

The Annual General Meeting of the Fowey Rivers Association  
was held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at Boconnoc

Present

Bill Smith (Chairman)	Roger Brake (Treasurer)	Jon Evans (Secretary)
Eoin Donnellon	Tyson Jackson	Jonathan Price
Bill Eliot	Chris Janes	Mick Smith
Stuart Fullwood	Dave Johns	Neville Tolman
Roger Furniss	Colin Pinnells	Godfrey Tucker
Richard Grieve	Adam Price	Rob Williams

Apologies

James Ashby	Alan Hawken	Chris Matthews
Anthony Fortescue (President)	Anthony Kent	Irene Eliot
Bob Tetley	Chris Marwood	Simon Toms
Ivan Lyne	John Pearce	Trevor Sobey

1. Minutes of the 2010 AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2010 were agreed.

2. Matters arising

It was noted that the SWRA AGM was held on 16<sup>th</sup> April at the Arundell Arms. Humphrey Wood has retired as Chairman and the new Chairman is Henry Llewellyn. Mac MacCarthy has replaced Arthur White as Treasurer. Roger Furniss continues as Secretary.

The keynote address had been current developments in Hydro generation.

The Draynes team had been given the Stewart Gardiner Award for outstanding Conservation work within the South West Region. The Chairman and members added their congratulations to the team members who had worked so hard over the past ten years.

3. Chairman's introduction

The Chairman welcomed members to the AGM. He thanked Anthony Fortescue for again providing the hospitality of Boconnoc for the AGM.

He said that 2011 had been an outstanding season for the Fowey with the counter showing 2,000 salmon and large sea trout and over 10,000 small sea trout. These figures represent a 10 year high. The actual catch return is not yet known.

There had been excellent numbers of fish raised at the hatchery and it was hoped that over 50,000 Fowey fish would be returned to the rivers, and equivalent numbers for the Camel. The closure of Wainsford was very disappointing and it was hoped that an alternative would soon be found.

The visit from the Atlantic Salmon Trust had been most helpful and the visitors had been most impressed both with the work on the Draynes and at the hatchery.

The canoe agreement had been reinstated through the good offices of Richard Hobba. The webcam would have links to the canoe agreement, and make visitors aware of the agreed height restrictions.

The website was in very good shape thanks to Eoin Donnellon and would certainly prove to be very useful in making information available both to local anglers and to visitors.

The Wainsford gauge had been installed in the river but had not survived the major flooding that occurred in November 2010.

Surveys had been commissioned through Westcountry Rivers Trust. The Fry index survey had shown where juvenile fish are to be found at sites throughout the catchment at 2 kilometre intervals. This work will be repeated in 2011 to enable records to be built up over the longer term. The walkover surveys would be started in April 2011, and it was hoped that when the initial training had been done, stretches of the river would be surveyed, recorded and mapped. These studies would enable better informed management strategies to be developed for managing the fish and the environment throughout all the tributaries in the catchment. Although many stretches had been adopted there are still areas that will need covering and more volunteers are required. Further training will be provided.

SWW and the EA had commissioned a report from Dr David Solomon to investigate potential salmon compensation requirements that had not been considered at the public enquiry. Initial results seem to demonstrate that SWW should compensate the FRA for salmon losses arising from the loss of spawning potential as a result of the construction of Colliford.

There is still a risk that Ocean Fish might attempt to use Hawkstor Pit as a rainbow trout production site.

The SWW Upstream Thinking programme could be of great benefit to the River Fowey, and Martin Ross will be speaking shortly.

#### 4. Treasurer's report

The Treasurer presented the accounts for the year 2010/11. Total income for the year was £25,500 and expenditure £21,408. £4,092 had been carried forward to the balance sheet. This is the best financial report for many years. The information gained from the detailed budgeting undertaken this year has been helpful in managing the budget and educational in letting people know where the money is being spent.

There is still relatively poor support from individual anglers subscribing directly to the FRA although there are a reasonable number who do subscribe through their club subscriptions.

Roger Lashbrook asked why the FRA was spending its funds on surveys when in his opinion, stock levels were already known to anglers. This view was not supported by other members present at the meeting.

Bill Eliot suggested that the Association should use its funds to continue the programme of buying up sanctuary water where it was shown that this could be advantageous by the surveys. This had the benefit of getting farmers on board and willing to help with the conservation programme.

It was agreed that the accounts should be adopted and the Treasurer was thanked for his very clear presentation.

