

Liskeard and District Angling Club

Annual General Meeting

16th February 2024

1. Call to Order/Welcome

The AGM, being held at Liskeard Constitutional Club, was called to order at 19.30hrs on 16th February 2024, with J Hake in the Chair.

The President (AW) welcomed those attending noting

- His thanks to those present for their continued support of the Club.
- He further noted that the Officers/Committee had discharged their responsibilities efficiently and the Club continues to function in the best interests of the membership.
- He noted that the continued support of riparian owners was critical to the future of the Club and he extended the Club's thanks to them for their understanding.
- He noted the continued fall in LDAC Club membership numbers but in doing so recognised that all angling clubs, be they game, coarse or sea angling, were facing the same drop in membership and rise in costs.
- He recognised the efforts in maintaining the critical efforts in supporting the important work of both hatcheries and stated that their efforts seemed to be helping to hold stock numbers level despite downward pressure on them from pollution, abstraction, predation and commercial netting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Messrs. White (D) and Coleman (T).

Twenty-two members in attendance.

3. Approval of Minutes of 2023 AGM

The minutes of the previous AGM (10th February 2023) previously adopted by the Committee on 13th April 2023 and posted to the club website thereafter, were put for approval.

Minutes for approval: proposed by RW and seconded by RG: APPROVED unanimously.

It was noted that there were no matters outstanding.

4. Officers' Reports

Chairman's Report (J Hake)

The Chairman thanked all for attending the AGM.

- He noted that this had been his first year as Chairman and whilst challenging at times it had been very rewarding.
- A major early challenge had been the requirement, at very short notice, to arrange the removal of 54 diseased ash trees abutting the A38 Highway at Lewarne. The work, carried out over 2 nights and 1 day during the Highway England scheduled closure required dispensations for felling licences from Forestry England, permits to work, and volunteers; all procured with 4 days. Having safely carried out the work the woods were then fit for sale at an auction 2 weeks thereafter. A successful sale was testament to the sterling efforts of the Committee and he wished to thank all those who assisted.
- He noted the excellent efforts of both Hatchery teams, recognising that with these facilities in place the Club was better positioned than most nationally to support salmon stocks.
- Better water conditions in 2023 encouraged out anglers to try their luck early in the season. Salmon were seen and caught in good numbers but sea trout were all but absent from our rivers during the whole of 2023. This is

of considerable concern to the Club as these fish are the “*bread and butter*” of the membership and lower catches inevitably results in loss of members.

- He noted the efforts of the Committee in running the Club on behalf of all the members and of the volunteers that have turned out to clear debris, pathways and rivers so that the 2024 season fishing could start in good shape.

ii) Secretary (P Jordan)

- The Secretary provided an update on the pressures being faced on the River Fowey as a result of drought and lack of netting protections.
- SWW had put in place restrictions on water usage in 4Q 2022, carrying these forward into 2023.
- With approximately 500,000 residents SWW has to cope with an influx of a further 1.5mm users during summer months. This puts inordinate pressure on infrastructure and water supply. This is exacerbated by low rainfall and drought conditions.
- Inevitably this leads to raised abstraction levels from the Fowey. Whilst these can be managed on a temporary basis SWW were looking to apply for a (new) permanent licence to increase annual uptake by nearly 30%.
- This would have been calamitous for the river and its salmonid stocks. As a result work took place to gather abstraction data, scientific papers from the EA and historic analyses of Colliford reservoir releases.
- It became apparent that the *floor-flow-rate* (1.207 cumecs, effectively the *hands-off* flow rate), below which SWW cannot take any riverine water from the Fowey was set dangerously low. This means that little or no freshet water (spate water) ever reaches the estuary in the summer and stranded salmonids do not receive the encouragement they need to migrate upstream.
- It became clear upon analysis that a floor of 1.9 cumecs would be more appropriate. This was supported by informal conversations with regulatory bodies.

