has led in my opinion to a tendency to micro-manage which achieves as far as I am concerned nothing but disillusionment. Anyone wishing to argue this point should reflect on why we have turned over 4 bailiffs in 4 years and struggle to attract suitable candidates for interview even though we offer the going industry rate. There is a real need for a future committee to review how the bailiffs are managed otherwise they will be condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past.

On the plus side though has been the commitment, loyalty and dedication of a number of core volunteers who have made a real difference in this system. Whether it is turning up on river clean-ups on the Endrick, Fruin or the Leven. Helping out the LLFT or SCENE with various projects, such as invasive species work, or with scientific research, such as the smolt

tagging project, they have truly been the unsung heroes of the last 5 years. It was always my intention that this club should be a community club and by encouraging all to participate in improving the system then we might heal some of the rifts from the past. While I believe we have only partially achieved this goal the work of the volunteers has made a real difference and has dramatically improved the fishing environment in many places. I would therefore like to pay tribute to each and every member, associate member and the not inconsiderable number of non-members who helped out over the last number of years.

While the above few paragraphs has given you an understanding of how far we as a committee have travelled it all means nothing if we do not have fish to catch. What then of the fish stocks under our period in office?

Prior to 2012 conservation measures were limited. Given the poor juvenile densities found in some of our key spawning areas in a 2010 survey conducted by the LLFT it was clear that more formal action had to be taken. The upshot was that it was accepted by most members who responded to a poll and voted at an EGM in 2012 that all fish had to be returned in the month of October and that a carcass tagging system would be introduced that would restrict the number of salmon that a member could kill in any given year. Therefore in a short space of time the Association developed a range of progressive conservation measures that played no small part in persuading the Government to review our categorisation in 2016.

Before 2012 salmon return rates were never recorded but anecdotally were running well below 50% with most spring fish killed. Since then our members have become more conservation minded and between 2012 - 2015 we returned on average just under 70% of salmon caught. Sea trout return rates have remained consistently high at over 90% in the last 5 years which is something to be immensely proud of.

Whatever your views on conservation the simple fact is a dead fish can't spawn so anglers should where possible return as many fish as they can as this will increase the number of fish on the redds. The implementation of our conservation policies as well as this year's categorisation has resulted in higher numbers of fish on the redds than would otherwise have been the case. Add to this the new River Leven water flow agreement then we have left the system in a far better place than the one we inherited. This is not just an idle boast, limited survey work has confirmed the presence of large number of fry in key spawning areas. It would appear that our policies are at last starting to bear fruit.

Looking at the above I can honestly say that I am extremely proud of what has been achieved by a small core group of volunteers over the last 5 years. We have quietly got on with the job of running the Association as efficiently and effectively as possible without feeling the need to give ourselves self-appointed titles of the best this or the best that. Those of us who are retiring can also honestly say we have done all this work for no charge and we have always put the Associations interests first.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow retiring committee members all of whom I can describe as true friends. We have been through a lot together and it is only fitting that we are now retiring together and have in my opinion made this system that bit better for our time in charge. I would also like to thank our respective wives and partners for putting up with what was a labour of love.

I wish my predecessor, whoever that may be, every success in the future and look forward to some extra fishing time on our system.

Malcolm MacCormick,
Chairman

LLAIA Vice Chairman's 5 Year Report 2012-2017

This year I am submitting a "five year summary report" as your retiring Vice Chairman of the Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association (LLAIA) & as the incumbent Chairman of the Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust (LLFT).

By way of background, I moved back up to Scotland in 2009. David Clark who founded the LLFT in 2001 knew that I have fished the Lomond system since I was a boy & asked me to join the LLFT in 2010. My family have been passionate about fishing for as long as I can remember and we have owned & managed a stretch of the Blane Water & River Endrick for many years.

In Feb 2012 I was invited to attend the LLAIA AGM and rather unexpectedly was asked to join the committee to represent the River Endrick Proprietors'. In November 2012, I became Chairman of the LLFT after James Lumsden's retirement. The LLAIA unanimously voted me to be your Vice Chairman at the AGM in February 2013. In February 2015 I was once again elected unanimously as Vice Chairman of the LLAIA.

In Feb 2012 we understood that there had been massive legacy issues within the LLAIA & the relationship with the LLFT & the Loch Lomond Riparian Owners Group (LLFROG) was also impaired. Before taking over as Chairman of the LLFT I was informed that some members of the Association were more interested in how much their permit cost and how many fish they could kill rather than discuss how they could improve their system. I had also been informed that the LLAIA had paid hundreds of thousands of pounds to the LLFT since 2001 and that the LLFT's sole activity appeared to be collecting more and more data and there was no indication as to how this data was being used to "Improve our System". I also was aware that from 2001-12 there had been a considerable amount of thoroughly vindictive, inaccurate and unnecessary articles & comments on websites, forums, emails and official LLAIA documents which contributed to this state of affairs. Sadly these attacks have continued to this day despite the Trust's desire to improve the Loch Lomond System via science, education and physical activity, which in turn would enhance the system at every level going forward. We thought it a good idea to begin by going back to the founding of the LLFT, to look at its objectives as stated in the Articles of Association. As a result, I commissioned a full financial, operational & strategic review of the LLFT in 2013 in order to re-align and review the situation.

