

# S&DAC

## Newsletter

### Spring 2024



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# SPRING NEWSLETTER

## EDITORS RAMBLINGS

I am sure that those of us that enjoy a bit of winter fishing on the rivers and lakes have been thwarted by the deluge of rain with rivers and even lakes overwhelmed by water. Some meadows are covered in water and it was said that a boat was required to even get to the banks. I gather there are quite a few for sale at Dover at the moment along with motors and engines –one careful owner.

There have been a few who have managed to find a window and been rewarded with the odd fish. Another cracking chub was landed on the Avon and a 50cm grayling on the Wylye. With all this weather the rivers have been flushed out and hopefully the year ahead looks as if we will have reasonable flows. In the short term it looks as if there may be some banks that will be inaccessible as in previous years and openings delayed if it considered unsafe or footfall may cause further damage. Alas this is one of the results of climate change and has been an issue in previous years. It isn't something the club wants to do as anglers are chomping at the bit to flick a fly but there are many considerations before any decision is taken. The keepers and volunteers are doing all they can but nature has a way of thwarting efforts.

As the club moves forward it constantly reviews its policies and one that is being updated is Health and Safety along with safeguarding. As a club we have responsibilities to anyone who works, uses, volunteers and is a member of the club. These policies have to have a review date and the time has come for us and we are following the standards set by the Angling Trust, fortunately the trust has plenty of guidance and advice. The youth and small fry are up to speed as safeguarding is an integral part of the operation. However, although it may not seem obvious, safeguarding is also now a part of the adult section as we have some who fall into that category by age and/or conditions that may put them at risk.

I can imagine a few rolling eyes at the mention of 'Elf and Safety but the club has insurance and liability, in the event of a claim or any incident the first thing

that will be looked at is what the club has done in health and safety measures. All the policy and procedures have to be signed off by the committee so they will be answerable to any inquiry and could suffer consequences, so it is essential to have everything in order. You will see a new updated Health and Safety page in the yearbook so please read and adhere please. There is also the Traffic light system which is Red for no go. Amber, Proceed with caution and Green all open.

One other thing you will see is the recommendation to wear a floatation device and take a wading stick. We know there are some hardy waders in our membership but I have seen competent waders come a cropper by a dunking which most get out of but also know of obituaries too. Here is a comment to think about,

‘This comes from personal experience on the River Wylfe where one day where I clambered down the bank and got stuck in the mud, fell backwards and finished up sitting on the gravel bottom with water pouring in over the top of my waders. And, as Mike Blackmore commented last evening, there’s no one around to help you get out of that predicament! So safety first! ‘

Sent by Patrick Heaton-Armstrong

Health and safety is a two way thing and each of you has a responsibility as well for your own safety.

With all the technology available to us there is an inevitability that the club may follow suit and later Bill Latham will outline on line catch returns. Although some may not understand nor wish technology advancements be assured we will of course listen to what members say but there are times where it is a good thing for the club. I can see the positives in that members will have access to see how fisheries are doing from the comfort of their own home before deciding where to fish. I put together the newsletter, E mails fly and contributions come in. It can be done quickly and cheaply instead of pigeon post or sending missives by horseman. Communication is key to members getting information quickly and kept up to date on events and announcements. The best way is via our website. For those who have a computer or phone we would suggest you get on the forum. Even if you feel no need to contribute there are plenty of updates, topics to read and even a brave few put in trip reports. It is quite easy as all you have to do is press the register key. Then a page of words to read and at the bottom you agree in the little box and proceed to the next page. You then are asked for user name, which is what your identity will be and seen by all and a

private password. Then put your Email address, confirm and submit. It goes to be checked and you'll be sent a mail and the world is your lobster.

### WARNING

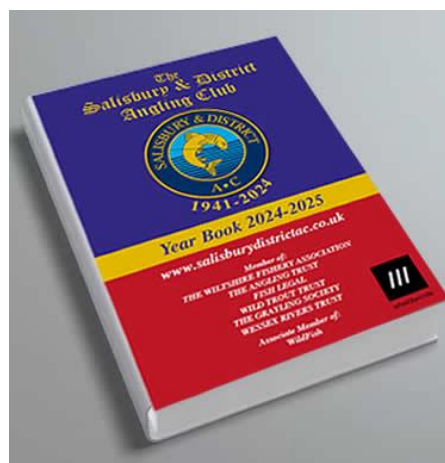
If you have not logged into the forum during the past year, you are in danger of having your account automatically deleted as per the Terms and Conditions.  
To stay connected log in Now.

