

Liskeard and District Angling Club

Annual General Meeting

February 2018

1. Call to Order/Welcome

The meeting, held at Liskeard Constitutional Club, was called to order at 19.30hrs on 13th February 2018, with R Williams (in the Chair) and with A White (presiding).

- Silent tribute to Bill Eliot
- AW welcomed all to the well attended 2018 AGM and noted that most members would be aware of the Salmon Stock Consultation launch by the EA after the worst recorded catches of 2015. Responses to the document were made by the local River Associations, SWRA and the club. No doubt many members had also responded individually.

Following the Consultation the EA has considered all responses and its overall proposals will be published later this month. Aside from this, voluntary EA proposals have been placed before the Club Committee relating to the removal of the remaining net on the river Fowey and accompanying changes to rod angling, many of which may become the basis of our future salmon angling.

Whilst it is not the place of the President to comment on the proposals and the Club's response thereto, he emphasised that this matter has occupied much Committee time and frank discussion. Following this the Club established a formal response to the FRA/EA.

The response placed the continuing wellbeing of the Club as its prime concern, and whilst some content may not find favour with all members, the Committee has carried out its responsibilities to the full in this matter.

Their job has been far from easy and he urged members to bear this in mind when the matter is discussed later in the agenda, and he hoped that members would give the Committee the support it deserves.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Messrs Paine, Mugridge, Dean (S) and Tuson.

3. Approval of 2017 AGM minutes

Following adoption by the Committee (on 11th April 2017) and their publication on the Club website no further comments have been received.

A motion was therefore made by R Williams, seconded by N White, to approve the minutes of the 7th February 2017 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 2018 LDAC AGM and in particular the external guests Simon Toms (from the EA) and Bruce Stockley, Dave Chapman and Bruno Vincent from WRT.

The Chairman noted that the 2017 season had started well, spring salmon and a few large sea trout being caught, aided by frequent rainfall ensuring river conditions were often favourable for fishing. Fair numbers of summer grilse and sea trout were also caught on both the Lynher and Fowey but once again the later (Autumn) run of Salmon in the two main rivers were disappointing and fresh fish were very scarce.

Despite this, intensive fishing efforts meant both hatcheries managed to meet their brood-stock quotas for the year.

The Fowey river counter figures were discussed and it was noted that the numbers were, once again, lower than the 10-year average with salmon fairing less well than sea trout. Recent in-river survey figures produced by the EA and WRT also show worrying trends. The implications are to be discussed fully under Agenda Item 5.

Heavy rain throughout this winter meant that rivers were untypically high over a longer period of time and it was hoped that this would not negatively impact on juvenile production in 2018.

The FRA has now secured much of the sanctuary area on a permanent basis and Chris Janes has resurrected the gravel cleaning to improve it. Efforts to extend sanctuary leases on other parts of the Draynes for a further 5 years have also been successful.

There is further good news:

- The Water 4 Growth Project (to be discussed by guest speaker from WRT),
- New beat maps (printable and interactive),
- New restrictive Estuary Netting bye-laws in force.

Finally RW thanked the Committee and Officers for their efforts and R Grieve for continuing to support the website.

He concluded by wishing members an enjoyable season ahead.

ii) Secretary (P Jordan)

The Secretary noted that the Committee had met 5 times in the year and that their attendance had been excellent.

Key issues in the year have included

- ***Renewing leases for 2018 and beyond***

- The Coodes Lease for the Ashford Beat on the Fowey to be extended for 3 more years.
- 4 leases on the Lynher. With positive responses already received from 3 of the riparian owners. It is felt likely that all will be satisfactorily negotiated before the beginning of the season.
- **No additional fishing** rights came to the market during the year.
- **Access at Turnpike Cottage** (Newbridge, Lynher) is proving problematic as new owners' are now in residence. A site meeting has taken place and whilst the Club's legal rights are assured we will try to conclude the dispute without resorting to legal intervention. Please bear this in mind if accessing above the road bridge.
- Other news
 - **LDAC organised the Trout and Salmon Magazine writers visit to the Fowey in August 2017.** This was part of the push to recruit new members. Whilst the river proved out of sorts (with only one salmon taken by the fishing party) an excellent piece was published advertising the efforts of the hatchery at Colliford. Hopefully the publicity will be reflected in new membership enquiries.
 - **EA salmon consultation:** Liaison and lobbying of the FRA. More to follow under Item 5 of the agenda
 - **Looe-Liskeard cycleway:** The Club met with the project manager for this tourism project. It was clear their proposals would have a major impact on the fishing environment along the West Looe beat we rent from the Duchy. Our concerns have been fed back to the Duchy and the Project Team. It is hoped that these objections will result in a new route being found.
 - **Beaver re-introduction in Cornwall:** Cornwall Wildlife Trust has now established a small beaver breeding colony on the Tresillian River at Ladock.

Feedback was given to WRT, SWRA and the FRA. Despite objections this private project was launched in June 2017.