As you know, from my explanation to the LLAIA members at the various AGMs, the LLFT is made up of two stakeholders, essentially one held by the LLAIA & the other being held by the Loch Lomond Fisheries Owners Group (LLFROG). The LLFT was originally set up in 2001 by both these Groups and in March 2011 Michael Brady as Chairman of the LLAIA and James Lumsden as Chairman of the LLFT created and signed an amended "Articles of Association of The Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust". The Trust became a Company Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. The objectives for which the company was established were as follows:-

- 1) To advance for the public benefit environmental protection and improvement and to advance animal welfare by conserving and enhancing all species of freshwater fish and their environments and all fishery resources primarily but not limited to the inland and coastal waters of Loch Lomond and the River Leven catchment Area.
- 2) To advance the education of the public and any association, company, local authority, administrative or governmental agency or public body or representative body in:-
 - a) The understanding of aquatic ecosystems, including their fauna, flora and economic or social activity and river catchment management.

b) The need for, and benefits of, protection, conservation, rehabilitation and improvement of aquatic environments.

The LLFT currently has 2 Riparian representatives on the Board (could be max of 3), 3 LLAIA members, 3 Independent Directors and our Consultant Biologist. Malcolm MacCormick kindly attends all our Board meetings when he can but does not have a vote and neither does our Biologist. Reverting to Michael Brady's report 1995-2012 & advice from Prof Colin Adams on his retirement as Vice Chairman of the LLFT in 2012, the LLFT now has a well balanced impartial board. Since 2012 the LLAIA & LLFT have worked more closely together to achieve our common goal which was to "Improve our System". The core backbone of these committees feel extremely proud to have implemented & enhanced these objectives.

I think it important to clear up once and for all confusion around historical suggestions made regarding the cost of running the LLFT and that our funding comes directly from LLAIA Members permit fees as a proportion of your permit. From a financial perspective from 2001-2012 LLFROG, the Riparian owners donated £72,000 versus the LLAIA £25,600. Clearly there was an inequality in this so called partnership.

Since 2012, the LLAIA have allocated funding for certain selected projects, which some of your committee felt was important to the LLAIA members, such as the Auchengaich, Murroch & Gruggie Burns. Grants for the LLFT core objectives such as the smolt traps & Electro-fishing equipment came via SNH & the National Park & Scene. As a result, the LLFT has been forced to work within its limited resources and look for funding elsewhere as the LLAIA has been totally inconsistent & unreliable. Members permit money towards what some members describe as 'experiments' & equipment is "de minimum". The total donation from the LLAIA from 2012-date is £10,746.20 versus the Owners £30,010 over the same period. Once again, a funding ratio of about three to one in favour of the Riparian Owners, for a relationship and responsibility that is supposed to be equal.

I would also like to respond to another point about the desire for some accountability over how the LLAIA & LLFT money is spent. In his 1995-2012 AGM Report, Michael Brady stated that it was not necessary to keep LLAIA minutes or records of LLAIA activity etc. Having worked in the City of London for over 20 years in a regulated market, driven by The Financial Services Act 1982 and post "Big Bang" regulation under the FSA/FCA guidelines of the London Stock Exchange as a Corporate Stock Broker, Fund Manager and Director of various Companies, I do not think it is best practice to be financially unaccountable, have no official agenda, lack any recorded minutes or not possess any official action plans. Within the LLAIA Gareth Bourhill had taken over the role of Treasurer after Ritchie Campbell resigned in 2014 and the monies were explained very eruditely and carefully ahead of the meetings & in the minutes. He also obtained a review of the Balance sheet and Profit & loss Account produced by Bell Barr Accountants every Quarter (on my recommendation), which exceeds best practice especially for a fishing club/Association. In short, I thought Gareth was on the face of it an excellent, reliable & trust worthy Treasurer. However, it has now become evident that there has been a conflict of interest given his role as one of the Baillif Manager's. Some discrepancies have arisen & need to be clarified.

As you know, the previous committee was unaccountable in the area of finance, undertaking a last minute spending spree (including the purchase of over £4,000 of climbing kit!) that cleared out the bank account and left the Association effectively £19,000 in deficit when the new committee took over on 1 March 2012. From an LLFT stand point, the finances are delivered and prepared by Bell Barr. The LLFT has detailed records and all the projects are accounted for in full as per above and includes a rolling cashflow analysis to provide extra accountability and visibility. Many Directors or Trustees before my tenure as Chairman

were deeply dissatisfied by the reporting structure and activities of the LLFT, in particular Dr Andy Burrows' performance & accountability. One of the results of the strategic review was the dismissal of Dr Burrows. I have stood up at all the LLAIA AGMs to present the activities & progress of the LLFT to the assembled company. At these AGMS, I strongly recommended that the various qualified scientists such as Prof Colin Adams & Carolyn Bryce attend in order to provide the audience with exacting facts and solutions where possible. This had never been done before because they had all been alienated & rebuffed by the LLAIA as confirmed by Michael Brady in his 1995-2012 AGM report.

In addition, to further communicate better, which was also lacking historically, a LLFT report was included in the LLAIA Annual Report over the last two years. The cost of printing this newsletter is entirely paid for by the LLFT. In addition, Carolyn Bryce, the LLFT consultant Biologist & Annabel Struthers, one of the LLFT Independent Directors, endeavour to populate our website, Twitter & Facebook with pictures and reports which do not breach commercial confidentiality such as work commissioned on some Wind Farms or Hydro Schemes in 2014. Since Carolyn Bryce has been working with the LLFT, data has been collected and analysis on our core activities include the smolt trap work in the spring, Electro fishing in our core areas and other specified locations during the summer. Redd Counting has taken place in the Autumn/winter when the weather has made this possible. The data here has been used to monitor the health of the system.