In the past draft AGM minutes have only been available to view just prior to the next meeting where they would then be accepted as correct and approved. Following members requests these minutes in draft or approved format will be available to download to registered users of the Forum.  
CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS/General/AGM MINUTES

The work goes on our environmental issues which take up a lot of time and effort to keep pace with many organisations that are involved in projects that may have an effect on what happens around our fisheries. The Wiltshire Fisheries Association has an interesting piece to read here.

So while the waters are overflowing I am sure you have put the lay off to good use and have boxes overflowing with flies and all your gear is ready to go. I am a bit behind and am having some finds in my bag being forensically examined to see what they are.....

Have a good season. Baz Reece



The New Year Membership Books should arrive from the Printers week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024. If you require a new car sticker now is the time to submit a request before posting commences.

## **Vice Chair (Game) John Stoddart**

We have been through perhaps the wettest winter on record and at the time of writing there is no let up. Floods have led to closures on many waters both coarse and game as there is a lot of damage on the banks, debris to remove and fallen trees to clear. Our keepers have worked hard constantly clearing the otter fence at Petersfinger in case it is pushed over by flood water, shifting fallen trees and other debris from the river hatches. As soon as things dry they are ready to start the clear up and preparation for the new seasons.

We urge all members to sign up and at least read if not participate in the members' online forum. This year this will be particularly useful as conditions will dictate various cautions in and around the fisheries. It is open to members only and will be the best place to update on any club matters.

Game member renewals have begun and we remind all game members to do this ready for the new season. Let us know as soon as you can if you aren't renewing. It allows us to be timely about inviting new members from the waiting list.

Two of our longest standing members and office holders stood down from official duties at the AGM in January. Ron Hillier's most recent position was as President but he had served on the committee, as secretary and in other roles for many years. Robin Sumsion retired from his Vice President role having served on the committee and in other capacities. Both were members from the very early days of the club seeing the club grow from a small mostly coarse fishing club through to what it is today. Both were presented with paintings by the artist David Miller at the committee Christmas dinner and thanked for their unmatched service to the club. We wish them both the very best and hope for many more days fishing the waters.

## **Game Updates**









We pray for a break in the weather to allow our keepers to start preparation for the opening on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Our top priority is to get Amesbury reopened but there is a lot of work to do both there and across all the game waters. We are picking off fallen trees as conditions allow but with no let up of the rain in sight

we need to plan for difficult opening conditions where some banks will still be very wet, flows will be high and we may not have cleared all the obstacles. We will reintroduce the traffic light system which we operated a few years ago to indicate which fisheries are closed (red), fishable with care (yellow) or fully open (green). Notes of local conditions will be shown alongside the traffic light. The Fishery Status table will be published on the web site and forum. Example.

 Open Fisheries

 Closed Fisheries

 Partly Open

Fisbery	Map No.	Status	Comments
Durnford	1		Do not take tally, simply turn over.
Lower Woodford	2		
West Amesbury	3		
Queensbury	3a		If you wade beware of strong flows
Abbey	4		
Countess	5		
Ratfyn	6		Main gate opens at 7am and shuts 7:30pm
Stonehenge	7		Open to gate by bench, avoid wet areas

Wading is likely to be hazardous unless we dry up very quickly, strong river flows, altered river beds with new holes and debris may be an issue. There may be a general delay to wading or specific areas of caution will be noted on the traffic light system. Banks may be slippery, areas have been undercut, some very wet with deep mud and tree roots which can easily cause trips and injuries. In any wading area in the early season a wading staff is advised along with a flotation device, we have been in the river already attending to various matters and the flows are very strong. Additional images in web version.



