

Liskeard and District Angling Club

Annual General Meeting

2014

1. Call to Order

The meeting, held at Liskeard Constitutional Club, was called to order at 19.35hrs on 11th February 2014, with R Williams (Chair) and A White (presiding).

2. Members not in Attendance

Apologies for absence received from Messrs J White, B Smith, J Evans, R Dean and R Furniss.

3. Approval of 2012 AGM minutes

Following adoption by the Committee (30th April 2013) and their publication on the website in May 2013 no comments have been received. A motion was therefore made by R Williams to approve the minutes of the 12th February 2013 AGM meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

4. Matters Arising from 2012 AGM Minutes

Award of small keepsake trophies for annual trophy awards; approved by Committee and to be implemented at this AGM.

5. Officers' Reports

i) Chairmans Report (R Williams)

The Chair reported that the 2013 season had been difficult from a fishing point of view. The year had started with poor conditions on the river due to low water and this situation persisted until late in the summer. As a result the fishing was hard and few sea trout were caught.

The low water persisted into the autumn and salmon were rarely seen. Those present became increasingly stale. This, when coupled with abnormally high water temperatures meant that there were increasing reports of fungal infection on the few fish seen and caught. This situation was also noted on other SW rivers.

Whilst the counter had shown that numbers of salmon and sea trout

were higher than last year fish had clearly run through the river system without stopping.

From a conservation point of view the Club had worked hard on improving habitat in tributaries, clearing trash dams and opening pools previously obstructed by fallen trees. Financial assistance from WRT and FRA was gratefully acknowledged. Members were also thanked for their support at work parties.

It was reported that the Club had not met its salmon catch/return target of 66% on the River Lynher in the 2012 season. It was acknowledged that anglers catching single salmon would not be expected to return their first fish but regrettably a number of anglers had taken in excess of their allowance. In one case this led to expulsion from the club for life.

Members were reminded that releasing fish was the best way to sustain stocks and they were urged to release any undamaged and lightly hooked fish whenever possible.

ii) Secretary (P Jordan)

The Secretary reported that, once again no fishing leases were lost and that, with the addition of the new Speck Beat on the Lynher the Club members now have access to a total of 36.75km (over 23 miles) of fishing on 5 rivers in east Cornwall.

The Club remains grateful to the many riparian owners that kindly support LDAC in providing sporting amenities to the local population of Cornwall and further afield. Committee members visited 97% of them personally during the year to help ensure key relationships were established and maintained. These visits are used to update the owners on improvements and maintenance carried out on their beat(s) and to discuss the general health of the river, its productivity and the Club's long-term plans.

Members were advised that the Club insurance cover had changed in 2014. From February 1st, 2014 the Club is insured through the Angling Trust partner-of-choice, Insure4Sport. This change has been brought about as membership of Angling Trust (and Fish Legal) requires angling insurance be taken as an all-inclusive package. It does mean that the Club can no longer provide 3rd party liability cover for individual members. Comprehensive work party insurance remains in place. This change has resulted in a significant saving of >£350 pa to the club. Please note that members do still have the opportunity to take out individual cover by joining the Angling Trust directly.

The Club has benefited tremendously from the high turnout of

members to assist in working parties. A total of 104 half-days were contributed in 2013. This enabled extensive improvement work to be carried out on

- i) Cutting of trees adjoining the A38 in Lewarne Wood. Many thanks in particular to Chris Jane who led the other members that turned out in the wet and cold to work with the Highways Agency during the night closures on the A38 in February and November.
- ii) Clearing of many trash dams and log jams in the River Fowey at both Lewarne and Dennicksball.
- iii) The 6 working parties also improved access and cleared debris in Dogleg and Wotton Farm on the Lynher, and at Ashford, Doublebois, Jacks and Halfway on the Fowey.

Members who turned out were thanked and the Secretary unashamedly requested that there be as good, if not better turnout in 2014. Dates for the up-coming working parties are published in the Annual Newsletter.