- **Emergency Bye-law on the Camel** published to Club website: to remain in force until end October 2018.
- **Website Manager:** Pleased to advise that Richard Grieve has agreed to continue to support the website even though he has departed the Committee. He has our thanks for this important role.

- Don't forget
 - **Roadford Fishing Fair (24th February 2018)**
 - **FRA AGM (11th April 2018)** at Boconnoc. Members 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.
 - **LDAC work parties have started.** Please support all the others and improve your fishing. The Newsletter has all the dates in it. Wotton is next Sunday.....we look forward to another good turnout.

- And finally
 - **As ever we need your latest email and postal address** if we are going to keep in touch with you. That's in your hands, not ours....

iii) Treasurer (T Sobey)

The Treasurer presented and reviewed the P&L account for year ending December 31st 2017.

It was noted that exceptional capital purchase items (the purchase of Hendergrove and a significant contribution towards the FRA purchase of much of the Draynes sanctuary)

had necessarily depleted the club's capital reserve by some £12,000.00). This, when coupled with shrinking membership numbers, had placed the club under some financial strain.

Despite this, Club fees (for 2018) had been increased marginally (£2.50 pa for adults) and all other subscriptions/day/weekly tickets had been frozen.

Following consultation with riparian owners the majority have agreed to forego the annual RPI increase we normally provide in the rents payable. The Club thanks them for their generosity and continued support.

iv) Auditor (J Shearsmith)

The Club auditor noted the strain on Club reserves and stated that membership numbers needed to be sustained or financial pressures would increase. He recommended the 2017 accounts for approval and commended the Treasurer for his excellent work.

Proposal to approve the 2017 Accounts: Proposed by P Jordan, seconded by D White. APPROVED unanimously.

5. 2018 Voluntary Fishing Restrictions (RW/ST)

Rob Williams reflected on the current state of salmon and sea trout stocks in the SW and in the Club's waters in particular. He noted that the Fowey was now classed as *probably at risk*. He reviewed the various EA initiatives (2018 Fowey NLO/salmon consultation, 5 point plan) and the Camel bye-law and advised members of the anticipated outcome of an NLO of zero on the Fowey by spring of 2018.

On that basis the Committee has decided to voluntarily implement the following rules for all members of LDAC for the 2018 season on the Fowey.

- Season to close on 30th November
- Hooks
 - No trebles
 - No circle hooks

- Bait fishing
 - Single barbless hooks at all times
 - No worming for salmon before June 16th / after 31st Aug
 - Prawn /Shrimp permitted all season
- Spinning
 - Single barbless hooks after 31st August
- Catch/Release (***Catchment-wide limit***, 90% target)
 - Return first salmon
 - Retain maximum of 1 salmon *pa*
 - Retain maximum of 10 sea trout *pa* (2 *pd*, 4 *pw*)
 - Return all sea trout under 1.5lb and over 4lbs - lengths to be advised

He **further** noted that

- The rules would be ***implemented across all rivers/beats that the Club has access to*** - to prevent over-exploitation of other rivers
- That apart from the Fowey all other river seasons' remain unchanged
- ***To become effective March 1st 2018.***
These rules replace current catch limitations as printed on season tickets
- Members will be notified by post/email by 1st March 2018.

Simon Toms (EA) provided some background to the EA request for the FRA/Clubs to adopt the voluntary measures at this time. Catch/release figures for 2016/17 were compared in several SW rivers and it was shown that salmon were *probably at risk* in the Fowey catchment. He indicated that rod catches were now representing between 25-30% of all Fowey salmon entering the catchment and that these voluntary agreements would hopefully provide salmon with a breathing space to recover their numbers. He also noted the importance of protecting the sea trout from over exploitation as the salmon angling effort was

reduced. He further noted that supportive (non-angling) measures were also being implemented including

- EA pressing for an NLO of zero on the Fowey
- New IFCA bye-laws that had been passed restricting almost all commercial netting in SW estuaries
- Increased cooperation/resource pool between EA/IFCA to reduce poaching

The new rules were discussed at length and members asked for a number of clarifications

- **Limits on hook sizes:** ST (EA) advised that likely restrictions would follow with publication of the National Salmon plan. At the moment anglers were expected to use their good judgement
- Were **double hooks allowed for fly fishing:** Yes
- Could **sea trout lengths be advised** to enable anglers to quickly judge the weight of sea trout: Yes, this would be included as part of the information sheet to follow.

BREAK (21.00 hrs)

6. Other Reports

i) FRA Hatchery (R Grieve)

- Thanked LDAC for continued support for the hatchery.
- Noted the good collaboration between EA/SWW/FRA/WRT in making the hatchery successful
- Noted the first year of operation with good outputs
- Noted that brood-stock had been collected from across most of the catchment for 2018
- Provided an interested commentary on some of the lessons learned from the first year of operation. It had, for instance, become clear that water temperature was critical in hatching and normal fry

development. To this end an innovative and cost effective chilling system had been installed which re-circulated chilled water across egg trays, thereby reducing the volumes required. This concept had also been transferred to the Lynher hatchery as best practice.

