

# **Liskeard and District Angling Club**

## **Annual General Meeting**

**February 2019**

### **1. Call to Order/Welcome**

The meeting, held at Liskeard Constitutional Club, was called to order at 19.35hrs on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019, with R Williams (in the Chair) and with A White (presiding).

- Silent tribute to Mick Smith
- RW welcomed all to the well attended 2019 AGM

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence received from Messrs Smith, Toms, Burrows, Lashbrook, Brandon and Furniss.

### **3. Approval of 2018 AGM minutes**

Following adoption by the Committee (on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018) and their publication on the Club website no further comments have been received.

***A motion was therefore made by P Jordan, seconded by D White, to approve the minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018 AGM meeting: APPROVED unanimously.***

### **4. Matters Arising from previous AGM Minutes**

None.

### **5. Officers' Reports**

#### **Chairman's Report (R Williams)**

RW welcomed all those attending the 2019 LDAC AGM and in particular our speaker Bruce Stockley, from WRT.

Noting that 2018 had been one of the more difficult seasons on record the Chairman indicated that overall fishing efforts had been low throughout the year and it was likely that this would be reflected in low(er) catch return numbers.

For the stalwart few that did venture out a few early spring fish rewarded their efforts on both the Lynher and Fowey. Summer fish were caught but generally sport had been poor for most members.

The Chairman then spoke to the news that the TTFA/EA had started to electronically tag sea trout in the Tamar. This would provide data for studies regarding migration routes and frequency of spawning. He advised the membership that it was possible that these fish might also re-enter the Lynher. If so they could be recognised as having a clipped adipose fin. Tagged fish could be reported to the EA and a financial incentive was in place for those reporting such catches. Further details would appear on the Club website.

The Chairman then discussed the disappointing news that the Fowey fish counter (at Restormel) had not been producing reliable data during most of the 2018 season. It was unlikely that any meaningful data would be forthcoming on numbers of fish entering the catchment. It was hoped that things would improve for 2019.

Fry survey information from the FRA funded WRT work on the Fowey was then presented. This showed that the middle river had improved but that there was less promising news for Warleggan salmon parr; salmon numbers had shown a dip but conversely trout numbers were higher there – perhaps indicating a healthier stock of sea trout for the future.

There was better news on the Cardinham. In 2017 the surveys had shown no salmon above Ladyvale Bridge. However, with encouragement from WRT the Forestry Commission had removed a major log-jam and in the subsequent 2018 survey salmon parr numbers had rebounded. This was excellent news and showed the importance of the surveys in helping to spot problem areas and to illustrate the positive impact of focussed in-river works.

There was however disappointing news regarding the Club's attempts to purchase the Newbridge stretch of the Fowey in 2018.

Despite all our efforts and the generosity of members in donating and loaning funds the Sellers' withdrew from the sale/purchase agreement in November 2018. More details follow in the Treasurer's report.

Gravel cleaning was not undertaken in 2018. This was due to the dis-incentives created by the need to apply for and get a series of licences to perform gravel cleaning at any location

- An easement for each location was required
- A permit was required to pull hemlock
- A waste carriers licence was required to remove hemlock from site.

This matter had been taken up with the FFRG (EA, WRT and FRA) and the EA have indicated that they can provide support to facilitate the permitting process in 2019.

WRT had made a large gravel cleaning pump available to the Club and it was hoped that this would make the work load lighter in the future.

Bank clearance days have been published in the December newsletter and following a slow start the Chairman was pleased to advise that attendance had improved and he thanked those involved. He further noted that there were a number of dates in February/March that needed support and he urged the membership to turn out to work on their river.

The Chairman briefly mentioned the work undertaken by IFCA and the recent news that they were looking to extend controls from the main estuaries into the creeks and coves surrounding ...noting that many salmonids used these areas as a refuge in low water conditions.

The new beat maps were highlighted and thanks were made to WRT for producing them and to R Grieve for making them accessible on the Club website.

Finally he took the opportunity to thank the Treasurer (T Sobey), the Secretary (P Jordan) and his Committee members for all their efforts in helping to run the club during 2018 and to wish the membership tight(er) lines for the 2019 season.

## ii) Secretary (P Jordan)

The Secretary noted that the Committee had met 6 times in the year and that their attendance had been excellent.

Much time and effort had been spent at these meetings trying to find the right balance between managing external relationships (with the EA/FRA), protecting river stocks and supporting the members' sport.

