

The Annual General Meeting of the Fowey Rivers Association  
was held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at Lostwithiel Social Club

**Present**

Paul Eliot (Chairman)

Roger Brake

Bill Eliot (River Co-ordinator)

Roger Furniss (SWRA)

Tyson Jackson (Water resources officer)

Dave Johns

Matt Lewis (Lanhydrock)

Dave Phillips (Lostwithiel)

Mike Smith

Simon Toms (Environment Agency)

Godfrey Tucker (Vice Chairman)

Robbie Williams

Jon Evans (secretary)

**Apologies**

Ray Burrows

Anthony Fortescue

Alan Hawken

Claire Hoddinott

Ivan Lyne

Trevor Sobey

Sir Michael Thompson (President)

Arthur White

1. **Minutes of the last AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2007 which had been distributed, were agreed subject to inclusion of the Chairman's concerns about the continuing use of multiple hooks on Rapalas. He said that he hoped that this would figure in future discussions about voluntary constraints.

2. **Matters arising**

The question of the sand pump at Pennygillam was raised again, and Simon said that he thought there was a problem about its use on grounds of Health and Safety. However, he agreed to see if it might be possible for it to be given to the Fowey Rivers Association on grounds that its value should have now been written down in the Environment Agency books.

ST/JE

3. **Chairman's report**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. He said that it seemed to have been a variable year with some anglers doing well and other finding the fish hard to locate. It was a poor season for salmon with some very small ones which the counter might have considered to be sea trout. He thought this might have been due to the pollution incident in 2005.

He was very concerned about the very poor juvenile stocks at Treverbyn which had its lowest count ever.

He said that the people involved in development work should be congratulated on their efforts but asked that this season, we should do less talking and more doing.

4. **Finance**

The Treasurer, in presenting the accounts for 2007, reported on the 2007 detail. The presentation now included project costs and this was welcomed by the members. As far as income is concerned, nothing has been received from SWW since 2005 but this does not mean the income is lost. It is in the SWW accounts, and, if included in the Fowey Rivers Association accounts, would demonstrate an

excess of income over expenditure. The payments will be agreed by the Fowey Finance and Resources Group which has not met since February 2007. Neil Whiter is being regularly encouraged to call another meeting.

JE

It was noted that very few members paid any subscription and it was agreed that the committee should discuss the benefit to be gained from asking members for a subscription which might lose some members and would then not enable information to be given to farmers, landowners and other interested people about the activities the Association was undertaking.

JE/RB

The 2007 accounts for the Fowey Rivers Association were accepted, and are attached to these minutes. The Treasurer was thanked for his clear presentation.

## 5. Secretary's report

The Secretary's report was circulated.

He drew attention to

1. Canoeing and to the need for the voluntary agreement to be reconsidered because it had not been signed by the local officer.
2. Thanks are due to Tyson, Robbie and Chris Janes for their continuing development and improvement work on and in the river.
3. the hatchery where the club and angler contribution had been £650 from the Glynn, Lostwithiel and Lanhydrock only. The Chairman said that as far as he was concerned, it seemed that there was now a Camel hatchery on the Fowey. The Camel Fisheries Association had contributed both financially and in terms of organisation for many years. The very small financial contribution from the Fowey, and the lack of a local organiser was no longer acceptable, and funds and organisation had to be found, significantly from SWW but also from the local angling fraternity. It was noted that Roger Furniss is leading the programme for the Fowey Hatchery Group and will report to the next committee meeting.
4. Paul despite his family problems had managed to grow on a small number of fry. It was agreed that £500 should be budgeted to allow a trailer, tank and pump to be bought and kept at Wainsford for the use of the Fowey hatchery co-ordinator, whoever that might be. Robbie agreed to oversee the work although he would not always be available to fetch fish from the river. It was agreed that publicity should be given to the planting programme which would encourage anglers to donate fish. Paul also invited any angler who was interested to come to the hatchery to see for themselves.
5. Tyson said that there was an important omission from the Secretary's report which is the SITA funding, which might be in excess of £100,000 and for which Toby Russell from Westcountry Rivers Trust is leading the programme with Tyson and Jon. This is for developments within a 10 mile radius of Taphouse. It was agreed that Environment Agency and Cormac support should be sought to add weight to the submission which would be made. The project that would be of most benefit would be a complete survey of the Fowey catchment to establish where the river is producing less than it should. The information was now sadly deficient since the Environment Agency monitoring programme had been seriously reduced.