I have some sympathy with members' comments that scientists sometimes appear to like accumulating data for the sake of it, and don't act. But that is not how Carolyn has approached her task. In fact both committees believe the work done by Carolyn has been – and is – crucial if the levels of migratory fish in the system are ever to recover to past levels. The data we collect is stored in a database and used in a number of different ways. One very recent example I would like to draw your attention to is our rotary smolt trap. We have been collecting data from the Endrick main stem for several years now which has provided us with an idea of Salmonid smolt numbers each spring. Without this baseline information it would have been impossible to know whether the low number of smolts experienced in 2015 and 2016 were just the result of naturally poor survival rates within the river or the inefficient fishing of the smolt trap (for example). However we obtained this information, so we are now able to identify 2015 and 2016 as bad years for Endrick smolts. At the moment we are looking into the reasons why these two years were so poor and over the winter period Carolyn will also review the catch returns and weather reports from 2012 onwards to see if there are any obvious correlations.

Unfortunately, last year we received some negative comment on Hannele Honkanen's project regarding her smolt tracking survey. This project was the beginning of an attempt to discover what happens to the smolts when they head down the system. Hann's survey results revealed a high level of predation in the system but will require far more work to answer definitively what is happening. Some LLAIA members felt that they had contributed £4,000 to the LLFT for this project and hadn't got answers for their money. The actual figure was £4,600 and was actually paid to the Aquatic Research Group at Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment (Scene). First, I would like to be absolutely clear that none of these monies was used for any LLFT work. This was entirely a Scene project but the LLFT & LLAIA felt obliged to help Prof Colin Adams as this was ground-breaking research. In the end, the exercise cost the LLFT in the region of £3,000 and the total cost to Scene was a minimum of £41,800. Second, this survey was just the start of trying to find the answer to this important question. As Hann herself pointed out at the AGM, it would be inappropriate to draw hard conclusions from this experiment, as the sample size was small. But her work has, importantly, begun to fill the knowledge void. If predation appears to be the biggest influence on the survival of smolts in our system, then we require additional funding to

investigate what is predated on the smolts and take action to rectify this if deemed appropriate. The smolt tracking project, I suspect, will continue only if funded mainly via Glasgow University.

In much the same way as our smolt data, our electrofishing data is used as evidence to show the health of a site. Collecting data from core sites year after year provides us with a larger sample size that holds more merit when we need to use this as evidence to push for a change. The Auchengaich burn is a prime example where 7 years of pressure initiated & led by Jim Freeman has produced some results at last. We applied pressure on SEPA, the National Park Authority, BP now Petroineos, MOD and Scottish Water etc. Without the data we would not have been acknowledged by Petroineos, who are now working on an engineering solution to rectify the barrier problem on the Auchengaich burn, a crucial spawning area. We now have a working group set up with these parties which is a great result. Using our electrofishing data, we have managed to show that the Auchengaich Burn, which was once used by spawning Atlantic Salmon, has deteriorated in health due to manmade barriers and water abstraction. The owners of the pipeline have taken this information on board and we are now in the early stages of modifying the barrier to improve access to the spawning grounds. This is just one example of how the information we gain from redd counting, smolt traps and electrofishing allows the trust to properly prioritise our time and effort to the areas most in need of our attention.

We have also been heavily involved with biosecurity projects and trying to improve the habitat surrounding the rivers by removing invasive non-native species (INNS), which benefits the fish population. Funding was provided by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) until 2016 when their resources were frozen by Scottish Government. All the INNS projects on the Blane, Endrick & Leven have been achieved by the loyal LLFT volunteers to improve the habitat. Over the next couple of years we are also preparing for some broader habitat restoration work, with the overall aim of improving the fish population. Looking beyond the science, we have developed and delivered a number of different education programmes to schools, community groups and youth groups, which provide hands on learning experiences and highlight why it is important to conserve the local environment. The Powan in the Classroom Project has been a fantastic educational and national success within Scotland and the rest of the UK. The Greggs Foundation and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) are now sponsoring us to expand this project into 12 local schools over the next 3 years. Our efforts to help The Tulloch Trust & John Muir Awards in September 2016 and going forward has proved an outstanding success. From this, both the LLFT/LLAIA are conducting a joint educational programme linked with the John Muir Awards. Again, I would like to emphasise that not a single penny of LLAIA money has been used to date. It has all come via LLFT resources.

Once again with the help of our core volunteers, the Tulloch children were seen clearing paths and creating better river access on the River Leven from the Polaroid Bridge in Strathleven Business Park to Ballantyne's Distillery, identifying and removing invasive plants. The Children completed an electro-fishing and invertebrate day followed by a day's fishing on the Leven under instruction. Sadly, Gareth Bourhill, acting as a Bailiff Manager, was extremely hostile & unhelpful as well as refusing to allow the Bailiffs to partake in any way. Recently we have been presenting to various Path Groups & foundations in the area to enable better access for improved fishing & public access. In addition, we have been invited to present to various local Village community groups in order to make them aware of what the LLAIA & LLFT are trying to achieve. Through this initiative, we hope to attract new members and volunteers. For example, there have been several river clean-ups on the Endrick Water & River Leven over the last few years. This has also been true regarding habitat improvement work on the Leven, Fruin, Endrick and Blane. I am delighted to report that as a result of pressure brought by the LLAIA Committee, after several years of dispute

with Scottish Water over the Leven Barrier, compensation water is now being released into the River Leven in a more compassionate and considered manner. This is an important breakthrough which can only improve the movement & migration for fish into the system.

After many years of neglect, hostility and banishment in the wilderness, your committee finally managed to mend broken bridges with the Coarse Anglers within our system thanks to Malcolm MacCormick's efforts. To strengthen this new alliance Alan Armstrong and Simon Lawson joined the LLAIA committee. Alan and Simon have added a new, invigorated dimension to improving the Loch Lomond system in a different way and legacy attitudes to coarse fish and coarse anglers will hopefully change for the better now. The almost immediate effect of this initiative was that coarse ticket sales have flourished this year and "filled in" several shortfalls within the existing gaps in our revenues for 2016. Without Malcolm, Alan and Simon's efforts the Association would be faced with a deficit this year.