Whilst this had not always been easy it is a credit to the Committee that consensus was reached and that the EA had been supportive of the Club's position. This was reflected in the successful negotiations over the new NLO for the Fowey and no immediate threat of bye-law introductions.

The (voluntary) catch/release and restrictions/rules put in place for 2018 would now extend into the 2019 season and if any changes were proposed after the FRA/EA 2019 meeting had taken place then membership would be informed. In the meantime copies of the rules were made available at the meeting for those seeking a copy. It was noted that there was an error in the December newsletter.....***barbless hooks to be used after 31<sup>st</sup> August, not before June 16<sup>th</sup> as stated.***

Other key issues in the year have included

- ***Protecting the fishing owned by the Club***
  - Ownership of and access to fishing rights on the stretch above the road bridge (Newbridge, River Lynher) was disputed by the new owners of Turnpike Cottage. The Committee stepped in and successfully resolved the dispute without resorting to costly litigation. New access points had been

- created and the membership are encouraged to access and fish the stretch.
- The Secretary noted that fishing rights and access issues were critical to the Club's future and asked members to immediately make the Committee aware of any attempts to close off/change access or to try to dissuade the Club members from fishing our beats. The sale of any property adjoining fishing should also be advised as such changes often led to difficulties over ownership and access.
  - **Additional fishing** rights at Newbridge (River Fowey) came to the market during the year. The Club attempted to purchase these but the sale fell through before contracts were exchanged. More details can be found in the Treasurer's report.
  - **Work parties** had started again and the Secretary reminded all members that it was important that they signed the risk assessment form before starting work. Failure to do so could negate both personal and Club insurances.
  - The Secretary reminded members to advise of any address or email changes *asap*. Failure to do so would inevitably result in lost contact.
  - Don't forget
    - **FRA AGM (now anticipated on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019)** at Boconnoc. Members were urged to support the River Association, the Salmon hatchery at Colliford and the sea trout sanctuary in the Draynes. These efforts, in conjunction with the excellent work that the Lynher Association also does at their hatchery are critical in sustaining our sport. Support them both by joining both Associations.

### iii) Treasurer (T Sobey)

The Treasurer presented an overview of the Club's efforts to

purchase the River Fowey Newbridge fishing in 2018.

He noted that the Club had always sought to purchase fishing if it became available. As background he stated that fishing had been purchased at Golitha (1985), Jacks (1997), Lewarne (1998), Doublebois (2004) Hendergrove (2018) and the Club had also donated substantially towards the FRA Draynes sanctuary purchase in 2018.

In July of 2018 Kivells advertised the sale of the Newbridge stretch of the Fowey River. The Club bid on the stretch but was advised that a higher bid had been received. That third party sale subsequently fell through and the Club then directly negotiated a second (increased) offer that was accepted by the seller, Lanhydrock Estates. With solicitors instructed the sale progressed and land registry, river-bed ownership and access matters were examined to ensure that the Club would have full, un-encumbered title to the fishing.

In mid-November the Club was surprised to hear that the sellers were seeking membership dues from its Angling Association members for the 2019 season. It transpired that the sellers had decided to withdraw from the sale but had not advised other parties to that effect.

More positively, our membership proved highly supportive and very generous in making interest free loans and donations to enable the purchase offer to be made. The Treasurer wished to put on record his personal thanks for that support.

The Treasurer then presented and reviewed the P&L account for year ending December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018. It was noted that despite concerns over membership numbers the Club had retained its subscription income *year-on-year*.

Allowing for all costs in the year the Club carried forward £28,122.33p, an increase of £1,541.75p on the previous year.

Whilst this headline result is reassuring, the Committee is aware that 2019 will be critical financially.

Notwithstanding, they have decided to keep subscription rates

at their current level for another year – to encourage membership when our fishing is under considerable pressure both in quantity of fish caught and further restrictions on methods and overall catch limits.

We are pleased to note that many of our riparian owners have also recognized the financial uncertainties we are facing and have agreed to a 20% reduction in rental rates whilst we weather the *not-so-perfect* storm of increasing regulation, the effects of commercial netting at sea and climate change. We thank them for their understanding and support.

#### **iv) Auditor (J Shearsmith)**

A White noted that J Shearsmith had always historically audited the Club accounts but he was now moving out of the area and would be unable to carry out audits in the future.

The Club thanked him for all his efforts and wished him well for the future.

JS and AW approve the 2018 accounts as presented.

