

Liskeard and District Angling Club

Annual General Meeting

February 2016

1. Call to Order

The meeting, held at Liskeard Constitutional Club, was called to order at 19.35hrs on 9th February 2016, with R Williams (in the Chair) and with A White (presiding).

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Messrs Dean, Lynes, Leadsford, Evans, Smith, Furniss and Vincent.

3. Approval of 2015 AGM minutes

Following adoption by the Committee (14th April 2015) and their publication on the Club website no further comments have been received.

A motion was therefore made by R Williams to approve the minutes of the 10th February 2015 AGM meeting: APPROVED unanimously.

4. Matters Arising from previous AGM Minutes

- None carried forward.

5. Officers' Reports

Chairman's Report (R Williams)

The Chairman provided an overview of the 2015 season.

With a dry start to the year the river experienced low levels for some time. As a result few fish entered the rivers and sport was difficult at best. However things improved with some wet weather and fish began to be caught.

But following a cold late spring, diseased fish began to appear on both the Fowey and Lynher. Whilst this was concerning for the Club members on a regional basis we fared better than others - the disease being so prevalent on River Dart in Devon that it was closed to all fishing for the rest of the season by the EA.

By mid May the rains had finally arrived, and whilst too late for some fish, sport improved considerably. Sea trout runs were good and late spring and fresh summer salmon were seen in numbers.

By the back end of the season the season had generally been good but it was disappointing to note that the late autumn run of fish did not arrive.

By looking at the last 5 years of fry survey figures provided by the FRA (Fowey only) it is clear that there has been a significant decline in the number of juvenile salmon across the Fowey catchment. In places salmon fry numbers have shown a drop of up to 50%. This is despite all our efforts on conservation and clearly attests to the commercial pressure on fish and possibly the impact climate change is having on (increasing) water temperatures.

Whilst salmon have been struggling it is re-assuring to see that sea trout numbers (seen in the rod caught, fish counter and fry survey numbers) have held up. No doubt this is due in no small part to the work carried out in the Draynes (Fowey) and on the other rivers to improve habitat.

With continued pressure on the river fish-stocks the Committee felt it appropriate for the Club to fully adopt the new (December 2015) Fowey River Association guidelines on conservation for the Fowey River:

- *66% catch/release rate for salmon (in line with the Lynher).*
- *To take a maximum of 1 salmon daily, 2 weekly and 5 for the season maximum.*
- *To return all (unharmed) sea trout over 24"*
- *To take no more than 2 sea trout in 1 day prior to the 1st June.*
- *To take up to 4 sea trout per day after 1st June.*

Members are asked to adhere to these conservation measures with immediate effect.

(Note: Future trophy nominations will be accepted with fish measurements and a weight/measurement chart will be uploaded to the website to aid members).

The Chairman was pleased to advise that the Fowey Hatchery project was well advanced and that after a 4-year absence the Fowey will have a new salmon hatchery in place by September 2016. Further details can be found in the Hatchery Update (R Grieve) later in these minutes.

Volunteers are needed to ensure that this activity is a success and the Chairman asked every member to consider how they could best support the Club and the FRA in their endeavours to improve our fish stocks.

Additional conservation work planned for 2016 includes Draynes gravel cleaning and again the club was looking for volunteers to support this work.

He reminded members that work party efforts were rewarded with free guest tickets and he hoped that members would use this offer to help introduce new members to the Club.

Finally, the Chairman thanked his Club Officers and all the Committee Members for their continued support and hard work in the last year.

In closing he wished members a successful 2016 season.

ii) Secretary (P Jordan)

Club fishing will see another slight reduction as we enter the 2016 season – Lynher Farm (Beat 13) being sold along with the land and farm buildings; bank length dropping by a net 800m; the club now leasing or owning 34 kms (21.5 miles) of fishing rights spread over six local rivers.

