

The Annual General Meeting of the Fowey Rivers Association was held on Wednesday 11th April 2018 at Boconnoc

Present

Bill Smith (Chairman)	Paul Jordan (Treasurer)	
Dave Chapman	Jason Drew	Richard Grieve
Jon Hake	Chris Janes	Matt L'Estrange
John Rossiter	Mick Smith	Neil Smith
John Tisdale	David White	Nigel White
Rob Williams	Mark Yates	Jon Evans (Secretary)

In attendance

Simon Toms

Apologies

Roger Brake	Roger Furniss	Alan Hawken
Chris Marwood	Bob Tetley	

1. **Bill Eliot**

Members stood in silence to remember Bill Eliot who had died at the end of October 2017. Bill had managed the LDAC for ten years and during his time had been responsible for many of the improvements in the Draynes Valley.

2. **Minutes of the 2017 AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on 19th April 2017 were agreed.

3. **Matters arising**

1. Riverfly training. Dave Chapman reported that there had been a training session at Lanhydrock but that a coordinator was needed to make further progress.
2. Website. Richard reported that contrary to rumour he was still managing the website. However, there was a need for a source of material for inclusion. Dave Chapman agreed to see if Bruno would be able to help.

DC

4. **Chairman's report**

The Chairman reported on notable events in the previous year

1. 2017 had been a most satisfactory first year for the hatchery with a very effective team of volunteers. 27,000 fish had been reintroduced to the river. 2018 had been good for broodstock, 10 hen fish and nine cock fish had been caught and taken to the hatchery, most caught by Jon Hake. All eggs had now hatched and the oldest had started to swim up. SWW had agreed to fund the future years' operations to 2025 including an inflationary uplift.

2. The counter showed that 2017 had been a reasonable year for both salmon and sea trout with 78% and 72% catch and return rates. The overall numbers of large fish seemed to be reducing and fewer large fish seemed to be entering the system. Sea trout numbers, although lower than last year were still close to the ten year average at 7,530.
3. The St Neot had been improved with ten sites being funded by SWW up to 2019 and more funded by W4G money. This was mainly coppicing work. Further funds would be provided by SWW but at a lower level than in the PR14 programme because the work would be significantly for maintenance rather than development.
4. The fry survey had been undertaken in 2017 and there would also be a 2018 survey funded by W4G. Minor changes had been found in fry populations except on the Cardinham where a major trash dam seemed to have prevented upstream migration. The Forestry commission had now removed this and the next survey would demonstrate the impact.
5. FRA had purchased the Treworrey water with help from three other clubs/riparians and thanks were due to Paul for managing the process very effectively and thereby sustaining the sanctuary waters on the Draynes.
6. A significant programme of clearance was undertaken on the Draynes with thanks to Chris Janes and the volunteer team. There is a new plan for 2018.
7. The NLO has now been reduced to zero and should be signed off by Ministers shortly. The remaining net has been bought out with the help of SWW. Simon Toms' persistence and drive has led to this very satisfactory position.
8. Two committee members were retiring, Roger Furniss who had brought great expertise to the committee and Jon Evans who had been the secretary since 2006. Both Roger and Jon were also directors of FRAL and new directors were sought, as well as a new secretary. Both were thanked for their sterling service.
9. The Chairman thanked Elizabeth Fortescue for again allowing us the use of Boconnoc for the AGM. He also thanked the officers and Board for their support and help in maintaining and developing the Association and the company.

5. **Water for growth (W4G)**

Dave Chapman reported on WRT progress with implementing W4G plans

1. Coppicing. The objective is to get more light on the river and create fry refuges. The work has been targeted on getting rivers such as the St Neot as ready as possible to reduce the need for maintenance.
2. Improving fish passage by removing weirs and jet cleaning gravels to remove sand incursion. 4 weirs had been identified at Parkway, Cardinham, Treverbyn and Ashford. The EA is checking gauging stations such as Trengoffe.
3. Fry surveys. The 2018 will be undertaken in 2018 to maintain the data series.

Dave was thanked for his summary

6. **Treasurer's report**

The Treasurer reported on the company (FRAL) and the association (FRA). The accounts were dissociated from each other. The financial situation was set out in the paper circulated with the agenda.