After a slow start at both our game lakes in the autumn they are now fishing well, they will be stocked through to May when at the end of that month we close for the hotter summer days. In the last two seasons we have been recording temperatures there and in both years summer temperatures have exceeded those at which salmonid species start to suffer, another sign of changing times. With a wet start and conditions on the rivers likely to be difficult members might want to try the lakes. I will say at this point that the rule on the lakes is to kill the first fish caught to promote turnover of the stock. If members are put off from trying the lakes for this reason, we will not hold rigidly to that requirement, particularly not if the rivers are just too difficult.

Members will already be aware of big changes to the weed cutting arrangements for the catchment, the EA having pulled out of their extraction role last season. We have trialled a solution for the Avon with SADAC taking a lead role in running extraction gates at beats 3 and 13, Durnford for the members of the Wiltshire Fisheries Association upstream, other clubs and owners have been very supportive of our efforts. We are currently working through the permitting process with the EA and all being well the extraction dates as published in your year book will see us cutting weed again in 2024 and avoiding the fishery

closures resulting directly from excessive weed and consequent flooding. As yet we have no overall solution for the Wylfe but may operate a limited cut at Stapleford.

We will be opening a new fishery on the Wylfe at Eastleigh, the Lower Eastleigh Beat will be accessed from the existing car park on three days a week, the opposite days to the upper Eastleigh beat and leaving Thursday free for our maintenance team. Please note the fishing days for each of the Eastleigh beats in your year book. This was a very wild bit of woodland that we have now made more accessible and fishable. We have cleared dense undergrowth to make a path, put in new bridges and seats but the ground can still be very marshy. Additional images in web version.



We are in the process of confirming arrangements with the new owner of the fields and fishery at Barford St Martin. It is included in the year book and we will confirm with members when we finally sign the deal. It will be two rods in future at the request of the new owner and you may well meet him on the water as he will be fishing himself from time to time.

Trout & Grayling guest tickets for West Amesbury & Queensbury will now be only available through our online shop and opened for bookings as soon as river conditions allow.

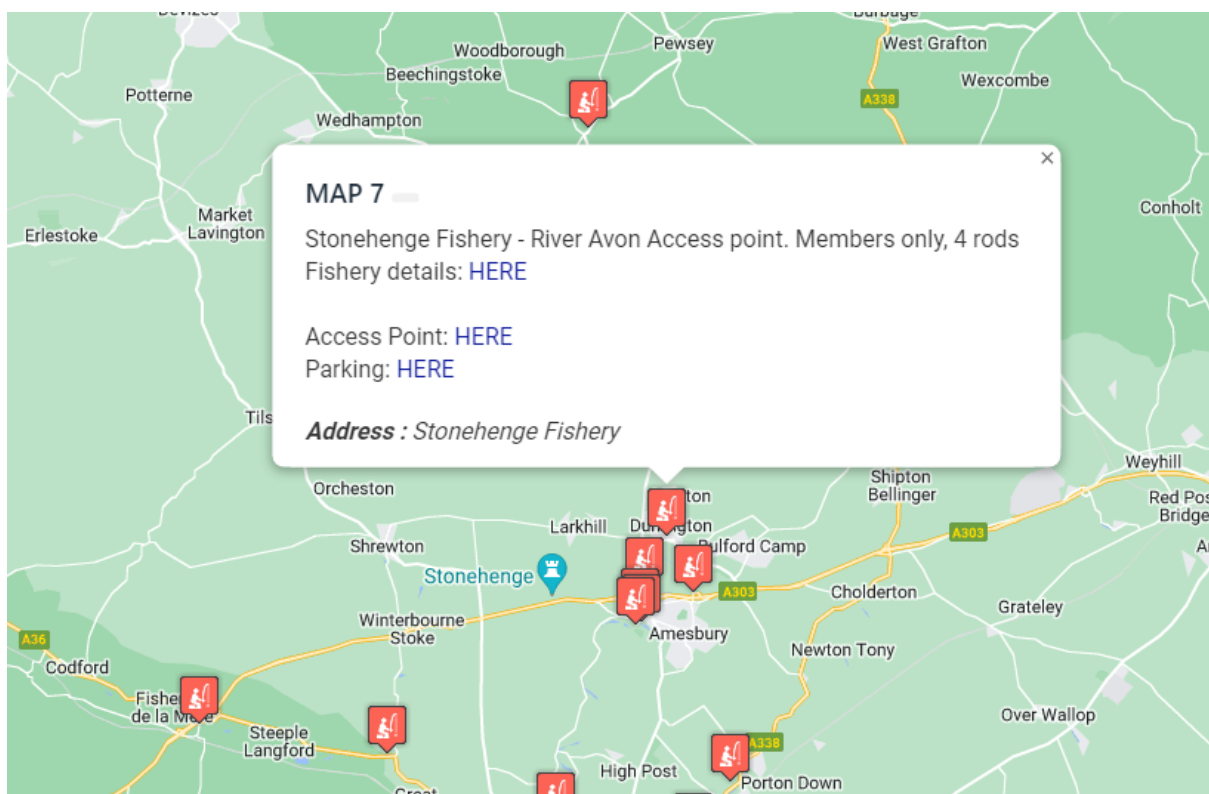
All Mayfly guest tickets (15<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> June) require approval by the office. Please allow a least one week for your order to be confirmed.