In July 2015 as Chairman of the LLFT, I conducted an Independent review of the entire Loch Lomond System in order to pre-empt and challenge Marine Scotland & Andrew Finn's recommendations about our system and the consequences thereof. Given that the Clyde Foundation, The Lomond system & Girvan in Ayrshire are not members of the Atlantic Salmon Fisheries Board (ASFB) we had some interesting choices and dilemmas to evaluate. I invited all Directors of the LLFT & all committee members of the LLAIA to join this Independent strategic group led by Dr Susie Jackson. Her report took around five months to research and write. The group comprised in the majority, LLAIA committee members. Jim Raeburn declined to get involved but subsequently complained bitterly that he was not included after Dr Susie Jackson's conclusions had been submitted! At the time, other than the Tweed Foundation, I understand from Andrew Wallace, Chairman of Rivers & Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) that we were the only other region out of 40 fishing bodies in Scotland that had the temerity to challenge Marine Scotland & RAFTS with this type of review. Since February 2016, clearly more have subsequently challenged Marine Scotland in a similar way. Together, we (LLAIA & LLFT) have used this as a major challenge to Marine Scotland regarding the Category 3 imposition and we have been rigorously pursuing our criticism of the way the categorisation has been imposed, as per the LLAIA's paper to Marine Scotland in September 2016. One of the stipulations from Marine Scotland regarding the category 3 status is for our system to produce sufficient electro-fishing data. So yes, in this instance we are indeed being forced by the Scottish Government to gather even more data with no direction from Government on how to use it! Very little LLAIA monies to date have been used to preserve & improve our system in terms of this LLFT initiative. Above all else, the committees of the LLAIA & LLFT were "primus inter pares" in challenging this "imposed Category 3" by Marine Scotland, where they have not even consulted any biologists. Finally, Marine Scotland is beginning to engage at the eleventh hour, but with strings attached!

My ultimate comment is regarding Michael Brady's remarks in his 1995-2012 Report about the management of the Lomond System. Since 2012 the LLAIA & LLFT have endeavoured to work as a cohesive team to improve the Lomond system. I would like to stress that the LLFT during my tenure has never hinted or coerced any parties into thinking that the LLFT desired or was even in a position to manage the Lomond System. Given the Articles of Association of the LLFT signed in March 2011, the composition of the LLFT Board and the amount of leases and purchases to fish which are held by the LLAIA from 1995 to date, including the bailiff activities, makes this notion totally absurd. The Wild Fisheries Review by Scottish Government imposing Fishery Management Organisations (FMO) further solidifies these comments. Instead, as a group we have been endeavouring to improve the system all round in terms of habitat improvement, eradication of Invasive Species, persuade and fight the Scottish Government about this ridiculous Category 3 Imposition and provide better & easier access to all fishing people. None of this would be possible without the help of all

those core volunteers for giving their time and effort to make it happen. To them I am profoundly grateful.

There are plenty of areas in which we can improve. Despite attempting to make in-roads within the media, such as the Reporter & Lennox, I think we can do a lot to improve the way we communicate about the work of the Trust and the Association more generally. We need to use communication to encourage new members to fish within our system. We want to counter the bad publicity of the past and win over the hearts and minds of the locals and people outside our catchment areas. We also need to use communication to encourage as many volunteers as possible to join our ranks. When it comes to volunteering, ordinary members from the LLAIA & LLFROG are sadly lacking! Lady Members & young people are also sadly lacking for all sorts of legacy reasons, and require addressing. Over the last 5 years, your core Committee has worked hard & tirelessly to improve the Loch Lomond System under our stewardship & it is for this reason that we wish to retire now with grace and reflect on the turn around and achievements. I am proud of what we have achieved over recent years.

The LLFT & LLAIA are now aligned as they should be, despite historic difficulties. And this is even more obvious given our jointly agreed response to the Wild Fisheries Review. Above all, I believe everyone is passionate about restoring our system. So we must work together as a cohesive team, including the "old Guard". One disappointing observation I would like to add, however. When reading back through Michael Brady's 1995-2012 Report, I noticed a section entitled "The real truth with regards Bailiffing." In it he mentioned that "The most poignant item that almost ruined the LLAIA and prevented the Association from achieving great things over many years was the Bailiffing!" I am sad to say that since 2012 he has also been proved to be correct. In my opinion this is due to how the Bailiff team has been run & managed.

The two incarnations of the Bailiff Management team have been the "near nemesis" of this committee. In my opinion, both lacked vision and had no insight into improving our system other than go permit hunting. Colin McFadyen, I felt, had the appropriate bailiff credentials, energy & acumen as well as the capabilities to be a main stay for years to come. Regrettably he was unfortunately suppressed, alienated and then thwarted by the then Bailiff management team. The new bailiff management team in recent times had, in my opinion, begun to revert to the unfortunate situation of putting "bailiffing" ahead of the committee and nothing else. This undermined the committee and their resignations while surprising, were not ultimately unwelcome, given the way they had begun to behave around the management of the bailiffs. They have been unable to promote themselves to be the true front runners, cohorts and ambassadors of our system. This has been a tragic missed opportunity and one the next committee makes at their peril.

To quote the Sage of Renton "We are running a fishing club not the country!" If only some people had taken these wise words to heart we would not be faced with a ridiculous call for an EGM. However, we are where we are and we will now retire with grace and dignity. We wish you all well going forward & thank you. Personally, we have had some great times together over the last 5 years. I have also made some great, loyal friends while helping and trust this will continue going forward for the best of our system. The biggest thank you must go to the core volunteers such as Jim Freeman, Gordon Mackenzie, Keith Adams, Jim & Alan Muir, Andy & Alex McLwee, Chic Maclean (Senior & Junior), Gus Wylie, Wulfy Millar & Keith Gillies- all ably guided & supervised by Carolyn Bryce.