During 2016 several other parcels of fishing will be subject to further negotiation:

- A Fowey river beat that the Club has rented for some time is coming to the market and the Club has expressed interest in purchasing it. It is hoped that these negotiations will secure the fishing for the Club in perpetuity. Failure to agree an acceptable price would result in the fishing being lost – possibly during the 2016 season. Updates will be provided on the Club website – please visit it regularly to keep *up-to-date* with your fishing.
- The Duchy fishing on the River Inny; (Beat 19/Tebullet) and the West Looe (Beat 20, Herodsfoot/Lantundle Wood). These beats are the subject of renewed discussions as the Duchy seeks to renegotiate the lease. Members debated the level of usage of these beats and it was agreed by all that the club should endeavour to ensure they remained available to the Club.

Other developments include

- Highways England purchase of the roadside (for 50m, opposite South Lodge) and embankment alongside Beat 6 (Lewarne Woods). This sale will slightly reduce the Club liability for tree maintenance along the A38. Due to the low value/area of land involved there will not be a marked increase in club cash reserves. Highways England has undertaken to plant a screen to minimise intrusion into our fishing.
- Replanting of the roadside west of the Lewarne pull-in by highways England following necessary roadside coppicing in 2015.

Club insurance was an issue during 2015 after one riparian owner was asked for a significant sum for (additional) insurance cover to allow visitors (ie Club members) to access their land to fish. With some timely intervention by the Club Treasurer this situation has been resolved - but members are reminded that ***the Club provides no insurance cover whilst fishing on owned or rented beats and members fish at their own risk.***

The Club has benefited from a good turnout of members to assist in working parties so far this year. This is an important element of our work as the efforts ensure good access and maintenance of

our riverbanks. Please do try to turn out for the remaining work parties in 2016 – they are advertised in your newsletter and on the website.

One entry for the Christmas crossword competition had been received (from Mrs K Sobey) and her efforts were rewarded with the presentation of a small prize. If members want to find the answers to the crossword they are posted on the Club website.

Members were reminded to take a regular look at the up-dated Club website – to find out latest news, any beat changes, get forms, maps and see benefits.

Members were also reminded to let the Secretary know if their contact details or email addresses changed during the year. Without this club correspondence would inevitably be sent out to the wrong addressee.

iii) Treasurer (T Sobey)

The Treasurer reviewed the 2015 profit/loss account for the Club and provided a breakdown of expenditures and income for the year to 31st December 2015.

He illustrated that the finances were in fair order and that the Club had shown a slight surplus (£1,010) for 2015. This was particularly gratifying when seen against the pressure of reduced membership numbers.

2015 membership levels were down on 2014 levels. For the 2015 season the club had eleven (11) life members, fourteen (14) junior members and one hundred and seventy six (176) full members (adults/disabled).

Total club membership therefore stood at a total of two hundred and one for 2015 (*cf* two hundred and seventeen in 2014). An additional 20 beat and complimentary season tickets were also issued to riparian owners as part of lease agreements.

2016 cost/rental increases are estimated to rise by some 4% (over 2015 levels) and subscription for adult members are to rise by £2.00 *pa* to cover this (+2.%). All other ticket rates have been held at 2015 levels. Up-dated ticket prices and membership details are

available on the club website at www.ldac.org.uk

iv) Auditor (J Shearsmith)

The Club auditor recommended the 2015 accounts for approval and commended the Treasurer for his work.

Approval of the 2015 Accounts: Proposed by David White and seconded by Nigel White. APPROVED unanimously.

6. Motion

The President advised the membership that a private motion had been proposed for the AGM:

That this club opposes any further restrictions on rod anglers

The President discussed the motion and highlighted that

- ***The motion conflicted with the broad philosophy of the club to support conservation efforts in the waters that we fish.***
- ***The motion contravenes the LDAC Committee decision requiring members' stay within various River Association catch/release recommendations (as updated from time to time).***
- ***The motion would bring the club into conflict with Regulatory Bodies, River Interest Organisations, NGO's and key riparian owners.***
- ***In the opinion of the Committee this motion would not be seen as constructive in the forthcoming negotiations on Salmon Conservation measures with EA/DEFRA.***
- ***The motion had been discussed and unanimously rejected by the LDAC Committee on 9th January 2016.***

The member proposing the motion (Mr. P Mugridge) was given the opportunity to speak to his motion and he did so.

