

# **The Annual General Meeting of the Fowey Rivers Association was held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at Boconnoc**

## Present

Bill Smith (Chairman)	Paul Jordan (Treasurer)	
James Ashby	Chris Bryant	Jason Drew
Bill Eliot	Richard Grieve	Anthony Kent
Ivan Lyne	Dave Matthews	Richard Morris
Jonathan Price	Mick Smith	John Tisdale
David White	Dan Wyton	Jon Evans (Secretary)

## In attendance

Simon Cadman Cornwall  
IFCA

## Apologies

Elizabeth Fortescue	Alice Barker	Roger Furniss
Alan Hawken	Clair Hoddinott	Chris Janes
Chris Marwood	Chris Matthews	Giles Rickard
Bob Tetley	Rob Williams	

### 1. **Minutes of the 2015 AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 were agreed.

### 2. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes

### 3. **Chairman's report**

The Chairman opened the meeting by paying tribute to Anthony Fortescue, our late President. He said that Anthony had always been very supportive of the aims and achievements of the FRA. In particular, he had taken a great interest in the hatchery and not only provided space for the old Wainsford equipment but also supported the work to provide an alternative site at Couch's Mill. He reminded members that his memorial service would be held on 9<sup>th</sup> May in Truro Cathedral where he would be representing the FRA.

He said he would be approaching Elizabeth Fortescue to see if she would be willing to take over the position of Honorary President. This was supported with acclaim by the meeting.

He then moved on to the principal developments which had taken place in the past year.

1. The Hatchery. Richard Grieve would provide a fuller report later but a few key points are that the funding has been agreed by OFWAT/SWW, Colliford has been chosen as the site, some of the historic myths about Colliford have been debunked, the contract between SWW and the FRA is reaching its conclusion, Richard has been selected as the hatchery manager for the FRA, a team of volunteers would be found to support Richard, and the DIDSON scanner has demonstrated enough fish in the bottom stretch of the St Neot to make trapping a real possibility.
2. The help of Giles Rickard from WRT had been invaluable in getting the Ladyvale Bridge project implemented on the Cardinham, one of the most prolific sources of juvenile salmon provided the adult fish can get beyond the Ladyvale blockage to spawn further upstream, the provision of the sixth year of juvenile surveys, providing, possibly, the most comprehensive record of juvenile fish in the West Country. This is a valuable resource for planning river developments such as coppicing at Lewarne.
3. A very successful website with over 1000 hits in the past year, managed most effectively by Richard Grieve.

He wished to thank Elizabeth Fortescue for allowing the FRA to hold its AGM at Boconnoc again, the FRA helpers and members for their assistance, and Paul and Jon for their continuing hard work on behalf of the FRA.

The chairman's report was noted.

#### 4. **Treasurer's report**

The Treasurer presented his report.

The FRAL Board had accepted the 2014 company accounts and the abbreviated accounts were available for inspection if members wished. In accordance with previous practice, the profit made by FRAL had been kept to a minimum to minimise corporation tax. The FRAL could be seen as "trading while insolvent" but with the agreement of our accountants, the support of FRA funds enables this to continue.

The FRA now had total assets of £18,133 with a credit with SWW of £3,844. The treasurer noted that historically there had been a regular annual payment of £12,500 from SWW as compensation for Colliford. However, this had reduced with effect from April 2015 to £5,000 annually. The reduction was compensated for by SWW, with the agreement of OFWAT from PR14, building a hatchery (CAPEX funding) and running the hatchery (OPEX) funding initially for 5 years. This was supported by the EA.

The hatchery OPEX funding will not be inflated over the five-year period of the contract. However, the PR19 programme will hopefully enable a review of actual costs. In the meantime, the FRA will assume some risk but this may be mitigated

by maintaining tight financial control.

It was noted that the total amount of hatchery funding going into the St Neot more than compensates for the loss of the SWW £7,500 annual payment.

The hatchery will be operational from autumn 2016 and in the meantime, the FRA is using the OPEX funds in such a way as to minimise the expenditure in subsequent years.

Bill Eliot said that he hoped the FRA would continue to fund the spawning areas and sanctuary payments at the top of the Draynes because the Fowey is particularly known for its sea trout run.

It was agreed that the accounts should be adopted and that Paul Jordan should be thanked for his work.

## 5. **Secretary's report**

The Secretary gave Giles' report in his absence

- WRT has undertaken Riverfly training hopes to get this going on the Fowey along with some off the other Cornish rivers
- Upstream thinking 2 is underway on the Fowey, which includes regular monitoring across the catchment (15-20 sites) using a hand held device which can measure conductivity, turbidity, phosphate and colour amongst other things. Please contact WRT if we become aware or suspicious of areas of poor water quality as WRT will also be checking small side tributaries.
- UST works on the river over the next 4 years such as, fencing, dung/slurry storage, clean and dirty water separation and reducing pesticides
- There may be some scope for further walkovers this year on Fowey, this may come down to available time

## 6. **Election of Officers**

It was agreed that the post of vice Chairman should continue to be left vacant until required. There were no new nominations and it was agreed that the Chairman and officers should be elected en bloc to serve for the year until the 2017 AGM.

