

The Annual General Meeting of the Fowey Rivers Association
was held on Wednesday 15th April 2009 at Lostwithiel Social Club

Present

Roger Brake (in the chair)	Dave Johns
Stewart Fulwood	John Pearce (BAA)
Roger Furniss (SWRA)	Robbie Williams
Ivan Lyne (BAA)	Jon Evans (secretary)
Chris Hitchens (Environment Agency)	Rob Hocking (Environment Agency)
Philip Christie (Environment Agency)	

Apologies

Paul Eliot (Chairman)	Matt Lewis (Lanhydrock)
Anthony Fortescue (President)	Dave Phillips (Lostwithiel)
Alan Hawken	Trevor Sobey
Claire Hoddinott	Godfrey Tucker (Vice Chairman)
Tyson Jackson (Water resources officer)	Arthur White
David Lewis	

1. **Minutes of the last AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on 16th April 2008 which had been distributed, were agreed.

2. **Matters arising**

It was noted that the search was still on for suitable gravels for spawning beds.

TJ

3. **Chairman's report**

The Chairman proposed that the Association's best wishes should be sent to Paul. This was agreed.

He said that for a number of reasons, there had not been many projects carried out during 2008 but he thanked the Draynes Valley clearing team and the hatchery team for making such a success of their work.

4. **Finance**

The Treasurer, in presenting the accounts for 2008, reported that the income had been £2017.88 and expenditure was £3074.45. He also reported on the detail. It was noted that there is £15,000 being held by SWW for which about £10,000 of invoices have been presented but not paid over. The Secretary was asked to follow this up with Neil Whiter from SWW.

JE

It was noted that no income had been received from the Lanhydrock members and the Secretary was asked to follow up on this also.

JE

The 2008 accounts for the Fowey Rivers Association were accepted, and are attached to these minutes.

5. **Secretary's report**

The Secretary's report was circulated.

He drew attention to

1. Park Pit and the problems experienced with the licence application. The Agency had regarded the lake as an "off line" water body and the outlet had been screened. The lake had been netted by the EA but despite their efforts, no smolts or adult fish had been caught. It was expected that the Management Group would be set up shortly and that there would be a number of spawning bed projects on the Trenant Stream.
2. The very successful second phase of the Maidenwell redds had been finished in September 2008 and spawning fish were seen immediately after. The project funds had been obtained from SITA by Toby Russell through the Westcountry Rivers Trust.
3. Thanks are due to Chris Janes, Robbie and Tyson for their continuing development and improvement work on and in the river. Two Draynes walks had taken place during the winter and many natural redds had been seen. The Draynes sanctuary payments had been made for a further period of five years.
4. There had been many instances of illegal canoeing on the main river from Draynes as far as the tidal limit. Robbie reported that the prohibition signs would require Natural England agreement at Draynes Car Park. There will also be signs at Treverbyn and Ashford Bridge.
5. Hatchery. A limited but very successful hatchery programme was undertaken by volunteers when Paul was very ill in November. Paul is now looking after the juveniles from both the Fowey, 25,000, and the Camel, 20,000 eggs brought from Trafalgar Farm. These will be looked after by Paul when he is well enough and by volunteers when he is not able to do this.
6. Hawkstor Pit. It was understood that Ocean Fish of Looe was buying Hawkstor Pit from Imerys and the Pencarrow Estate. The purpose would be to raise rainbow trout commercially and in an environmentally sustainable way. A meeting was held and subsequently a strongly worded letter was sent to the company explaining the objections the FRA might have to such a venture. No reply was received but it was later understood that the pit was being sold to a Trust established to carry out recreational activities such as those previously carried out by the Bishop's Trust. It is not clear who the final purchaser is but the position is being monitored.

RW

The Secretary's report was noted and is attached to the minutes. It was also agreed that Tyson, Robbie and Jon should meet to agree a programme of projects for 2009.

7. **Election of officers**

It was proposed that all the officers should be reappointed and this was agreed. It was also agreed that the post of Chairman should be left vacant until a suitable person could be found.

It was also agreed that the membership of the FFRG should be drawn from any three of Tyson Jackson, Roger Furniss, Paul Eliot and Jon Evans.

It was agreed that it was essential to communicate with the membership of the Association and that attempts should be made to set up a newsletter or website. This proposition should be taken back to the clubs, riparians and syndicates to see what skills were available and could be used to develop the FRA.

All

8. **Colliford agreement.**

Roger Furniss said that the original Colliford public enquiry had agreed some compensation for sea trout but did not include any mitigation proposals for salmon as they did not spawn upstream of the dam and no account was taken of the impact of the changed flow regime in the St Neot. The St Neot will never again be a suitable spawning stream for salmon because the flows are insufficient and unreliable. Juvenile salmon will have to be introduced hatchery fish and natural source of these would be Wainsford. SWW has said that they have fulfilled their duties in relation to Colliford but it is the officers' contention that more should be undertaken. To this end it was proposed that the Association should instruct Fish Legal to take appropriate action against

- a. SWW for damage to our collective interest in the river and
- b. The Environment Agency for not taking action to prevent significant environmental damage.

It was noted that this would change the relationship between the FRA and SWW but only on this matter.

It was agreed that legal action should have positive benefit, and that Fish Legal should be instructed to investigate the possibility of establishing that SWW has a responsibility for the loss of salmon on the St Neot and that the Environment Agency should have prevented such significant environmental damage.

RF

9. **Hatchery**

Robbie reported that it had been agreed fairly late in the year, to run a small scale hatchery programme. Ten volunteers were recruited and 40,000 eggs were stripped and fertilised from the fish caught. Most eyed up successfully and were in gravel boxes. Paul is now looking after the emerging fry.

It had been a very useful learning experience and most had been documented and photographed. It had also improved the collaborative relationship between the FRA and the sister organisations on the Lynher and Camel.

He thanked the team of volunteers that had been recruited and were now suitably skilled for the future.

The next steps would be to sort out the future stocking policy and sites, put together the paperwork for the application for a discharge consent, and develop an operations manual for future years.

RW/JE

10. **Canoe agreement**

Roger Furniss reported that previously that had been a very good relationship with the BCU through the local access officer, Richard Hobba. However, the BCU nationally had instructed their local people that there was a right of access

to all rivers. They have backed off from this but are saying that any local agreement should be for 365 days in the year.

It was agreed that, despite the cancellation of the previous agreement, a letter should be sent to Mr Hobba saying that the Association was quite willing to renegotiate a voluntary access agreement, but that it would have to be on the Association's terms.

JE

11. The Environment Agency

The Chairman welcomed Rob Hocking, Chris Hitchens and Philip Christie.

Rob made a number of points about the Fisheries enforcement Team. The team is unable to be on the river day in and day out, and relies to a great extent on intelligence from mother sources. There are two tiers within the team, those who have powers of arrest and those who have limited group powers. There is considerable collaborative working mainly with Harbour Authorities and the Police. The service is now more efficient, although much of the time is spent on waste issues, mainly landfill and the consequential work relating to the Proceeds of Crime Act. Waste enforcement and regulation occupies much of the time, including the diagnostic work.

Most of the SAFFA work is intelligence lead.

The fish catch on the Fowey is: Salmon 190 with 128 returned, and Sea Trout 519 with 287 returned.

The members thanked the Agency staff for their contribution.

12. Date of next committee meeting.

15th July at 7.30 p.m. in Lostwithiel.