- Notwithstanding SWW are, by law, currently permitted to abstract 50% of all riverine water above 1.207 cumecs. They do this in preference to releasing water from Colliford.
- Indeed the abstraction process (of lopping 50% of incremental flow) means that unless the flow in the river rises above 2.53 cumecs the estuary will NEVER receive sufficient water (1.9 cumecs) to **ensure** salmonid runs occur.
- Against this backdrop SWW were pressured to drop the new abstraction licence application because a legal challenge would have been made to reset the floor to 1.9 cumecs as a condition of increased annual abstraction. We were successful.
- Regrettably there is no challenge possible to the existing *hands-off* number of 1.207 cumecs.
- In parallel SWW are investing in new water supplies for the region. These include desalination, mine water and quarry water. Additionally SWW have purchased Hawks Tor on Bodmin Moor and are planning to abstract water from there and pump it directly into Colliford to enhance the reservoir catchment. This is of concern as the headwaters of the Warleggan are a key sea trout breeding sanctuary and that could be starved of input from a *lower* Hawks Tor water level. SWW have nonetheless recently applied for a 1-month trial licence to monitor the impact on the Warleggan during abstraction and the issue is being closely monitored by the EA, FRA and LDAC.
- Meanwhile, in a *perfect-storm* scenario C-IFCA have decided not to pursue the salmonid netting protection by law in St Austells Bay and elsewhere around the coast of Cornwall. This important work, despite having had several years of extensive consultation has now been cancelled under the “*too difficult to do*” category following extensive political lobbying of ministers by the commercial fishing fleets.
- As a result there will be **no** new inshore restrictions....*no new near shore exclusion zones, no deeper headline setting, no active by-catch reporting*) This leaves our salmonids stranded in the estuaries due

to lack of freshets; being totally exposed to being netted as by-catch or other predation.

- This is particularly pertinent for sea trout who do not migrate far from their riverine estuaries (recent Samarch study data). In the case of salmon unable to migrate upstream EA published data shows that up to 80% will give up and die at sea.
- One must wonder why C-IFCA is called the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and **Conservation** Authority?
- In better news the FFRG (Fowey Fisheries Resource Group; comprising EA, FRA and SWW) has agreed that the ever-elusive Colliford water bank can and WILL be used for the benefit of salmonid migration both upstream and downstream in the Fowey. This momentous decision has only been 10 years in the making!
- Angling Trust details have been placed in the room and members are being encouraged to join this important and effective organisation. Whilst LDAC has club membership to protect fishing the club does not provide individual insurance and this is one of the many benefits of AT membership for individuals.
- Discussions are currently underway with all riparian owners regarding rents to be paid in 2024. This means that agreement has yet to be reached on renewals but the Committee has committed to matching last years rents in order to retain fishing. However, if renewals are not possible the membership will be informed.
- In this context it is noted that Frogwell Mill Farm has recently been sold so a short stretch above Newbridge on the Lynher is no longer LDAC water.
- The Committee has functioned well during the previous 12 months with attendance being good at all 4 meetings. It is noted that several vacancies exist and that a Deputy Secretary is actively being sourced. Anyone who wishes to take on any of these rewarding roles either now or in the near future should make themselves known to the Chair.

iii) Treasurer (T Sobey)

The Treasurer presented and reviewed the P&L account for

year ending November 30th 2023.

Membership numbers fell again in 2023, from 106 to 88.

Despite careful management of 2023 costs during a time of continued membership loss (and therefore income) the Club has made a net loss of £1890.00p. This excludes one-off costs and a capital injection associated with the sale of Lewarne Woods (sale price £25,000 gross).

The new (2024) applicable subscription rates are posted on the Club website and on the LDAC joining forms. Please refer to these when renewing your membership or joining the Club.

R Dean questioned whether the late joiners fee was dissuading some members from re-joining late(r) in the year. The Chair replied this was possible but it was necessary to encourage early enrollment in the Club to ensure sufficient cash flow to cover rental outgoings during 1Q.

iv) Auditor (A White)

The Club's accounts were found to be in order and thanks were due to the Treasurer for his efforts in managing the Club finances.

Motion: To approve the 2022 accounts: proposed by NW, seconded by MD.

APPROVED unanimously.

BREAK (20.30 hrs)

5. Other Reports

FRA Colliford Hatchery (R Grieve)

- RG confirmed that the 40,000 target for released fry had been reached in 2023. Approximately 25% of these had been fin-clipped.
- He discussed the importance of reporting fin-clipped fish caught on the revised simpler reporting form that

can be can be accessed on the FRA website. Without seeing more details it was looking like fewer fin-clipped fish had been reported in 2023 than in 2022. It was noted that the EA will only accept reported fin clipped fish as the necessary hard-evidence of hatchery effectiveness.