Yours Aye

Eddie Edmonstone Vice Chairman of the LLAIA

2016 Fishing – Good in parts but not great

Never mind the politics, what about the fishing? In line with the reporting requirements imposed by the Scottish Government the table below provides a summary of the number of fish that were killed and returned on the different parts of our system during 2016 compared to 2015. The figures below represent returns from 135 members (~32% of membership), and the returns are expressed as weight in Lb's : number of fish caught

	Salmon	Grilse	Sea Trout	Finnock	
	Returned	Returned	Killed	Returned	
Endrick 2016	324.5 : 33	258 : 52	21.5 : 7	95.75 : 33	0
2015	101 Lb : 11	273.5 Lb : 57	2 Lb : 1	94.5 Lb : 48	9Lb : 12
Fruin 2016	43 : 5	22 : 5	0	34.75 : 10	0
2015	11Lb : 1	62Lb : 13	2 Lb : 1	23.5 : 12	0
Lomond 2016	576.5 : 49	55 : 10	35.5 : 16	390.25 : 165	8.5 : 11
2015	808.5 Lb : 74	130 Lb : 29	74.5 Lb : 23	1,176 Lb : 550	68Lb : 86
Leven & Estuary 2016	373 : 41	125.5 : 27	69.75 : 33	730 : 396	22.5 : 34
2015	498.5 Lb : 48	275 Lb : 52	242.5Lb:119	1477 Lb : 826	295.5Lb : 397
Total 2016	1317 : 128	460.5 : 94	126.75 : 56	1160.75 : 604	40 : 57
Total 2015 returned	1,409 Lb: 134	409.5 Lb : 151	321 Lb: 144	2,771 Lb : 1,436	401.5 Lb : 495
Total 2015 Killed	1,117Lb : 100	204Lb : 37			

Total reported salmon catch:

salmon + grilse = 222 with a 100% return rate

Total sea trout catch:

sea trout + finnock = 717 with a 91% return rate

The 2016 season began well and in common with the rest of Scotland there were a number of large salmon landed. We know of at least 2 salmon from the Leven and 3 from the loch that were around 25Lbs in weight and there were also a few that came unstuck estimated to be of a similar size.

Frustratingly a great start to the season on the tributaries fizzled out and for the third year running a dry spell during most of October dampened catches significantly. However big fish were still there to be caught, the best off the Endrick this year weighed in at around 20Lb. Much has been made in print and on-line of changing run timings and the demise of the autumn and grilse fisheries this year has reinforced the message and for the third year running the changes we detected in 2014 with regards to the number of salmon caught now exceeding grilse numbers has continued. Whether this will lead to improved spring fishing next year is anyone's guess we will just have to wait and see.

Finally, the number of members submitting catch returns is at the time of writing of this report sitting at around 32%, less than half of last years total. This is ridiculously low considering that future categorisation of this system will be partly determined by catch returns. Hectoring members has succeeded to a point, however, the next committee may wish to take more draconian steps to ensure that everyone complies in future.

2016 Season Returns

River Endrick.

	Salmon	Grilse	Sea Trout	Finnock
Month	Returned	Returned	Killed	Returned
April				
May				
June	1	2	2	10
July	4	5	2	6
August	5	6	3	4
September	9	24	0	10
October	14	15	0	3
Total	33	52	7	33
2015	11	57	1	48

River Fruin.

	Salmon	Grilse	Sea Trout	Finnock
Month	Returned	Returned	Killed	Returned
July				2
August	2	4		3
September	3	1		5
October				
Total	5	5	0	10
2015	1	13	1	12

Loch Lomond.

	Salmon	Grilse	Sea Trout	Finnock
Month	Returned	Returned	Killed	Returned
February				
March				14
April				9
May	10	2		10
June	18		4	17
July	9	5	4	27
August	6	2	3	59
September	5	1	5	10
October	1			19
Total	49	10	16	165
2015	74	29	23	550

River Leven & Estuary

	Salmon	Grilse	Sea Trout - Leven	Sea Trout - Estuary	Finnock
Month	Returned	Returned	Killed	Returned	Returned
February				1	
March				5	11
April				6	32
May	6	3		24	1
June	6		3	43	4
July	3	10	8	39	4
August	10	6	5	39	1
September	7	2	6	23	1
October	9	6		19	9
Total	41	27	22	199	11
2015	85	65	34	342	85

Catch and Release in 2017

While we can once again harvest salmon in 2017 members are encouraged to show restraint whenever possible. Be in no doubt that if our exploitation rate is below that of the last 5 years this may be taken into account in any future categorisation deliberations. In particular we remind loch anglers that killing the majority of spring caught fish is now indefensible and totally out of kilter with the rest of Scotland. The authorities will be watching with interest and you continue this course of action at your peril.

As anglers are aware amendment has been made to the club by-laws to restrict the number of salmon that can be taken to one fish per day as well as prohibiting the taking of any fish on the system before 1 May.

It is the opinion of the Committee that the stricter approach to salmon conservation in Scotland through Wild Fisheries Reform means that we as an Association must act now to avoid statutory catch and release being imposed in future. This is something that any new committee must take into account and act accordingly.

River Endrick Fishings and the continued importance of catch returns

We now have 5 years of in-depth catch data for the Endrick and can now provide members with provisional valuations of the fishings that we own. Such valuations are based usually on a 5 year average catch and we have used the multiplier for a grade 3 water which values our stretches at £5,000 per salmon recorded. Given the investment over recent years on the River Endrick it is imperative that the Association continue to collect accurate catch returns for the various beats we fish in order to properly value our assets and better inform our leasing strategy in the coming decade. This has to be a priority for any future committee.