Several members expressed their views on the motion and, following debate, the President called for a *Seconder* to support the motion and carry it forward to a vote.

No Seconder was forthcoming and the motion failed to progress to a vote. Matter closed.

7. Guest Speaker (brought forward)

Tam Sneddon (EA Enforcement Officer)

The EA remains under financial pressure as a direct result of central government cuts to budgets. It was noted that since mid 2015 the number of enforcement officers in Devon and Cornwall had been reduced by another 25%, down from 8 to 6. This meant that Enforcement Officers were now responsible for more areas. In the case of Mr Sneddon this meant he was increasingly being asked to cover areas of Devon in addition to his Cornwall role.

As a direct result of manpower restrictions the EA *modus operandi* had changed to focus more on intelligence gathering rather than on patrolling riverbanks.

Wider collaboration with police and other agencies means the EA is now more able to target known individuals and increased co-operation has identified additional reasons for prosecution. The EA marine inshore boat is no longer moored and will be trailered from Bodmin to areas of interest on an *as needed* basis.

It is hoped that the change of approach will have a significant positive impact in the region. However, it remains vitally important that all Club members remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity directly to the EA on their 24-hour hotline (0800 80 70 60).

It is these reported cases and their subsequent investigations that provide the EA with justification to maintain fishery protection activities going forward.

Mr Sneddon then spoke to the salmon disease outbreak in 2015 and confirmed that the disease had been stimulated by an unusually cold spring resulting in abnormally low water temperature conditions as fish were running. The exact nature of the disease has not been ascertained but it is neither *UDN* nor *Furunculosis*. Nonetheless it had been serious enough to cause the complete closure of the Dart Fishery last season.

In closing there was discussion regarding the unfortunate jet-ski

incursion on the River Lynher on Boxing Day. The meeting consensus was that this was inconsiderate and mindless vandalism and that the members should remain vigilant to prevent a recurrence.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Tam Sneddon for his interesting contribution.

BREAK

8. Other Reports

i) FRA Hatchery (R Grieve)

Mr. Grieve advised that it had been 4 years since the Wainsford hatchery closed and 2 years since the challenging experiment of trying to run a remote hatchery operation near Boscastle.

He was now pleased to report that SWW (South West Water) the FFRG (Fowey Fisheries Resource Group) and FRA (Fowey Rivers Association) had reached agreement on funding and operating a new facility.

The new hatchery, to be located at Colliford Dam, will be operational by September 2016 and brood-stock collection would begin this autumn. The target stocking in 2017 would be 40,000 fish.

Mr Grieve noted that all hatcheries had to compromise on some aspect of their operation (be it water supply, temperature control, location etc). Whilst Colliford was known to have provided certain challenges to hatchery operations in the past this information provided an opportunity to invest directly in overcoming any limitations from the outset:

- Water quality would be ensured through the use of filters (for eels/debris), ultra-violet sterilization and necessary de-gassing measures.
- Temperature of water would be low enough to ensure fry hatching and survival.
- The location was ideal as fry would be re-stocked to the

St Neot River directly downstream.

With the financial backing of SWW the FRA is undertaking the operation of the Hatchery – but the success of the Venture will be fully dependent upon the support of volunteers from LDAC (and other Clubs) to ensure that the Hatchery is adequately resourced.

Mr Grieve is therefore looking for members to commit time to the Venture and he would be collecting contact information from those interested after the AGM meeting.

Discussions followed regarding

- the ability of the St Neot to sustain the additional head of juvenile fish,
- the likelihood of trapping only St Neot fish as brood-stock,
- *and optimal* water-flow management to ensure survival of fish after stocking.

