

A meeting of the Fowey Rivers Association  
was held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at Lostwithiel Social Club

**Present**

Bill Smith (Chairman)	Paul Jordan (LDAC)
Roger Furniss (SWRA/Glynn)	John Tisdale (Treverbryn)
Roger Brake (Treasurer)	Rob Williams (River Co-ordinator)
Chris Janes (RFC and Riverbed management)	Fred Tolman (Lanhydrock)
Dave Johns (LDAC)	Jon Evans (secretary)

**Apologies**

Ivan Lyne (BAA)

**In attendance**

Chris Bryant (LDAC)	Richard Grieve (LDAC and hatchery)
Giles Rickard (WRT)	

1. **Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed Richard Grieve, Giles Rickard from WRT, Chris Janes and Chris Bryant.

2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2013**

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 9th October 2013 were agreed.

3. **Matters arising from the minutes**

**1. Cardinham pollution**

A full reply had been received from the EA about the pollution to the Cardinham. Two companies, Dingles and Tulip Foods, at the top of the Cooksland Stream were implicated but it did not prove possible to determine without question which company was liable. Both were issued with improvement notices. It was agreed that this stream should be given special attention in future monitoring.

**2. Newsletter distribution.**

It appeared that most people had had copies of the Newsletter. A last printed distribution would be made to FRA members as part of the AGM invitations.

**3. Hatchery programme 2013**

Richard reported on the 2013 programme. Justin Ruscombe King had offered the use of the Trafalgar Hatchery and this had been accepted at the FRA meeting in July 2013. The hatchery was made ready, additional transport sorted out and fishing days agreed. In practice, it became catch as catch can. Two hens and three cocks were taken in October before the Stocking Plan had been done for the EA. Owain Burrows sourced Pyceze at very favourable rates and thanks are due to him.

Some of the fish in the tanks seemed to be infected with fungus and this was not susceptible to Pyceze treatment and died. The EA was not happy with the mortality which seemed to be due to high water temperatures. There were no living hen fish in the hatchery at the end of the season. An EA inspection team visited Trafalgar but was unable to find any deficiency in the way in which the fish were being kept and congratulated Justin on his systems and care.

However, despite an extension being agreed for after season fishing, this was revoked four days later and regrettably the programme came to an end with no eggs or juvenile fish.

Sincere thanks are due to all those people who helped with the programme, particularly Justin Ruscombe King.

Any decision about a 2014 programme will be left until the July FRA meeting when the position of SWW funding for the St Neot will be have become clearer.

#### 4. **Finance**

The Treasurer tabled a statement of finances to January 2014. This showed a total of £18,950 budgeted but only £7,492 spent to date. The premature closure of the hatchery programme meant that funds would be available for habitat improvements in 2014. There is a total of £22,347 in three accounts and further funds will be made available by SWW when appropriate expenditure is invoiced.

JE

Some of the 2013 work programme budget sums have not yet been claimed because the work is not complete. The Wildlife and Countryside Act proscribes the latest time at which the coppicing can be finished, i.e. when any wild bird may be building or preparing to build a nest. Recent high water flows have precluded a quicker completion. The non financial contribution of other organisations such as WRT and the Forestry Commission were very welcome because they assist the work of the FRA and enable our funds to go further in protecting and improving the river system.

The accounts to date will be attached to the minutes.

It was agreed that the accounts should be noted.

#### 5. **FRA 2013 work programme**

Progress on the implementation of the 2013 work programme was reviewed.

1. Walkover surveys. These were complete and Giles said that the maps would be available as soon as possible.
2. Coppicing. The work is part completed. Four volunteers have received Chainsaw training in Richard's woodland. They will form

GR

- part of a team, also including Chris Janes, who will be available to work wherever required on the rivers, tributaries and streams.
3. The Forestry Commission has cleared the over shading and trash on the Clinnick Stream. A letter of thanks should be sent to John Ebsary for all his help. JE
  4. Tree removal and coppicing from Ashford to Doublebois Bridge. This is complete.
  5. Upstream Thinking. WRT has been contracted by SWW. 23 farms and thus 23 projects have been identified. Actions include fencing, improved slurry storage, sand removal, ditch management. The improved water quality benefits will be demonstrable in later years. WRT
  6. Gravel introduction on St Neot. Deferred pending OFWAT and SWW funding.
  7. Juvenile survey. Now completed by WRT and the report was received in December 2013.
  8. Ladyvale Bridge. Design work is being undertaken by WRT, EA and Forestry. Larger box section pipes will replace the current small circular ones. WRT is currently agreeing the design contract. The final cost is estimated as being approximately £15,000. WRT
  9. Netherton and Treverbryn weirs. These weirs have been assessed. The report shows that Treverbryn weir could block the passage of fish at low water levels, although local evidence is that fish still pass and there is no significant problem for upstream migration.
  10. Trenant gravels. This work would be funded by funds accruing with Park Stannon group from SWW. No site had yet been identified. JE
  11. St Neot restoration. The 2013 hatchery programme was a brave attempt to start the restoration programme. Sadly, it had to be stopped before any live eggs could be obtained.