Stretch	When purchased	Purchase price	5 year average catch (salmon)	Estimated value	Book value + / -
Upper Endrick Bogside, Kilunan, Mill of Glenboig, Hunter's and Netherton	2009/2012	98,656	10	50,000	-£48,656
Cowdenmill	2007	42,500	7.8	39,000	-£3,500
Wilson's	2008	31,653	5	25,000	-£6,653
Drumtain	1998	31,179	16	80,000	+£48,821
Total Middle Endrick Fishings		105,732	28.8	144,000	+£38,268

While the above values are indicative, it would appear that the price paid by the previous committee for fishings on the upper Endrick has been at a premium to say the least. It should also be noted that as some members have not included details of where fish have been caught then valuations are lower than they might otherwise have been if accurate returns had been submitted – only 55 out of 85 recorded this year alone.

There are also residual issues from the purchase of fishings in 2012 that require addressed some of which have a cost implication. This is down to the speed of operation of the relevant Government Department. More work and expense for the new committee!

Finally, without wishing to go over the same old ground failure to make an accurate catch assessment on the Endrick could also propel the system back into a category 3 given the Endrick is a SAC.

Fishing Tackle For Kids – Remembering James Paris

The Association are keen to promote angling in the younger generation as without new blood coming through there will be no club. Last year following the untimely demise of James Paris, who served on the committee from February 2012 till February 2015, we were contacted by James' parents who kindly offered his fishing tackle and angling books to the Association.

As a result we were able to provide 5 full outfits for young people that can and have been borrowed as required. We also had a selection of tackle that, to be frank, was perhaps too good to be put in the hands of inexperienced anglers and with the backing of James parents this tackle was sold at a silent auction during our last AGM which netted us £350. Although it was our intention to use this money to purchase additional fishings outfits we were overwhelmed by the generosity of Paul Devline and the Glasgow Angling Centre who provided us with significant amounts of tackle, this was selflessly added to by some of our committee members who sought no payment for their generosity.

In August we had a real chance to develop our youth development strategy by working in collaboration with the Tulloch trust who provide support to children who live in the West Dunbartonshire area. The vast majority of our committee were fully supportive of this initiative but it was only thanks to the generosity of the LLFT who stepped in at the last minute to buy tools that the assistant bailiff manager, for reasons known only to himself, refused to hand out that we were able to actually facilitate what turned out to be the first of 3 incredibly rewarding days. Children who have never fished in their lives or had given any consideration to the river environment on their door steps ended up cutting paths for anglers, electro-fishing for juvenile fish and finally fishing for and catching fish on the Leven.

This is how young people, girls as well as boys, are shown a different route in life and hopefully provided access to a pastime that will last them a life time.

As if things could not get any better in late October 8 primary schools from Renton and Alexandria were introduced to the ecology of a number of small tributaries on the Leven. Once again this was a real eye-opener for the children and their enthusiasm had to be seen to be believed. In addition to the children, teachers and parents were also involved as were committee members and one of our bailiffs.

Both of these initiatives were outstanding successes and will with any luck have a real positive influence on future angler development. To provide seed capital for future development we have taken the £350 raised through the James Paris donation and have doubled this and presented a cheque for £700 to the Tulloch Trust for use in future junior angling development. We truly believe that James would have approved of this move and genuinely think that this money will lead to a new generation of anglers on our system. The new committee must continue with this work for the good of our system.

New Stiles and Seats

At long last the committee can confirm that a large number of stiles have been constructed and over the winter will be situated in place on the Endrick and the Fruin.

The first work has already been completed at the Black Bridge on the Fruin where a number of stiles have been erected and a ladder positioned which now allows anglers access and egress from the Bridge Pool. This will be the first of several improvements that committee are pleased to have authorised and which the new committee need to prioritise over the winter months.

Why is your committee Standing Down?

The committee are quite frankly sickened by the personal attacks that have been aimed at the Secretary and rather than let their final year in office be dominated by internal division and fighting which will only undermine the club we have taken the decision to retire early and avoid a conflict which the Association does not need.

We believe that the club has enough challenges in the year ahead without our continuing presence becoming a focal point for some to ferment dissension and unrest. The future is uncertain and the committee need to be able to concentrate 100% on managing the system and not get bogged down in petty internal fishing club politics. As we do not believe that an EGM would be the end of the sniping we have with a heavy heart decided to retire. That is why we are going.

We are disappointed to be leaving under such circumstances but having learned the lessons of the past believe it is the right thing to do. No one is bigger than the club and we have no pretensions that we are either so rather than become the issue over the next year we will retire with our heads held high leaving behind a legacy which the new committee can hopefully build upon.

Proposed Change to the Constitution

Given the totally unacceptable behaviour of some members over recent months the following change to the constitution is proposed for the AGM:

Article 8

“(a)(ii) Should any category of member post by means of a public electronic communications network (e.g. text, email, Facebook post, web forum) a message or other matter that is offensive or of an indecent, obscene, demeaning or menacing character; or causes any such message or matter to be so sent; or allows such a message to be posted on a public electronic site shall render such member liable to forfeiture of their membership without recompense, and the committee shall have the power to cancel the offenders membership, and they shall thereupon forfeit all rights and privileges in virtue of such membership.”

This amendment if successful will provide protection to members and committee members alike and will hopefully put an end to members undermining our Association on-line. We ask you to approve this proposal at the next AGM.

Election of Office Bearer / Committee Members

As the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and 6 of the 7 committee members will be retiring elections will take place to fill these positions as well as the position of treasurer which was vacated on resignation on 1 October 2016. Successful candidates for the posts of chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer will serve for a period of 3 years and then face re-election.

All applications for office bearer posts or the committee should be with the secretary or with our office at Woodside Place by 31 December 2016.