The Annual and mid-year Newsletters were both distributed to over 70% of members electronically for the first time. This led to a direct saving of some £200.00 in postage and printing costs. These reductions help to keep down annual subscriptions, help pay for the Club running costs and, of course, for renting more fishing. The Club will, of course, continue to mail news items to members who do not have access to email – but these are increasingly becoming the minority.

Members were, once again, asked to take a regular look at the Club website – to find out latest news, beat changes, forms, maps and benefits.

Q: A Comber: Could the club prepare a work programme for volunteers for up to a year in advance to allow people to schedule attendance?

A: It was stated that the annual newsletter set out the work party dates in the prior December and that it was not possible to do more than that.

Q: A Comber: Use of the internet was putting pressure on members to do their own printing. Could this be rectified?

A: The Secretary pointed out that all members who wished to receive communications by mail could do so by asking. However the Club was moving increasingly to Internet communication to save time and money. Those members who provided their Internet details were assumed to prefer to use that media for correspondence.

iii) Treasurer (T Sobey)

Membership levels were not as high as the previous year, dropping by approximately 10%. 2013 membership comprising 191 full, 15 junior and 9 life members. The Committee is keen to see full membership levels rise to their pre-recession level (225). This is important, as the ever-rising fixed costs of the club have to be covered by the income generated from membership dues.

The Treasurer reviewed the statement of income and expenditure to 31st December 2013 and illustrated that the club finances were generally in good order. With the reduced membership in 2013 an overall loss of £707.45p was reported, attributable in part to one-off capital cost expenditures on a new beat. This was the first reported loss for the Club in many years.

It was noted that 2014 rental increases would be higher than subscription cost increases and the Club would need to carefully control costs to prevent a further financial loss in the coming year.

It is noted that inflation increases will generally require annual rises to keep up with increased cost of fishing rentals and ongoing costs such as insurance and general administration costs. There is no alternative.

iv) Auditor (J Shearsmith)

The Club auditor recommended the accounts for approval and commended the Treasurer for his work. He further noted that the membership levels were key to sustaining the club finances.

Approval of the 2013 Accounts: proposed N White and seconded by B Elliot. Approved unanimously.

6. Other Reports

Hatcheries

Lynher Hatchery (A White)

A White reported on the Lynher Hatchery. With flooding prior to Christmas, the hatchery found itself up to 18" deep in water inside the building. The associated contamination and unseasonably high water temperatures appear to have resulted in the loss of a number of brood stock as treatment regimes that have previously worked were no longer effective.

Two hen fish were stripped early in January (2014) and 15,000 eggs were fertilized. One of the hen fish produced far larger eggs than normal, suggesting it may have originated from the Tamar.

Regrettably no further eggs were stripped from other hens as the cock fish all failed to produce any more milt. All the remaining fish were therefore returned to the river in the hope that they would find mates and breed naturally over the winter.

Water temperatures have now dropped slightly and we must hope that this trend continues to ensure later hatching; experience in 2013 showed that rapid hatching (brought on by higher water temperatures) often led to swim-up fry dying in large numbers.

The workload of the hatchery now falls on just four people and it is vital that we find some more volunteers to ensure the long-term viability of the hatchery.

Fowey hatchery (R Grieve)

FRA: RG highlighted the work done by the FRA in protecting and improving the river and its habitat. This was achieved through

- i) Direct intervention with SWW to ensure appropriate financial support for the St Neot mitigation
- ii) Habitat improvements including gravel cleaning and bankside vegetation
- iii) Identifying problems for resident trout, juvenile and migratory fish including remedial actions on trash dams, obstructions, pollution incidents and other threats such as farming in the catchment.
- iv) Liaising with outside organisations (EA, Forestry Commission, Highways Agency, SWW)
- v) Funding surveys
- vi) Attending Regional Groups to share best practise
- vii) Supporting hatchery work

It was stated that the LDAC, as the principal fishing interest on the river, held a number of officers' positions in the FRA and had considerable voting power.