- Recommended the excellent short film (Lost at Sea) as an interesting learning tool for all salmon anglers.
- Noted the importance of judging the hatchery and its success on facts, not supposition. In particular he touched on the motivational impact negative statements could have on the small pool of volunteers that kept the hatchery going.

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

AW gave a brief overview of the Lynher Hatchery activities including

- The 2017 output of 30,000 fry
- The cost of the operation being solely dependent upon donations and acknowledged the contributions made by LDAC in sustaining the operation
- 65,000 eggs in 2018, stripped from 8 fish
- That hatching had progressed well with just 4% losses – aided by lower water temperatures.

D White proposed a vote of thanks to all the volunteers who supported the work of both hatcheries. This was endorsed by all present.

7. Election of Officers (AW)

A White (presiding) commended the current Officers and Committee for their efforts in 2017 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 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 M Daly. Unanimously APPROVED.

All current Officers duly re-elected.

8. Election of Committee Members (RW)

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

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

All current Committee members were duly re-elected.

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

Nominations had been received from Jason Drew, Peter Tuson and David Paine by the date of the AGM. No further nominations were forthcoming from the floor.

Proposal: To elect the 3 new Committee members; proposed by M Daly and seconded by N White. Unanimously APPROVED.

3 new Committee members duly elected.

The Chairman thanked the retiring Committee member (C Bryant) for his help and support during his 5 years on the Committee.

9. Presentation of Club Trophies

The Committee had received the following nominations for trophies during the 2017 season.

- *Salmon Cup: J Hake for a 17lb Fowey salmon caught on 1st November 2017 on the Fowey at Doublebois. The Committee awarded the Salmon trophy to J*

Hake.

- *Glencross Sea Trout Cup*: S Dean for an 8lb sea trout caught on the Fowey at Dennicksball on 9th August 2017. The Committee awarded the Sea Trout trophy to S Dean.
- Brown Trout trophy jointly awarded to
 - J Drew for a 3lb brown trout from the Harann Beat on the Lynher (30th April 2017) *and*
 - R Grieve for a 3lb brown trout from the Fowey at Dennicksball (7th December 2017)
- *The Lynher Contribution* trophy was awarded to C Janes in recognition of his ongoing work in supporting the Draynes Sanctuary and his unstinting commitment to the Club.

No nomination was received for the Junior Achievement Trophy in 2017.

Keepsake trophies were given to 2017 winners.

10. Any Other Business

No 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

- Noted the issue of beavers being re-introduced into a river catchment in Cornwall. He was concerned that there was limited understanding of the impact of damming on migratory fish and an absence of knowledge about the salmonid trout populations in the Tresillian river. He noted that due to the PR issues around re-introducing native species back into the environment we would see likely further initiatives. The lack of a requirement for any licencing for trials (in reserves) were considered worrying – but it was noted that subsequent wild releases would require permits from Natural England.

- WRT had spent considerable personnel resource in engaging with the current round of consultations regarding national salmon action plans
- Had undertaken further electro-fishing surveys on the Fowey and noted the importance of having a good data-base to fully understand catchment-wide issues. He noted the example of an un-cleared trash dam on the Cardinham. In position for some 18 months the dam had become impermeable to fish passing and electro fishing had shown a complete absence of parr above the dam. This had now been cleared by the Forestry Commission and future electro-fishing should show positive results. He noted that there was no substitute to **“eyes on the river”** and urged the members to report obstructions and issues to the Committee for action.
- Water 4 growth was underway 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.
- Fish passage surveys had identified 4 Fowey weirs (Bodmin Parkway, Glynn, Ashford and Treverbyn) as warranting a *sniffer protocol* to ascertain whether they required additional work for baffles, fish passes etc. If so talks with the EA and land owners would need to take place to agree future works to make the obstructions more passable for migrating fish. The concept was that minimal increases in each weir’s *passability* would produce an overall significant positive improvement in *passability* across the entire river system.
- WRT had produced a new set of interactive maps for LDAC waters and these would be uploaded to the Club website shortly. Once operational members would be able (subject to signal) to access maps at the riverside and identify beats, parking etc.

- Building the sport for the future entailed attracting youngsters to the sport. It was felt that that telephone apps to promote ease of access to fishing through the Angling Passport Scheme would attract tech-savvy youngsters to try the sport. To this end a new app had been launched.

RAFFLE

The AGM was followed by a successful club raffle organised by Messrs. C Bryant and D White. Proceeds raised amounted to £146.00p.

In closing the Chairman thanked all for their attendance and inputs. He wished them success in the season ahead and asked that members' feed back their experiences and issues regarding the implementation of the new rules. These comments would then be used to inform the annual review process with the EA

The 2018 AGM of the LDAC was brought to a close at 22.30 hrs.