**Motion to approve the 2019 accounts: proposed by N White, seconded by R Grieve. APPROVED unanimously.**

A White thanked T Sobey for all his efforts in acting as Treasurer to LDAC over many years.

## **6. Other Reports**

### **i) FRA Colliford Hatchery (R Grieve)**

RG gave an interesting discussion on the hatchery operations and water flow issues

- He reported that this was the start of the third year of operation of the relocated Colliford Hatchery.
- He noted that prior concerns over water quality had not materialized.
- He thanked his volunteer staff for all their efforts, especially those that were from local communities, not the more typical angling population.

- He noted the key LDAC/FRA support for the hatchery.
- He discussed in detail the issues over water levels and their possible effects on salmonid migration in the Fowey
  - Whilst the SWW releases of summer water for abstraction at Restormel provided artificially high flows in the mid-river this did nothing in the lower estuarine reaches as it was all being abstracted at Restormel.
  - He was concerned that the abstraction of water at Restormel was seriously impacting the ability of fish to by pass the weir at Restormel. Water should be left to run out to the estuary below Lostwithiel, especially that associated with *water bank* releases.
  - He suggested that the *water-bank* at Colliford could be more fully utilized to encourage migrating fish from estuary to upper river and that the FRA/WRT could focus on this issue with SWW and the EA.
- Finally he noted that brood stock collection in late 2018 had been fair but with the majority of hen fish being small grilse. Late stripping of one fish had resulted in helpful EA agreement not to insist on factorial mating to complete the operation.

In support of hatcheries RW presented an analysis of Fowey counter figures that clearly showed that, in the period before the Wainsford hatchery was first in operation, the 9 year average was 696 fish whilst the 10 year average during operations (including the 3 year smolt/first migration period) showed that this average had risen to 902 fish (a 23% increase).

Whilst some might discount such data, at worst it showed that Wainsford hatchery had no detrimental effect on Fowey stocks and at best it improved them substantially.

RW noted that fin clipping of 25% of the Fowey fry was undertaken and urged members to look out for such fish and to report them if caught – thereby proving the success of the hatchery.



RG noted that these (first) catches might not take place until 2021 as recent fry surveys had indicated a 2-year old hatchery parr that was not yet smolting in the St Neot. This was not seen as being detrimental, BS (WRT) indicating that larger (14cm) fish were more likely to survive and return.

## **ii) Lynher Hatchery (A White)**

AW gave a brief overview of the Lynher Hatchery activities including

- The 2017/18 output of 56,000 fry into the river at a cost of 5p per fry
- The cost of the operation being solely dependent upon donations and acknowledged the critical financial contributions made by LDAC in sustaining the operation.
- Only 17,000 eggs were stripped this winter due to limited brood stock availability
- Hatching had now started but that they were expecting approximately 15,000 fry for stocking out later in 2019. Whilst this lower number was disappointing it was recognized that natural variations should be expected.
- He wanted to thank G Hake in particular for his efforts in leading the hatchery work and N Lintott for providing the site.

***BREAK (20.50 hrs)***

## **7. Election of Officers (AW)**

A White (presiding) commended the current Officers and Committee members for their efforts in 2018 and stated that all the serving officers (R Williams, Chair; N White, Vice Chair; T Sobey, Treasurer and P Jordan, Secretary) would stand for re-election if requested. No further nominations had been received and none were forthcoming from the floor.

He therefore proposed *en bloc* voting to re-elect the 4 Officers

***Proposal: To re-elect the 4 Club officers; proposed by R Selby and seconded by J Hake. Unanimously APPROVED.***

*All current Officers duly re-elected.*

## **8. Election of Committee Members (RW)**

The Chairman (R Williams) advised that two Committee vacancies now existed.

Nominations had been received from Alan Dean and Treve Fowler by the date of the AGM. No further nominations were forthcoming from the floor.

***Proposal: To elect 2 new Committee members;***

***A Dean: proposed by P Jordan and seconded by R Williams. Unanimously APPROVED.***

***T Fowler: proposed by R Williams and seconded by P Jordan. Unanimously APPROVED.***

*2 new Committee members duly elected.*

In the interest of time RW proposed that as the remaining Committee were all standing for re-election he recommended they be re-appointed *en-bloc*.

***Proposal: To re-elect the standing Committee members; proposed by R Grieve and seconded by R Selby. Unanimously APPROVED.***

*All current Committee members were duly re-elected.*

## **9. Presentation of Club Trophies**

The Committee had received the following nominations for trophies during the 2018 season.