Members were reminded that the FRA AGM is scheduled for 16th April 2014 at the Stable Block, Boconnoc Estate and that attendance was open to all LDAC members.

Fowey Hatchery: This was part of the FRA work stream and an integral part of the St Neot mitigation plan.

In 2013 Justin Ruscombe King had kindly offered the use of the Trafalgar Hatchery in Boscastle. This was agreed with the FRA

(July 2013) and the hatchery was made ready. Logistical support was put in place and fishing days agreed.

Two hens and three cocks were taken as brood-stock in October. Thereafter fishing became increasingly difficult and very few additional fish were collected. All those collected came from LDAC waters.

The paucity of fresh brood-stock fish became more critical as the fish held in the tanks became infected with fungus and this was not treatable with pyceze treatment

Despite a fishing extension being agreed with the EA for after-season fishing, it was becoming clear that the level of disease in the river, the difficulty of keeping healthy brood-stock and the lateness of the season would not lead to a successful hatchery programme. With agreement between the EA and the FRA it was concluded that the salmon hatchery would cease operations on 19th December 2013. As a result no fish were stripped and therefore there will be no juvenile fish to raise this year.

Of the 8 fish donated to the hatchery 4 fatalities were recorded but the remaining fish were returned alive to the river in the hope that they would spawn naturally.

Sincere thanks are due to all those people who helped with the programme, particularly Justin Ruscombe King.

Any decision about a 2014 programme will be made in the July FRA meeting when the position over SWW funding for the St Neot will be clearer.

7. Election of Officers

A White (presiding) commended the current Committee for their efforts in 2013 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. No other nominations were forthcoming from the floor.

Proposal: To re-elect the 4 officers; proposed by C Pinnel and seconded by W Elliot. Unanimously approved.

All officers duly elected.

8. Election of Committee Members

The Chairman (R Williams) advised that with the resignation of Messrs Tucker and Johns two Committee vacancies had now arisen. Nominations were sought from the floor.

Nomination: J Hake: proposed N White, seconded D John.
Nomination: T Coleman: proposed P Jordan, seconded C Pinnel.

Proposal: Re-election of existing committee members and the two new candidates, proposed by N White, seconded by J Cole. Unanimously approved.

New Committee duly elected.

The Chairman thanked both outgoing Committee members for their considerable support to the Club over many years. The members expressed their gratitude with a public vote of thanks.

9. Presentation of trophies

The Committee received the following nominations for trophies during 2013 season.

i) Salmon Cup: T Sobey for a 15lb Fowey salmon caught on 26th October 2013 at Dennicksball. The Committee awarded the Salmon trophy to T Sobey.

ii) Glencross Sea Trout Cup: J Hake for a 10lb Fowey sea trout caught on 1st June 2013 at Ashford. The Committee awarded the Sea Trout trophy to J Hake.

iii) Brown Trout Trophy: P Jordan for a 2lb 2oz Seaton brown trout caught on 29th July 2013 at Seaton. The Committee awarded the Brown Trout trophy to P Jordan.

iv) The Lynher Contribution trophy was awarded to N Lintott by the Committee; in recognition for his continued generosity and hard work in hosting the Lynher Salmon Hatchery. A vote of thanks were made at this time to all other members who worked so hard in supporting this important element of Lynher conservation.

No nominations were received for the Junior Achievement Trophy in 2013.

Keepsake trophies were given to both 2012 and 2013 trophy winners' in line with the action arising from the previous AGM.

10. Any Other Business

W Elliot suggested that catch/return forms might be distributed with LDAC season tickets. Committee agreed to review this proposal but pointed out that paper copies had already been distributed to all

members who were not on the Internet along with their annual newsletter. Other members could download and print the forms from the website as normal.