Projects not completed would be added to the 2014 programme. Roger Furniss agreed to update the programme with actual dates and achievements. RF

## 6. **Fry index survey.**

Giles introduced the Fry Index Survey and the aggregated four year results.

He said that this was the fourth consecutive year of fry surveys since 2010 and the results showed conclusively how the FRA actions had affected the fry counts, and where additional work was required to improve matters further. Specifically, the Cardinham had showed excellent and good results particularly from Fletchersbridge downstream, whereas the Warleggan showed consistently poor results both for salmon and trout except for trout at the Dewey junction. The St Neot showed no salmon fry/parr above Pengelly particularly since stocking ceased in 2011. Trout results have also faded. On the upper river, there were low but evident salmon fry/parr showing occasional spawning. There were some good results on the lower

river specifically at Respryn but further downstream, the results were disappointing. The variations between 2012 and 2013 seemed to be the result of very high flows in 2013. The very small tributaries are generally devoid of salmon but show very strong results for trout and are likely to be less influenced by high flow volumes than the main river.

The numbers show that there are significant opportunities for further habitat and flow improvements. In particular, the Ladyvale bridge scheme has a high priority and the recent clearance of Margate Bridge by the Forestry Commission has been most beneficial. Continuing the coppicing and clearance work at points other than Lewarne and concentrating on work higher up the river and on the small tributaries would show good dividends in future results.

Giles also suggested that further fry surveys, walkover surveys, coppicing and shading particularly in small streams would be beneficial in the 2014 work programme.

Giles was thanked for his excellent presentation and it was agreed that the work should continue unto 2014. Bill agreed to get in touch with Bruce Stockley to arrange this.

WS

#### 7. **2014 work programme**

The curtailment of the hatchery programme had released funds for use in 2014. It was agreed that quick wins should be planned for and also the completion of some work unfinished from 2013.

It was agreed that the WRT should be asked to do a fifth year in the fry survey programme at a cost of £5,200, and that a contribution of £5,000 should be allocated to the improvements to Ladyvale Bridge. Giles said he hoped to be able to obtain other funds from WRT grant sources, the Forestry Commission, the EA and others for the actual work at Ladyvale.

Other projects on the rivers using volunteer labour would be identified and the newly acquired skills of the chainsaw team used to good effect.

Roger Furniss agreed to work with Giles to put together a draft 2014 work programme.

RF/GR

#### 8. **Catch limits**

A proposal for sharpening the catch limits advice by suggesting either a moratorium on killing salmon in the short term or proposing a mandatory catch and release rate was considered.

Given the current high catch and release rate and the need to avoid

overregulation where possible, this was unanimously rejected. However, it was agreed that club AGMs should be asked to suggest to their members that salmon should not be killed if possible and that all juvenile sea trout (under 1lb or 12in) and multiple spawners (over 4lb or 24 in) should be returned unharmed to the river.

Club  
secs

9. **2014 AGM**

It was agreed that Jon would confirm with Anthony that we could use Boconnoc again

JE

It was also noted that both Pete Kibel from Fishtek and Mark Yates had agreed to be our guest speaker. It was agreed that Jon should confirm the availability of Mark and that Roger F would ask Pete if he would be willing to come to the 2015 AGM instead of 2014.

JE  
RF

10. **SWRA**

The SWRA Secretary reported from SWRA meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014. There were main four items for report

1. There was consistency in the poor salmon run and the excellent sea trout run in most rivers in the South West
2. There had been problems for all those hatcheries relying on rod caught fish but not where the fish were trapped.
3. WRT has a new Chief Executive, Jonathan Bailey, previously with the Environment Agency
4. The AGM would be on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April at the Arundell Arms.

The FRA noted the report.

11. **Committee membership**

Roger Brake indicated that he would be retiring at the AGM after eight years as Treasurer and that Paul Jordan had agreed to be nominated as his replacement. Dave Johns told the committee that he would be resigning at the AGM. Chris Bryant would take his place.

These nominations were noted with thanks. It was also hoped that Dave and Roger would continue to support the FRA in a voluntary capacity. Both were thanked for their very great contribution.

12. **Dates of 2014 meetings**

AGM	16 <sup>th</sup> April 2014
Committee	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2014
Committee	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2014
Committee	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2015