## 7. **Appointment of committee**

It was agreed that the FRA committee members should comprise the officers and

John Tisdale	Treverbyn	Upper river
Chris Janes	RFC	Upper river and River Bank Management
Chris Bryant	LDAC	Upper river
Rob Williams	LDAC	Middle river and River coordinator
Roger Furniss	Glynn	Middle river and Water Resources Officer

David White	LDAC	Middle river
Vacancy	Lanhydrock	Lower river
Ivan Lyne	BAA	Lower river
Stewart Fullwood	RFC	Lower river

## 8. **Hatchery development**

Richard Grieve reported on the progress achieved by the development team. The team consisted of

- James Rushforth - SWW Project manager
- Jon Pratten - engineer from Arcadis (a company contracted in by SWW on a regular basis)
- Bruce Stockley - scientist and Deputy Director of WRT
- Roger Furniss from FRA and SWRA and with previous experience with SWW
- Jon Evans from FRA with experience of administrative and regulatory issues
- Himself as the FRA's choice as Operational Hatchery Manager

Achievements to date include planning the refurbishment of the old hatchery building and production of a number of essential documents required to support the work

1. Hatchery plan
2. Biosecurity plan to support CEFAS authorisation
3. Stocking plan required by the EA
4. Consents for
  - a. Abstraction
  - b. Discharge
  - c. The fish trap
  - d. Land drainage authorisation associated with the trap
  - e. Stocking of juvenile fish in the St Neot

A number of problems had been overcome including

1. Regular monitoring of water quality with particular concern about zinc levels which can be inimical to fish
2. Supersaturation risk
3. Large particulate reduction
4. UV filtration
5. Eel infestation (break tank)

Progress was being made and he expected the programme to be achieved on time.

The water temperature is a matter of concern but this is controllable by managing the take off from the dam. The main concern is the variation in day and night time temperatures. However, the water supply to the hatchery meets all the required criteria.

Provided the team of volunteers could be recruited, he was confident that the hatchery would achieve the objectives defined in the contract between SWW and FRA.

It was noted that the hatchery needs to be seen alongside the other St Neot changes including restoration of juvenile habitat funded through PR14 and changes in the flow regime supported by use of the Colliford Water Bank and potentially using the pipeline to Restormel WTW bypassing the river as a channel for summer water supply. The pipeline installation is estimated to cost £4m to be sought from PR19.

John Tisdale suggested that the fish taken for the hatchery would very likely have spawned further up river. However, without the hatchery and the associated habitat restoration work and flow management, the St Neot would not be brought back into use as a productive salmon river.

Richard was thanked for his very helpful and informative presentation.

9. **Keynote speaker – Simon Cadman**, Principal Enforcement Officer, Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

After the traditional beer and pasties, members were treated to a presentation by Simon Cadman from the Cornwall IFCA.

Simon reminded members that he had addressed the SWRA Council in July 2015, and had been invited to the AGM at that time. His previous experience had been over 25 years in Sea Fisheries regulation preceded by a career in the merchant navy. He intended to cover three main areas

1. How the CIFCA operates
2. Netting byelaws for rivers, estuaries and the open sea
3. Regulation for bass fisheries

Cornwall IFCA, set up in April 2011, is the successor authority to the Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee (SFC). There are 10 IFCAs around the UK. They are the lead authority for inshore fisheries regulation and conservation. The mission of the IFCA is to maintain a balance between social, environmental and economic benefits. The members of the Authority are drawn from Cornwall Council, fishing and environmental interests plus representatives from the EA, Natural England and the MMO. There are four meetings per year and they are open to the public. The responsibility covers the Cornwall County land mass and extends out to six nautical miles. This includes rivers and estuaries to their tidal limit, and approximately 1,400 square nautical miles of sea drawn from between Plymouth Sound and Tamar sound on the south coast and extending to Marsland Mouth on the north coast.

The duties include making byelaws to manage the exploitation of sea fish, environmental work and fisheries management in marine protected areas, enforcement of certain national and EU legislation. Officers are cross warranted and the budget of £1.2m 2/3 from Cornwall Council and 1/3 from DEFRA provides for 16 officers, patrol vessels, survey equipment and vehicles. Inspections cover 45 commercial ports and 10 hobby ports. Premises, vehicles and catches may be inspected. Survey work uses visual, sonar and ROV equipment.

Netting byelaws were inherited from the former Sea Fisheries Committee and Environment Agency (EA). EA used to be the SFC in the rivers of Cornwall and some of its byelaws are over 100 years old. An IFCA review of all its 64 inherited byelaws was conducted between 2011 and 2015. New byelaws are now needed to protect salmonids in both river/estuary areas and the open sea. Robust evidence is needed to support the introduction of new byelaws. The IFCA tries to maintain a balance between commercial fishing and leisure angling interests. The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 requires IFCAs to manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources, but salmonids and some other freshwater and migratory species are excluded. The risk that sea fishing nets may

take salmonids as a by-catch is currently the subject of legal advice and this is expected within two months.

The EA also has powers to make netting byelaws to protect salmonids from river estuaries out to the six nm limit, under the Water Resources Act 1991. However, these powers have not been used.

Bass. The EU requires member states to consider their own measures and DEFRA is currently considering new national regulation, though it is not expected to be made in 2016. Cornwall IFCA could consider making a single species bass byelaw to apply in areas not currently protected. There are further known areas of bass aggregation that could be considered for special protection. There is a risk that imposing a minimum net mesh size to reflect the EU increase in bass minimum size may have an adverse effect on salmonids. Bass are also believed to predate smaller salmonids.

Simon concluded by saying that nothing is straightforward in making new byelaws, particularly when they involve mixed stock fisheries.

Simon then responded to members' questions and was thanked by Paul Jordan for a very interesting and informative presentation.

#### **10. Date of next AGM**

19<sup>th</sup> April 2017