G Hake advised that there was an error on the closed season dates printed on this form – the Secretary undertook to correct the error.

There was a question from the floor regarding the status of the Lynher webcam. The Committee was aware that the 3rd Party provider had not replaced this and noted that both convenient access and funding were part of the issue to hand. The Committee would enquire further.

11. Guest Speakers

i) M Harmer/Bruce Stockley (WRT)

Mr Harmer provided an overview of the work that had been carried out in 2013 between WRT and LDAC in providing safer angler access and overall enhancement of the visitor angling experience on LDAC waters. This work was match-funded through the Country Sports SW initiative; whereby LDAC volunteer time was recoverable in the form of capital cost contributions. These funds had been used to purchase materials for building bridging, steps, styles and fencing - all of which had now been installed on a number of beats on both the Fowey and Lynher rivers.

Dr Stockley provided an overview of WRT *Upstream Thinking Initiative*. This work focused on improving the health of fish in the Fowey catchment through water quality management.

This was achieved through the identification of win-win activities that directly impacted the quality of water extracted from the river by SWW. Examples of improved farming practice, fencing, silage treatment and land management were used to illustrate the leverage small grants can make to improving water quality. A total of £360,000 had been spent in 2013, creating better rivers and better water. This had a direct positive impact on fishing in the Fowey.

Dr Stockley further illustrated the work carried out by WRT on walk-up surveys and electro-fishing; leading to detailed maps that showed the distribution of trout and salmon parr across the catchment. These maps could be used to identify blockages to salmon migration (eg Ladyvale Bridge) and critical areas for protection of redds/gravel beds.

Q: R Laskbrook enquired as to whether the Ladyvale Bridge was indeed a problem. He noted that sea trout had always spawned

above the bridge and that salmon diverted to the nearby Callywith tributary. He was further concerned that opening up such a blockage might lead to detrimental competition for redds between salmon and sea trout.

A: WRT agreed that they would consider this information in any plan to resolve Ladyvale.

Q: Other members enquired as to the immediacy of improvements in the system and the longevity of the effects of Upstream Thinking initiatives.

A: Dr Stockley advised that immediate improvements could be mapped (after silage work practices had changed) and noted that covenants were in place to ensure future landowners were not empowered to make regressive changes to improvements funded by WRT.

ii) **S Toms (EA)**

S Toms provided an interesting overview of his recent trip to Greenland as part of DEFRA funded work in support of the Salsea Project, a NASCO initiatives. (www.nasco.int).

Work is being carried out sampling at sea, tracking of individual fish and applying technology to understand the affects of aquaculture and the relative importance and geographical distribution of migration pathways into the North Atlantic from European waters.

The trip to Greenland had been undertaken to specifically sample salmon from the Labrador Sea catchment area; to understand the health of these fish and to see what controls were in place to mitigate the damage of local fishing on international salmon stocks.

The talk was well illustrated and showed that Greenland had few controls on local fishing practices. Greenland, as part of Denmark, was not controlled by EU regulations and plans to increase both human population and fishing quotas may put Atlantic salmon stocks under more threat in the future.

The Atlantic salmon in this fishery are however, in excellent health. Mr Toms drew attention to the contra-indications found between the health of these MSW fish and the poor(er) health of the grilse population that tended to migrate to nursery areas west of Norway (Davis Straits).

The Chairman thanked Messrs. Stockley, Harmer and Toms for their interesting and informative talks. He also thanked Club members for their attendance and involvement in the AGM and club matters.

The AGM was followed by a successful club raffle organised once again by V Lamb. All proceeds raised will go towards the purchase of a new Brown Trout Trophy.

Roger Lashbrook's and Fishing Mayhem were both thanked by the Chairman for their generous donations to the club raffle this year and for their efforts in selling visitor tickets on behalf of the Club.

The 2014 AGM of the LDAC was brought to a close at 22.15hrs.