

# **Liskeard and District Angling Club**

## **Annual General Meeting**

**21<sup>st</sup> February 2025**

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

The AGM, being held at Liskeard Constitutional Club, was called to order at 19.35hrs on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2025, with J Hake in the Chair.

The President (AW) welcomed those attending noting

- That this was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the LDAC
- He recognised the efforts in maintaining the important work of both hatcheries and stated that this seemed to be helping to sustain stock levels despite downward pressure from pollution, abstraction, predation and commercial netting.
- More engagement with SWRA and FRA has been undertaken by the Club this year to enable our voice and views to be heard.
- Membership numbers for 2024 had held up and this was re-assuring for the future of the Club.
- The Officers/Committee had discharged their responsibilities efficiently and the Club continues to function in the best interests of the membership.

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

Apologies for absence received from Messrs Dean, Petrie, Bourne, Bryant, Drew and Carwithen.

Twenty-five members and 1 guest in attendance.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of 2024 AGM**

The minutes of the previous AGM (16<sup>th</sup> February 2024)

previously adopted by the Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and posted to the club website thereafter, were put for approval.

***Minutes for approval: proposed by RG and seconded by PJ: 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.

- Opened his remarks with a few thoughts and observations on the 2024 season
- Very few sea trout had been reported during the season. Salmon were also slow to show in the first half of the year.
- Noted that this was his first year that he had not caught a sea trout despite over 130 visits to the rivers.
- Efforts were being made by the FRA to improve the spawning areas of the Draynes sanctuary. Despite a lack of work in 2024 (due to contractor resource restrictions) it has recently been agreed with WRT that a comprehensive FRA/SWW funded work programme to improve gravel beds and spawning areas would be completed in 2025. Hopefully this will help to address the shortfall in sea trout numbers in years to come.
- Noted the excellent efforts of both Hatchery teams, recognising that with these facilities in place the Club was better positioned than most nationally to have support for salmon stocks.
- Noted the efforts of the Committee in running the Club on behalf of the membership and of the volunteers that have turned out to clear debris, pathways and rivers so that the 2025 season fishing could start in good order.
- JK asked whether Golitha log-jams could be removed as he felt that this stretch was deteriorating. PJ advised that work had been carried out by WRT in 2024 to remove some jams but that due to the remote location, which led to access difficulties, and the need for heavy

machinery it was unlikely that further significant improvements could be made. Additionally the area is a SSSI and there are therefore further limitations on work that can be legally carried out. It was agreed that a further walk over (by NW) would look to see if any further works could be completed in a safe manner.

- RG noted that the fry survey numbers in the Fowey were holding better than many other rivers in the country despite the threats from abstraction and predation.

## **ii) Secretary (P Jordan)**

- The Secretary noted that 2023 (the latest year with a set of catch returns) indicated that for the first time LDAC had achieved 100% catch and release not just for salmon, but also for sea trout. This was a clear indication of the efforts by the membership to care for the rivers they fished. It was an excellent example of what could be achieved voluntarily. The Club hopes that these sustainability efforts can be repeated in 2025.
- This achievement, along with the Fowey counter-evidenced delay in sea trout migration until late(r) in the year has resulted in LDAC and others lobbying the FRA to relax the voluntary code of ceasing sea trout fishing in September of each year. For 2025 sea trout fishing can now take place across all LDAC rivers during September. Members were asked to update their season ticket dates accordingly
- A review of the 2023 catch returns showed that the season had been mixed when compared to 2022 (the worst year on record). Salmon catches had dropped by 14% (to 84) but sea trout had risen from 64 to 89 (+40%). Interestingly the Fowey salmon numbers had dropped whilst the Lynher salmon numbers had increased.
- Discussions are currently underway with all riparian owners regarding rents to be paid in 2025. 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 as much fishing as possible.

- In this context it is noted that Frogwell Mill Farm is, due to a change of ownership, no longer part of LDAC waters and there is also a significant risk that Duchy waters on the Inny and West Looe will not be renewed for 2025. If renewals are not possible the membership will be informed on the website and Facebook.
- 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 still 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.
- MS asked whether the reported sea trout problem could be attributed to yellow fin tuna predation, these fish now being seen in abundance in the Channel. A useful discussion followed on the likely impacts of predation, commercial netting and lack of regulation and enforcement for sea trout in the southwest.

### **iii) Treasurer (T Sobey)**

The Treasurer presented and reviewed the P&L account for year ending November 30<sup>th</sup> 2024.

Membership numbers rose by 1 to 89 *year-on-year*.

With careful management of 2024 costs the Club has made a small paper profit of £900.98p. However this included a Solicitors' refund (from the sale of Lewarne Woods) of £981.99p. Without this the Club would have made a small operating loss of £81.01p.

In order to maintain membership interest the Committee has decided to hold 2025 subscription rates at the 2024 levels. The 2025 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.