Paul reported that the FRA position showed a balance of £18,300 which was an increase on 2017 because FRAL had paid back loans and FFRG sources have been considerably reduced to support the Treworrey purchase. The Fry survey would be funded by WRT from W4G money which would help the 2108 budget.

The FRAL 2016-17 accounts have been submitted to Companies House and HMRC. However, loans between FRA and FRAL are now classed as income and therefore accrue tax liabilities. These have been able to be offset against losses made in previous years. However, the slack is now all but used up and further loan activity might generate a corporation tax liability.

The FRA total assets are now £26,379 which while apparently very healthy will need to be managed carefully on account of commitments including remaining Draynes funding and future fry surveys. He drew attention to the fact that the SWW compensation funds are less than the cost of fry surveys although to some extent this is made up by support from donations, both individual and from the clubs and other riparians.

The hatchery finances are now satisfactory and SWW process issues have been remediated.

The accounts to date and the abbreviated company accounts were noted.

The Treasurer was thanked for his report.

7. **Secretary's report**

The Secretary reported that of the recorded apologies, four had cast proxy votes. Three had stated that they wished to record their opposition to the FRA guidelines yet to be discussed and the fourth had declared that the Chairman might use his vote in any business transacted.

He also thanked his colleagues in the Association for their help during the past 12 years. He singled out the Chairman and Treasurer who had been invaluable colleagues, and also mentioned Richard Grieve with whom he had worked both at Wainsford and Colliford. He particularly thanked Simon Toms who had been exceptionally helpful both with the Camel and Fowey work over many years. He had learned a great deal from all of them and was most grateful but also relieved to be retiring after a very profitable period in his life. He would miss the FRA and

a good set of friends. He wished everyone and the Association well for the future.

8. **FRA Guidelines**

The Chairman reported that the guidelines were included on the AGM agenda for information. He said that the committee has agreed the guidelines previously based on the proposals generated after the EA's January meeting to discuss the NLO and declining fish stocks.

He suggested that there should be one minor change, to wit the retention of the season to 15th December but with the proviso that all fish should be returned during the final fortnight. This was supported strongly by LDAC which had been pressing for this for a while. However, the guidelines had been agreed after some Wainsford guests had booked to stay. There is a commercial imperative for retention of the last fortnight of the season, at least for the 2018 season.

It was noted that the guidelines had been accepted by clubs such as LDAC, RFC and Lanhydrock. The Chairman of Restormel pressed for acceptance of the guidelines provided everyone was in agreement. Without the clubs having a real presence on the river, the source of volunteers who were prepared to give as well as take would disappear. This would be significant for the future management of the rivers. Jon Hake said how important it was to demonstrate respect for the fish by using fishing methods and practices that ensured the continuation of fishing on the Fowey.

John Tisdale said that if the 100% c/r was included in the guidelines, it would make the 90% target for c/r more achievable. He also proposed that the word "provisional" should be added to the published guideline.

Simon said that the EA Board is not inclined to press for mandatory c/r and prefers that the fishing fraternity abides by responsible guidelines. There is a risk that the national guidelines will include a ban on worming which would be hugely detrimental for Cornish rivers. He also said that a byelaw will be used if necessary. There is an example of this on the Camel.

It was agreed that the guideline agreed by the committee should be endorsed by the AGM and published on the FRA website.

BS RG

9. **Election of officers**

It was agreed that Bill Smith should be re-elected as Chairman and Paul Jordan as Treasurer. A new secretary will be sought but volunteers would be welcomed.

10. **Election of committee**

It was noted that Nigel White would replace Chris Bryant on the committee. With this change, the people listed on the agenda were elected to the committee.

11. **Any other business**

The Chairman said he could not let this occasion pass without thanking Jon for his work over so many years as Secretary. He presented a very generous gift card for him to take his long suffering wife for a meal at Rick Stein's. Jon said how grateful he was and what a privilege and pleasure it had been to serve the FRA since 2006.

The meeting then broke for beer and pasties.

12. **The five point approach and the state of fish stocks on the Fowey**

Simon Toms, National Fisheries Management and Ecology Team Leader and Senior Advisor, E&B National Fisheries Team.

Simon gave a very interesting and informative talk on the fish stocks on the Fowey and updated the AGM on the salmon 5 point Approach initiative.