- *Salmon Cup: J Drew for a 16lb Fowey salmon caught*

on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018 on the Fowey at Doublebois. The Committee awarded the Salmon trophy to J Drew.

- *Glencross Sea Trout Cup*: J Drew for an 8lb 2 oz sea trout caught on the Fowey at Dennicksball on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018. The Committee awarded the Sea Trout trophy to J Drew.
- *The Lynher Contribution* trophy was awarded to A White in recognition of his ongoing work in supporting the LDAC and both the Lynher River Association and Lynher hatchery.

Keepsake trophies were also given to 2018 winners.

No nominations were received for the Junior Achievement or Brown Trout trophies in 2018.

## **10. Any Other Business**

RW: presented a letter from the Chairman of the FRA (Dr W Smith). The letter noted that the previous Secretary of the FRA (J Evans) had retired in 2018 and a successor had yet to be found. This was a critical role and it was noted that the remaining directors/officers could not be expected continue to run the FRA effectively if additional support was not forthcoming.

Volunteers were therefore asked to step forward to enable the FRA to continue its key work in coordinating river issues with various institutions and parties. This work was recognized as being of fundamental importance to the wellbeing of the river and to the other clubs and riparian owners.

No other AOB items were brought to the attention of the meeting.

## **11. Guest Speakers**

Dr Bruce Stockley (WRT) provided an interesting overview of the activities that WRT were undertaking in 2018.

- Firstly he wanted to comment on the value of the fry surveys that provided a comprehensive picture of Fowey river health. In doing so he noted the investment in these works by the FRA. It was his opinion that the efforts of the FRA were some of the best seen across the other 12 river associations he worked with regularly in the southwest.
- The 2017 survey showed no Salmon juveniles at any sites on the Cardinham but after the tree block was removed the 2018 survey showed good numbers of fry had returned. Additionally the 2018 survey showed the presence of juveniles above Ladyvale Bridge, this was the first time that salmon juveniles had been found that high up and this followed the installation of a re-engineered area of the bridge to encourage fish through the small conduits below.
- Water4growth was progressing and part of this work is to create refuges in the St Neot River to protect hatchery progeny. This was especially critical as SWW releases from the reservoir in the summer often resulting in torrential water flows that could easily destroy the future salmon stocks - noting that flow rates often exceeded the theoretical maximum swim speed of salmon parr.
- Fish-passage work had taken place on the Fowey at Palmers Bridge, where 6 tonnes of sand had recently been removed. Additional work utilising the water pump provided to FRA would now be possible and this could improve river habitat considerably.
- Repairs to Bodmin Parkway weir had been completed. The work would aid the passage of fish both entering the catchment and leaving it. Additional work had been done to improve the chances for smolts to more easily manage the barrier.
- Work in 2019 would now focus on the Glynn, Ashford and Kilham weirs. Permitting was now underway to facilitate those works. Additional survey work would also be carried out on the Trago weirs.

- It was felt that that the telephone app initiative had been a success in the Angling Passport scheme with 40% of bookings now being paperless. It was hoped that Colliford reservoir would soon be added to the scheme.

In response to a question from RG, BS agreed that the effect of water abstraction at Restormel acting as a barrier to migration should be investigated further. It was noted that Restormel must be passable to fish in 95% of water levels and this was unlikely to be the case today.

Further discussion took pace on wider river management issues

- DW asked how success of all our in-river works could be best monitored. BS stated that fry survey work would be the most immediate way to show that efforts were having a positive impact. He underlined his earlier comments that the FRA work was having a positive impact.
- RG asked whether the Camel was having fry survey work undertaken. BS advised that the EA were undertaking some work in the river.
- RW asked whether blank sites in the WRT fry survey data sheets showed lack of data or inconsistencies in returning to the same sites *year-on-year*. BS advised that these blanks were left to input the EA survey results – but that these data sets were not generally available at the time of release of the WRT results. They would be incorporated in due course.
- RW discussed the issue of tree removal from rivers and it was noted that tying back trees rather than removing them altogether created refuge habitat that enabled parr to survive predation more successfully.
- RW noted that the Warleggan needing gravel cleaning on upper flatter areas. In the lower reaches gravel was absent altogether as the steep river had eroded it.

### **RAFFLE**

The AGM was followed by a successful club raffle organised

by Messrs. N and D White. Proceeds raised amounted to £85.00p.

In closing the Chairman thanked all for their attendance and input. He wished them success in the season ahead.

***The 2019 AGM of the LDAC was brought to a close at 21.45 hrs.***