Looking Forward to Your AGM

The AGM will be held before 1 March 2017 at a venue to be decided by the new committee.

The Call for an EGM – make up your own minds

A request has been made for an EGM, however, despite asking the lead petitioners for confirmation as to the reasons for seeking the removal of the chairman and vice chairman no information has been forthcoming. Quite how the applicants can hope to persuade members that they are serious is beyond us when they are unwilling to share their allegations prior to the meeting.

We will make no further comment on this matter and we urge all members to attend this meeting on the 14th of December to express their concern at such secretive practices.

There have though been a number of comments made on line and elsewhere that we feel cannot go unchallenged. What we will never do though is give the authors of such comments any free publicity nor will we discuss club business on a public forum. Members can reflect on who actually has the best interests of the club at heart as we answer the more serious allegations that have been made:

- 1) The ex-treasurer and the ex-bailiff manager were sacked/got rid of/unconstitutionally removed from the committee

On 22/9/16 the chairman distributed a **discussion paper** on the possible implications of remaining a category 3 system to all members of the committee. The treasurer emailed the Chairman back that day and in no uncertain terms announced he had resigned as treasurer and a voluntary bailiff. The Chairman emailed him back and the response from Mr Bourhill again intimated he was no longer treasurer. On 23 September Mr Raeburn stated in an email to the Chairman that he was no longer bailiff manager. In an email to all members of the committee on 26 September Mr Bourhill stated on 2 occasions that if the discussion paper was presented un-amended then he and Mr Raeburn would have no option but to resign. The paper was discussed briefly at the committee meeting on 27 September but it was agreed to defer any further action until the result of the categorisation was known and how membership renewal was faring in early 2017. The committee asked the secretary to write to Mr Bourhill and ask him to remain as treasurer and to Mr Raeburn to ask him to remain on the committee. Mr Bourhill submitted his letter of resignation as treasurer and on 1 October he deposited several bin bags on the chairman's driveway containing club material, including cheque books, bank pay-in books and an expensive body camera. Mr Raeburn did not respond, it was assumed he had also resigned but in late October stated in an email he was still on the committee.

Members can make up their own minds regarding the status of Mr Bourhill and Mr Raeburn.

- 2) The Association did not submit their appeal on categorisation in time to meet the Scottish Government deadline and the committee did not have a say in the content of the document sent

All documents prepared on behalf of the committee are circulated to the committee for comment. Only once the document is agreed is it forwarded to the requesting body. The draft appeal against the category 3 status was submitted to committee members on 25/9/16 and after review and amendment was forwarded to Scottish government on 27/9/16, 3 days before the deadline submission date.

Members can make up their own minds regarding whether the document was circulated to the committee before submission and whether it was submitted in time

- 3) The committee had no real input in moving the Lomond system from Category 3 to Category 2.

We shall quote directly from the Scottish Government web site:

3. The Endrick SAC and the River Leven (Dunbartonshire)

6 responses seeking recategorisation of the River Leven. We have had constructive discussions both with the Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association and SNH on a number of issues regarding salmon stocks in the Endrick SAC. As a result of these discussions we have re-run the model used to assess conservation status, using additional data, and revised the wetted area used in the assessment. This has resulted in the Endrick SAC moving from category 3 to 2. As a consequence of this re-assessment, salmon stocks in the River Leven (Dunbartonshire) has been graded as category 2.

Members can make up their own minds if the chairman, who represented the LLAIA at the above meeting, had any influence on the final decision on categorisation.

- 4) Moving to a category 2 was no big deal and the committee should have used the knowledge of other anglers on the system to formulate a better reply.

Again we will quote directly from the Scottish Government web site:

Final categories	After the consultation
47 category 1 rivers/groups	42 rivers/groups remaining unchanged
48 category 2 rivers/groups	9 rivers/groups moving from category 1 to 2
73 category 3 rivers/groups	11 rivers/groups moving from category 2 to 3
	5 rivers/groups moving from category 3 to 2
	1 new river being assessed

Therefore following review only 5 systems moved up a grading, 20 dropped a grading and 42 remained unchanged. It is clear that the Lomond system bucked the national trend with regards to categorisation. In addition use was made of data from other members and organisations such as redd counting data and juvenile surveys on the upper Endrick. If the information was sound then we were happy to use it, however, given the submission from the committee was considered exceptionally strong we saw no reason to change our submission.

- 5) The chairman is now signing the cheques and is the treasurer of the club

The chairman has always been one of the 3 signatories to the club account along with the ex-treasurer and the secretary. Once the ex-treasurer resigned the chairman and secretary have signed all cheques as there is a 2 signature policy. If they did not sign off these cheques then invoices would have gone unpaid and the club would have been labelled a bad debtor. A new treasurer has not been appointed, the members will vote one into office at the AGM.

- 6) It is the Chairman's way or the highway

This is not the case. If this had been the case then there would have been a further 2 car parks on the Endrick, far more stiles on the Fruin, disabled fishing access on the Leven and associate (Leven and Coarse) members would be allowed to vote at our AGM.

- 7) The Chairman wants to lead the new FMO when he retires from his current job

The chairman has confirmed he has no interest in being involved in fishing politics, he states that 5 years as LLAIA chair is more than enough, instead he is looking forward (hopefully) to a long retirement and many more fishing opportunities commencing May 2018.

Members are more than welcome to make their minds up as to the accuracy of the claims made and the integrity and transparency of those making them.

Bailiffing Report

The conservation and protection of fish stocks is the number one priority of the committee and we can see no circumstances in the future where this would not be the case. Without an effective and efficient bailiffing force poaching would be unrestricted and would cause significant damage not just to our fish stocks but to the stocks of other rivers on the upper Clyde that rely on the Clyde estuary for the safe passage of their fish.