### **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 2024 accounts: proposed by NW, seconded by RW.**

***APPROVED unanimously.***

***BREAK (20.35 hrs)***

## **5. Other Reports**

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

- RG confirmed that 39,000 fry had been raised in 2024 with 25% of these having been fin-clipped.
- All 11 tanks at Colliford are now full of growing-on fish, noting that the larger the fish when stocked back to the river the greater its chance of survival.
- The Hatchery continues to be self-sustaining, with full funding from SWW and volunteer staffing from local areas.
- SWW continues to use/raise the PR profile of the Colliford Hatchery with visits from CEO of Pennon Group (owner of SWW) and the EA during the year. It is hoped that this high level of engagement/interest might have an overall positive effect on the EA's general position *vis-a-viz* allowing new non-operated hatcheries in England to be opened.
- The EA have been more hands-on of late and, following several visits, have asked Colliford to prepare a best-practice manual for other hatcheries explaining innovative approaches with chillers and re-circulation systems.

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

- Broodstock collection had taken place successfully with cock fish in abundance this year.
- Reported that there were currently 47,000 fertilised eggs in the Hatchery; with hatching now commencing.
- This manageable number of fertilized eggs allows for

an equal split of alevin and reared on fry to take place.

- The Hatchery was grateful for all donations received, especially the ongoing commitment by LDAC in funding £500 per year despite their financial stress. It noted that two key financial supporters of the Lynher hatchery had passed during the year so 2025 funding was likely to be tight.

## **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 asked for nominations for Chairman for 2025.

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

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

***JH was duly elected as Chairman of LDAC for 2025.***

## **7. Election of Officers for 2025 (JH)**

With no new nominations from the floor the Chairman indicated that the current officers were willing to stand for re-election (NW, TS, PJ).

**Motion: To re-elect the 3 named officers for a further year (2025): proposed by RG, seconded by TF. *APPROVED unanimously.***

## **8. Election of Committee Members for 2025 (JH)**

With no new nominations from the floor the Chairman indicated that the current committee were willing to stand for re-election.

A motion was made to re-elect all Committee members for 2025;

**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 2024 season.

- *The Salmon Trophy* was awarded to J Drew for a fine fish of 12lb 8oz, caught on the Fowey on 26.10.24.
- *The Brown Trout Trophy* was awarded to J Drew for a 2lb 10oz brown trout taken from the R Fowey on 1.7.24.
- *The Junior Trophy* was awarded to S Sobey for a fine brown trout of 1lb 8oz from the R Seaton on 18.5.24 and for catching his first sea trout during the year.
- *The Lynher Contribution trophy* was awarded to Committee member J Drew in recognition of his tireless work in maintaining the rivers and in supporting hatchery work.

## **10. Any Other Business**

- MD noted that the AGM for LDAC clashed with that of Bodmin Anglers. It was agreed that the Chairman would liaise with Bodmin Anglers to prevent a repetition next year.
- DW noted that the new owner of Lewarne Woods was willing to open up some additional car parking space for anglers to access the river. It was agreed that the club would contact him and progress this matter.

## **Guest speaker (W Entwistle; SWRA Chairman)**

- W Entwistle has been the SWRA Chairman for 3 years and was delighted to be invited to discuss the SWRA initiatives being progressed to improve the SW rivers.
- The principal focus of efforts across the region was to

address the serious decline in salmon numbers. He noted that the LDAC catch figures presented were robust for the southwest. He indicated that in the last decade many other southwest rivers had seen their salmon runs decline from thousands to hundreds and in some cases recently to single figures. Perhaps this was hard evidence as to the benefits of hatcheries in Cornwall.

- Key SWRA areas of focus include salmon and sea trout stocks (where most current efforts are being directed), beaver impact (a lost argument) impact of predation, lack of regulatory control (EA/IFCA's) and water quality/abstraction and pollution.
- The smolt survival rate (down from 10-30% to just 1-2%) also needed to be addressed. This catastrophic decline could be due to predation and/or netting on the high seas. However this was an international issue and not part of the SWRA scope of work at present.
- He felt that the EA were fixated on process and KPI data collection with little or no implementation of actions to improve the plight of salmon.
- The SWRA are developing 10 key pilot projects, self-funded, but to be supported and monitored by a multi-agency oversight committee. These projects range from smolt ranching (on the Fowey), redd habitat improvement (Lune), new small hatcheries (Axe/Dart), to DNA studies (Exeter University)
- The aim was to get firm support and essential buy-in for the projects from DEFRA/EA and other regulatory agencies.
- He congratulated LDAC on achieving voluntary 100% catch/release for salmon and noted that on the Camel it was now once again an EA mandatory requirement to release all salmon caught.
- In concluding he invited members to attend the SWRA AGM, to be held at the Arundell Arms in April (date to be confirmed).

### **RAFFLE**

The AGM was followed by a successful club raffle organised

by N White / D White. Trago Mills has been particularly generous in the provision of prizes this year and were thanked.

Proceeds raised amounted to £93.00p.

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

***The 2025 AGM of the LDAC was brought to a close at 22.05 hrs.***

DRAFT