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

Mr. White provided an interested and informative update on Lynher Hatchery operations.

Unlike previous years when few cock fish were available for fertilization the 2015 season had provided an abundance of cock fish but fewer hens!

As a consequence of the mild winter higher water temperatures had again proved somewhat problematic. This has had a direct impact on the ability for holding and stripping of fish and at times fish were having to be returned (alive) to the river before stripping could take place.

Despite these limitations some 22,500 eggs were fertilized this year and swim-up fry have now emerged (16,000). With water temperatures at 12 degrees centigrade there is a higher incidence of malformation and this will be reflected in a higher mortality rate. Notwithstanding it is hoped that 15,000 fish will be stocked to the Lynher later in 2016.

On other matters Mr. White advised that initial catch return

numbers indicated a catch/release rate of c.79% was achieved for Lynher salmon in 2015 and he thanked the membership for their efforts in returning fish alive.

On sea trout he advised that recent studies had shown that fish could enter different rivers from their origin but that in most cases these fish would then descend back downstream to search for their correct point of origin.

Only one anomaly had been reported (near Plymouth) where Upper Dart fish represented 40% of the breeding stock occurred in another headwater. The explanation for this was thought to be because both the two rivers had geographically close sources - and that fish could be confused by similar water taste?

If anglers wished to participate in furthering such studies he had scale packs available for those interested in submitting data.

9. Election of Officers

A White (presiding) commended the current Officers and Committee for their efforts in 2015 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.

In addition the existing Committee (bar one) would offer to stand for re-election.

In the interest of time he proposed *en bloc* voting to elect both Officers and Committee members.

Proposal: To re-elect the 4 officers and existing Committee members; proposed by R Selby and seconded by D Johns Unanimously APPROVED.

All current Officers and Committee members duly re-elected.

10. Election of New Committee Member

The Chairman (R Williams) advised that one Committee vacancy had arisen. Two written nominations had been received, Messrs M. Davy and P. Mugridge. With only one

vacancy being available Mr. P Mugridge withdrew his application.

Proposal: Election of Mark Davy as Committee member; proposed by T Sobe, seconded by T Coleman. Unanimously APPROVED.

Mr Mark Davy duly elected to Committee.

11. Presentation of Club trophies

The Committee received the following nominations for trophies during the 2015 season.

- *Salmon Cup*: G Hake for a 19lb Fowey salmon caught in August 2015 at Dennicksball. The Committee awarded the Salmon trophy to G Hake.
- *Glencross Sea Trout Cup*: J Hake for a 9lb Fowey sea trout caught at Dennicksball. The Committee awarded the Sea Trout trophy to J Hake.
- *The Lynher Contribution* trophy was awarded to Mr. B Pearn in recognition of his continued support for LDAC. In particular the Club recognizes BP's continued work in improving access across the Clubs waters.

No nominations were received for either the brown trout trophy or the Junior Achievement Trophy in 2015.

Keepsake trophies were given to all 2015 trophy winners'.

12. Any Other Business

- Mr. P Mugridge advised that he had been liaising with Farson Digital and Mr A Davy to have the Lynher webcam (re) installed on the Measham Beat. Web links were now available on the Club website and members could access real time and historic water level information for both the Lynher and the Fowey.

Mr Mugridge and Mr Davy were both thanked for their efforts.

ii) Mr. C Bryant informed members that the Club was following a new recruitment strategy for 2016. Following many years of supporting the Liskeard and Royal Cornwall Show the Committee felt it opportune to try to attract members from other more *angling-focused* venues. As a result the Club would be represented at the Roadford Fly Fishing Fair (with WRT) on 27th February 2016 and would also be at the Wherrington Game Fair in August 2016 (more details to be published on the Club website nearer the time). It was hoped members would find the time to attend and support these events.

The AGM was followed by a successful club raffle organised by Messrs V Lamb and C Bryant. Proceeds amounted to £101.10p.

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

The 2016 AGM of the LDAC was brought to a close at 22.00 hrs.