- The membership noted that the EA were running their own hatchery at Kielder and that the Tyne salmon returns were, by no accident, by far the best in the country. This was also echoed by RG in advising that the pop-up sea trout hatchery for the Axe (at Colliford) had led to that river bucking the national trend of declining sea trout stocks.
- All brood-stock (for the 2023-2024 cycle) had been collected by end November 2023 and there had been no need to seek an extension to fishing through the first two weeks of December 2023.
- SWW had raised the profile of the Colliford Hatchery with visits from the new EA Chairman and other VIP's. It was hoped that this high level of engagement/interest might have an overall positive effect on the EA's general position *vis-a-viz* non-operated hatcheries in England.
- The Club took the opportunity to congratulate the volunteers (all of whom were residents of St Neot) and, of course, RG for their efforts in providing and maintaining a first class operation at Colliford.

Lynher Hatchery (A White)

- Reported that there were currently 60,000 fertilised eggs in the Lynher Hatchery. This large number had been the result of some particularly gravid hen fish being donated.
- With all water to the Lynher hatchery needing to be pumped the electricity price was critical to the operation. Having hedged successfully for the last 3 years a new tariff has had been agreed, increasing costs marginally (+6p/kwH)
- The Hatchery was grateful for all donations received, especially the ongoing commitment by LDAC in funding £500 per year despite their financial stress.
- The Club took the opportunity to congratulate the

volunteers for their efforts in providing and maintaining a first class operation at the Lynher Hatchery.

B Dean asked whether there were any financial synergies if the 2 hatcheries were to be combined. It was explained that this was not possible as Colliford was directly funded by SWW and they had no Lynher interests.

6. Election of Club Chairman (AW)

AW took the floor to thank the current Chairman (JH) for all his efforts in the past year.

AW was tasked for nominations for Chairman for 2024.

No nominations from the floor were forthcoming but the President noted that the current Chairman would be happy to stand for re-election.

With a proposal from PJ, seconded by NW, the AGM voted unanimously to accept that nomination.

JH was duly elected as Chairman of LDAC for 2024.

7. Election of Officers (JH)

- J Hake (Chair) stated that in the absence of any new nominations from the floor NW, TS and PJ were willing to stand for re-election as the remaining officers of LDAC.

Motion: To re-elect the officers for a further year: proposed by RG, seconded by RW. *APPROVED unanimously.*

8. Election of Committee Members for 2023 (JH)

The Chairman (J Hake) advised that one Committee member was retiring (Trevor Coleman) and he wished to personally thank him for his efforts over the last 5 years.

This meant that two Committee vacancies now existed, one having previously been advertised in the Annual newsletter,

but no nominations had been received.

- A nomination was then received from the floor for B Dean to stand for election to the Committee.

Motion to elect BD to Committee; Proposed NW, seconded RW. APPROVED unanimously.

- A nomination was also tabled by the Chairman for an absent member to stand for Committee, R Bourne.

Motion to elect RB to Committee; Proposed TS, seconded NW. APPROVED unanimously.

A final motion was made to re-elect all continuing Committee members for 2024;

Proposed by RG, seconded by RW. APPROVED unanimously.

9. Presentation of trophies

The Committee had received a number of nominations for fish caught during the 2023 season.

- *The Salmon Trophy* was awarded to J Hake for a fine fish of 16lbs, caught on the Fowey on 11.5.2023
- *The Sea Trout Trophy* was awarded to J Hake for a fish of 8lb 3oz, caught on the fowey on 2.5.2023
- *The Brown Trout Trophy* was awarded to C Pearson for a fine wild trout of 2lbs caught on the Fowey on 27.7.2023
- *The Junior Trophy* was awarded to H Davy for his first ever sea trout (2 lbs) caught on the Lynher on 5.9.2023
- *The Lynher Contribution trophy* was awarded to Committee member D Paine in recognition of his tireless work in maintaining the River Inny.

10. Any Other Business

- B Dean thanked JH for his work in posting his catches onto Facebook. He felt that this was the best (free) advertising the Club could have.
- T Macfarlane asked whether the Club had considered merging with other Club(s) to reduce costs. The Secretary advised that our many rental agreements precluded such activities.
- A Comber asked for clarification on grayling fishing on the Inny. In reply the Secretary advised that coarse fishing seasons applied but that bait fishing would not be permitted.

RAFFLE

The AGM was followed by a successful club raffle organised by N White.

Proceeds raised amounted to £95.40p.

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

The 2024 AGM of the LDAC was brought to a close at 21.45 hrs.