

A meeting of the Fowey Rivers Association
was held on Thursday 16th January '20
at the Lostwithiel Conservative Club

Present

Dr Bill Smith (Chairman)	Nigel White (LDAC)
Paul Jordan (Treasurer)	John Tilsdale (Treverbyn)
Jeff Pearce (Secretary)	Ben Gallant (WRT)
Rob Williams (LDAC)	David White (LDAC)
John Hake (LDAC)	Ruth Brookes (Lanhydrock)

1. **Apologies**

Giles Rickard (WRT)

The Chair welcomed Ruth Brookes as the new representative from the Lanhydrock estate

2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2019**

Agreed.

3. **Matters arising**

None.

4. **Treasurers Report**

The Treasurer reported that the association is financially sound with no outstanding obligations. The balance at 1st January '20 stood at £21,343.77, with total assets of £28,650.82.

5. **Colliford Hatchery**

48,200 salmon fry were stocked into the St Neot river at the start of September, 12,100 were fin-clipped.

Brood stock collecting started with the most productive October since relocation to Colliford. November started slow but water conditions improved & an above average number of fish were caught late in the month. December was quiet with just 6 anglers fishing beyond the 30 November conservation season close. 9 Hen fish and 9 Cock fish were caught for Brood stock. John Hake's efforts were highlighted with him catching a large number of Brood stock & his efforts along with the other anglers were very much appreciated.

A discussion then took place led by the chair on the future of the hatchery & the involvement of the FRA & FRA Ltd. It being 5 years since the hatchery was opened. The option being for FRA Ltd not to renew its contract with SWW & for Richard to deal directly with them. SWRA are also looking to use the hatchery for other rivers with eggs from stripped fish being brought to the site.

It was accepted that this could a future direction but that it must be written as a memorandum of understanding at the very least that the primary contract is for the St. Neot River & this potential extra capacity should not impact on the existing use of the site or equipment.

It was also noted that the St Neot volunteers may also only be keen to work on the St Neot fry.

The chair advised that all comments were noted & that moving forward the FRA would ensure Colliford hatchery continues as primarily a site for the St Neot as per the mitigation & that our assets & priority use of the site would be ringfenced.

6 **Beavers - Warleggan**

The initial site visit & meeting has been postponed, but will be reconvened, the committee will be updated with progress at the next meeting following the site visit.

7. **IFCA update**

John Tilsdale updated the meeting on the latest developments. With the previous proposal rejected the latest proposed byelaw had been updated & sent for consultation. The Bye law sub committee had submitted a very restrictive netting limit which was very positive but unfortunately the commercial fishermen completely opposed it. The reworked bye law is deemed worthless and offers little protection to salmonoids. John suggests the latest bye law should be opposed & the original one reinstated, but there comes an issue that the bye law may be cancelled altogether & the thought is that a bye law regarding nets is a start that can be worked on & this is supported by Simon Toms. A discussion ensued & a consensus reached that a way forward was to join individual groups who oppose nets together to form a coordinated approach linking for example Bass, Seals & bird protection groups for a united voice. David White suggested a social media approach where many of these groups operate. Jeff agreed to investigate setting up a social media account for the FRA. The Chair thanked John for his efforts with IFCA on behalf of the FRA.

Action: Jeff to investigate setting up a SM account to build a following of conservation minded groups & individuals.

8. **Draynes Gravel Work**

No activity had been undertaken for some time due to inability to co-ordinate teams for this, a discussion was had around prioritising areas for work & getting the support of the WRT to help with documentations. The pump was currently being looked after by Paul. The worst areas should be prioritised where known Salmon redds had compacted, liaison with Rob would be vital as he has a lot of working knowledge. WRT had recently offered to do a practical exercise under the A30 bridge where significant sand banks had built up, making the area difficult for fish to pass during low water.

Action: Jeff to liaise with Rob & WRT to take this forward

9. **Voluntary measures**

It was agreed to keep the measures the same.

10. **Westcountry Rivers Trust - Update**

Ben gave an overview of some of the recent work undertaken, starting with an update prepared by Dave & W4G, some great work has been undertaken removing weirs, altering flows at Gauging stations & taking out other obstacles for returning salmonoids especially helpful when fish are trying to move in low water. Ben then gave an overview of the work he is undertaking on the St Neot River, including, planting hedgerows, coppicing overhanging trees to allow appropriate amounts of light & rafting along the banks to provide sanctuary for young fish. 21 sites in total have been improved & fry numbers are showing positive increases following the work, especially noticeable within the Warleggan, where the Forestry commission removed a fallen tree dam & within one season parr are now showing in good numbers above the obstruction & ratings have gone from C & D to A & B.

11. **AOB**

SWRA update, SWW Rob Skerrett, gave the meeting a talk around their 10-year plan which was taking a different approach to linking in with environmental and topical issues including climate change. An example given by him referred to the Fowey and the option to complete the pipeline from Colliford to Lostwithiel, thus somewhat removing the extraction issues that affect the lower Fowey during low water conditions.

Browngelly Marsh concerns regarding the ditches that have been dug by a farmer to drain the marsh now potentially filling the valuable Draynes area with sand. This is a SSI area & home to specific butterflies, discussions have been had with SWRA to see if Natural England should be approached, for support in highlighting this illegal activity.

There was now other urgent business and the meeting closed at 21:45 hrs.

Date of next meeting:

AGM: Thursday 16th April 2020