RF

RW

PE

TJ/JE

The Secretary's report was noted and is attached to the minutes

## 6. **Water Resources Officer's report**

The WRO drew attention to

1. Park Pit where the plans are coming to fruition. Information had been received that the abstraction application was being discussed in detail with SWW as a result of the submission made by the Fowey Rivers Association. It was agreed that Neil Whiter should be encouraged to call a meeting of the FFRG before the application was approved. He highlighted the main issues of concern including the use of Fowey water to offset the Porth/Rialton abstraction which was very expensive for SWW to treat on account of algae and nitrates. The abstraction was now being limited to an annual recharge although it had been agreed by the Fowey Rivers Association that the most important thing was to get Park seen within the overall abstractions at St Cleer and Restormel.
2. The Lamelgate drinkers where the cattle were no longer damaging the river.
3. The discussions with Imerys which should lead to a regular source of boulders and gravels for river improvements on the Fowey and the Camel.

Tyson was thanked for his report and his sterling work.

## 7. **Election of officers**

The Chairman said that he was very pleased that Anthony Fortescue had agreed to become the Association's President. Mr Fortescue had hoped to be at the meeting but had been delayed in London. In his absence he was elected as President.

It was proposed that all the officers should be reappointed and this was agreed subject to Robbie Williams being appointed to the post of River Co-ordinator and Chris Janes being invited on to the committee to look after the redd and gravel cleaning work.

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 letters of appreciation should be sent to Bill Eliot and Sir Michael Thompson for their valuable contribution to the work of the Association.

JE

## 8. **Canoe agreement**

The Secretary reported that Richard Hobba, the local BCU representative, had not signed the agreement which had been discussed with him and then sent to him. He was clearly under pressure from the BCU head office not to sign any agreement that contained paragraphs relating to indemnification, policing the agreement or any financial contribution.

It was noted that an Early Day Motion supporting open access for non powered craft was being countered by Martin Salter. Members were encouraged to contact their MPs when Roger notified the appropriate route.

RF

It was agreed that the agreement should be cancelled and that a letter should be sent to Mr Hobba explaining that the riparian owners considered the suggested amendments to the agreement were reasonable and only contained those elements that were essential to the welfare of the river and the owners.

JE

## 9. Address by Simon Toms

Simon was welcomed by the Chairman and invited to address the meeting. He drew attention to

1. The 2007 declared rod catch for salmon was 94 fish which is the lowest since 1993. The salmon run had previously been around 700 fish until 2003 but had been declining since. The 2007 catch and release rate was 66.7% and this had been rising year on year. The ten year salmon average is 161. The counter showed 1605 salmon and large sea trout with an estimate of 796 salmon (1874 in 2006 with an estimate of 930 salmon).  
Sea trout numbers are also down. The sea trout catch was 577 (772 in 2006) The counter shows 5844 sea trout in 2007 (9196 in 2006). Sea trout numbers peaked in 2000 with a catch of 1180.  
There is major concern about the decline in sea trout numbers which is reflected in other rivers. It was noted that the pollution incident at Golitha in 2005 may be a major contributory cause of the poor run of fish in 2007.
2. The NLO had been reduced by one and the Tabbs did not appeal. Theoretically, if a river is passing its conservation target, the nets cannot be reduced without comparable reductions in rod catches. However, it had been possible to argue that the anglers had already contributed through catch limits, catch and release rates, sanctuary waters, redd construction and many other schemes and this did not apply to the netmen. Simon is now working on a ten year limitation.
3. Salmon Action Plan. The plan had been reviewed in February and will be totally redrafted in 2009. Of the 76 actions identified in the 2002 plan, 65 had been started and most had been completed. The next plan will concentrate on identifying achievable objectives.
4. Enforcement. Enforcement has concentrated on the marine work, including some arduous negotiation with the Sea Fisheries Committee. Members are encouraged to use the hotline 0800 807060 if any suspicious activity and net marked fish are seen.
5. Marine Bill. This is going to transfer powers from the Environment Agency to the Inshore Fisheries Management Agencies which may make enforcement tricky.
6. The impact of the pumped storage programme on the salmon run has not been evaluated and this needs to be raised at the FFRG.
7. Juvenile surveys show that whilst many sites show good juvenile numbers, Treverbyn is very poor. This may be due to a difficult survey season with very high water levels during the time available, or it may be due to sand infiltration.

Simon was thanked for his contribution.

## 10. Date of next committee meeting.

16<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30 p.m. Lostwithiel.