In the past 5 years the committee has invested heavily in protecting fish stocks. Between 2012 and 2015 we spent just over £223,000 in wages and on-costs, a further £39,000 in vehicles and the boat and around £ 16,000 in other costs associated with bailiffing. When depreciation costs of £35,000 are taken into account then in total this equates to an outlay of around £313,000 on bailiffing in 4 years, or on average £78,000 per year, or around 70% of our entire income over the last 4 years depending which way you wish to look at it.

In 2016 bailiffing costs are coming in at around our 4 year average as you will see in our accounts section. So for anyone to suggest that we have not invested in bailiffing this is not only misleading but a down right lie. Indeed compared with the previous committee spend, investment in bailiffing is proportionally higher now than under their tenure once the salary paid to the former chairman for undertaking the role of full time secretary is stripped out of the balance sheet. The financial reality is that the money saved from closing the failed smolt programme and ending the secretary's salary has been re-invested in bailiffing. Yet for some it would still not appear to be enough.

The reason behind the recent call for an EGM was due to the chairman circulating a **discussion paper** to the committee in late September outlining a number of scenarios and possible actions that might have to be considered should the system remain a category 3 in 2017. Be under no illusion if the system had remained category 3 then there was a real chance that income would slump given the Clyde and other nearby rivers were category 2. There was also every chance that bailiffing costs alone could potentially outstrip income. The bailiff manager and the treasurer (also a very active bailiff) demanded this paper be withdrawn / amended, the chairman said no and the rest as they say is history.

Yet again bailiffing, or to be more precise a fall out over bailiffing, has been the root cause of discord in this committee. Others of course have used this current schism for their own ends, however, that is another story for another time. The tough question and one the members now need to discuss is whether or not we have a bailiff structure that is fit for purpose and sustainable in the long term. As you will read in our financial statement the game fishing side of the Association is in decline and immediate steps need to be taken to protect our income in the years to come. We believe some hard choices will have to be made in the next few years even if we remain a category 2. If for whatever reason we slip back to category 3 in 2018 we believe that all bets will be well and truly off.

Finally a bailiffing report would not be complete without recognition of the work of our hardworking full time bailiffs. It is quite often a thankless task, chasing rumours and whispers or illegality over 784 square kilometres of countryside. It was difficult enough to do with 7 full time bailiffs in the 1980's and it is certainly far more demanding now, even if poaching activity has declined markedly on our system compared with a few decades previously.

The new committee might wish to reflect and ponder the lessons learned by both this and the previous committee. Get bailiffing and its management right and you will have the opportunity to drive this club forward, fail in this respect and it will come back to haunt you. Given the massive costs to members the time is now right for an open and frank discussion at the next AGM around the future of bailiffing.

Membership Breakdown

Full Members

	2016	2015	2014	2013
Existing Full Members	242	265	260	272
New Members	35	23	58	41
Existing OAP Members	108	101	129	118
Disabled Members	18	22	26	21
Student Members	2	1	0	1
Junior Members	8	8	4	4
Total Members	413	420	477	457
Honorary Members	4	5	Not Recorded	Not Recorded
Honorary OAP Members	21	24	n/a	n/a

Associate Members

	2016	2015	2014	2013
Local Leven Associate Members	73	88	95	90
Leven Associate Members	84	107	108	102
Disabled Associate Members	3	12	8	5
OAP Associate Members	38	78	38	42
Total Adult Associate Members	198	285	249	239
Child Associate Members	16	43	66	41
Coarse Associate Members	124	63	Not Recorded	Not Recorded
Complementary	19	Not Recorded	Not Recorded	Not Recorded
Estuary Associate Members	51	29	N/A	N/A
Leven / Lomond Day Ticket sales	340	Not Recorded	Not Recorded	615

And finally.....

Only 32% of Members have submitted a catch return to date. That means 68% of members have still to inform the committee of what they caught last year. This compares highly unfavourably with last year when 65% of members complied with our request.

If you don't submit your return there is every chance that our catch returns will fall below acceptable levels and we will once again be a Category 3 water in 2018.

So for the sake of the Association and for the sake of your fellow members submit your return now!

Savage	Roderick	Steel	Mrs	Traquair	Stewart
Scanlon	James	Stewart	Alan J	Turner	Christopher
Scanlon	Tom	Stewart	Matt	Turner	David
Scott	Michael Andrew	Stewart	Murray	Walsh	Kevin
Scullion	Robert	Stirling	Alan	Ward	Daniel
Semple	Walter	Storey	Neil	Watt	William
Seton	Harry	Strachan	Jamie	Watt	David
Shanks	James	Strachan	Raymond	Welsh	John A
Shannon	Andrew	Strachan	Robert	Whitelaw	John
Shannon	Phillip	Summers	George	Wilkies	Oliver
Shannon	Manus	Sunman	David	Wilkies	Mark
Simpson	William	Sunman	David Jnr	Wilkie	Alexander
Sinclair	Scott	Swan	Ancell	Williamson	Craig
Sloan	Andrew	Sweeney	Desmond	Wilson	Alastair
Smart	David	Tang	John	Wilson	Alastair
Smart	William	Taylor	Paul	Wilson	Cameron
Smith	Alan	Thomson	A Forbes	Wilson	Graham
Smith	Colin	Thomson	Crawford	Woods	Allan
Smith	Donald	Thomson	George	Workman	Alex
Smyth	John	Thorne	Gareth	Wornald	Peter
Soutter	Angus	Thorne	Alastair	Wright	Brian
Spence	Stuart	Tiley	Malcolm	Wyllie	Angus
Stead	Colin	Todd	John Liddell	Young	Charles
Steel	Ian	Tosh	Colin	Young	Paul