#### 5. Secretary's report

The Secretary presented his report of work undertaken through the year which had not already been mentioned by the Chairman.

1. Committee had met quarterly. The officers had met between meetings to carry out the Associations routine business.
2. The second newsletter to inform members and drum up financial support was published to coincide with the AGM. In retrospect, this is bad timing and in future this should revert to being published in time for the club Annual General Meeting programme.
3. Park Pit. Four new spawning beds had been installed in the Trenant Stream by the EA. The work had come in under budget and the residual funds would be used for further conservation work at Park. However, the quality and outcome could have been improved. It had been agreed that in future similar projects would be more likely to be undertaken by the FRA.
4. The FFRG meetings were proving very helpful and had improved both the FRA funding stream and the developments within the catchment.
5. It was hoped that communications between the clubs and the Association would lead to better understanding of the work and priorities on each.

The Secretary's report was noted.

#### 6. Water Resources Officers report.

The WRO said that the Association was very keen to be involved in the multi agency group being established for the Bodmin Moor components on the Upstream Thinking programme. The FFRG was keen to develop new programmes of activity based on the better intelligence available from the Fry Index and Walkover survey reports, and from Solomons. In this Neil Whiter would be a most valuable ally.

The use by Ocean Fish of Hawkstor was a major threat but since the Warleggan is now flowing through the lake, this changes the criteria on which applications for production units should be judged. Club members and individual anglers

should be encouraged to add their objections to the official ones being launched by the FRA with the assistance of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal.

The WRO's report was accepted.

#### 7. Election of Officers

It was agreed that the present Officers should be re-elected en bloc.

#### 8. Hatchery

Richard Grieve presented his report on the hatchery. He said that the team of volunteers had continued to work despite some hostile weather conditions, and some very nice fish had were being produced. Water temperatures had been at both extremes of the thermometer.

More assistance is needed because the team members are not getting any younger. The hatchery had been complimented on developing excellent paperwork to enable monitoring and it was hoped that this would become the exemplar for other hatcheries in the region. It had been shown that the hatchery was achieving its 80% targets. 22,000 Fowey fish had been produced in 2010 and it was hoped that there would be 50,000 returned to the rivers in 2011.

Richard regretted the loss of Wainsford hatchery and hoped that it would not be too long before an alternative site could be found. He thanked his team colleagues for their support.

Richard was thanked for his report.

#### 9. **Upstream Thinking: Martin Ross: Environmental Officer: SWW**

Martin Ross gave a very clear and interesting talk on the Upstream Thinking programme.

He said that the US programme was based on the premise that farming and water abstraction should be linked to the mutual benefit of both. SWW obtained major benefit from working with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations because this meant that work was based on sound information.

US is a 50 year programme, to which DEFRA and OFWAT are signed up, and there are long term maintenance agreements to ensure continuing benefit from work undertaken on farms but funded by SWW. Martin hoped that there would be close collaboration between SWW and all stakeholders on the moor would work together. He suggested that some of the information from the walkover surveys would be able to demonstrate that, for example, drainage channels built many years ago were no longer needed and if they were refilled this would help to retain water and reinstate wetlands on the moor.

Martin identified seven challenges for SWW

1. Climate change effects

2. Soil and manure loss to rivers
3. Eutrophication in shallow reservoirs
4. Uncontrolled erosion of former ditches
5. Drought and wildfire risks
6. £15m+ for pesticide removal
7. Downstream flood risks

It was essential to run the programme as a multi agency one. The Roadford and Wimbleball catchment investigations had been completed, upland restoration on Dartmoor and pilot work on Exmoor had started, the Fowey catchment work would start in 2012. This would involve £4m farmland improvements and headwater restoration for rivers. The beneficiaries would be

1. Sustainable profitable farming
2. Grazing to control wildfires
3. Carbon capture and storage
4. Habitats for biodiversity and wildlife
5. Valuing best managed water provision
6. Supporting 3<sup>rd</sup> sector capacity growth

On the Fowey there will be

- 6km fencing, 250 alternative water supplies
- 33 farms to be offered new yard infrastructure
- Soil testing for 40 farms
- Pesticide plans for 15 farms
- Five years of water quality monitoring
- Promotion, newsletters, meetings
- Project actions from April 2012 to March 2014
- Indicative value – approx. £500,000

In summary

- Upstream Thinking connects the land management and water industries
- It offers improved farming and protects water
- It offers downstream flood protection for urban areas
- It controls water charge increases
- It involves local communities and third sector experts in long-term climate change remedies