There is only 1 guest ticket available per day in this period and members can only purchase a maximum of 2 tickets in this period. Outside the Mayfly period a maximum of 4 tickets per day are available and no office approval is required.

Discussions are starting about the future of the yearbook, many enjoy receiving and collecting the book and we are progressing this work as it is time to at least explore it.

Maps to all game fisheries already exist online in the forum showing fishery details and what3words locations for parking and access.



We are in the midst of a big push by Government towards re wilding of the countryside. Bodies championing both wildlife and the rivers will have access to funds for these schemes. SADAC has come a long way in the last decade recognising the importance of the habitat on our fisheries and moving our mowing, fringing, tree cutting, weed cutting and our input of complexity to the water in that direction. We still however recognise that our stock in trade is chalk stream fly fishing and that this involves some manipulation of the environment on what are already heavily managed rivers. We have been ready to go as far as we can but there are extremes of river restoration practice and of wildlife support that we would not think integral to our managed fisheries.

There is an economy of the river where rents, jobs, retail sales and much more are closely linked to the chalk stream experience that we sell. We will be keeping these thoughts in mind as we work with partner organisations to get the best for the rivers we manage.

We have renewed our license with Harnham Meadows Trust for a year pending a review of the various waters and access points there which we are jointly conducting with the Trust and the Cathedral Authorities. We are confident that we will sign up to a revised and possibly improved arrangement in 2025.

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### **2024 Fly Fishing Academy Training Courses.**

We ran 12 training courses in 2023 attended by 67 club members. The courses were held in the Durnford Cart Shed office and were administered by our club member instructors Lindsay Moore and Rob Doyle. We had very positive feedback from all participants.

The Academy training course is split into two sessions. The morning session is classroom instruction in the office on how to approach a chalk stream, etiquette, equipment, entomology etc. This is done by group discussion and slide presentation. Two instructors and 6 participants. The afternoon session is casting practise and river skills on lower Durnford beats. We will be holding 8 courses in April 2024, on April 3,6,10, 13, 17, 20, 24 and 27<sup>th</sup>. The cost of each course is £50.00

**Please note that on April 3,6,10, 13, 17, 20, 24 and 27<sup>th</sup> the Durnford beats 13 to 9 will be closed on both banks to enable river casting by course participants.**

If you are interested in attending dates can be booked through our online shop.

[\*\*BOOK A COURSE\*\*](#)

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### **Fly Fishing Open Day – Saturday 18th May 2024**

The event will be held on Saturday May 18th, on the grounds of Amesbury Abbey Nursing Home, Amesbury, Wilts. SP4 7EX (map 4 in your yearbook) It

is a full day event starting at 9:30am, open to all members, game and course, and their guests. Participants get divided into three groups:

- Fly Casting
- Fly Tying
- Entomology

The groups rotate in the morning and by lunch time, every participant has the chance to experience the full spectrum of fly fishing. We are planning to have BBQ plus drinks, coffee and tea. In the afternoon there is plenty of time to engage with fly casting instructors, fly-tyers, entomologists and other members of the club and indulge in your special area of interest.

There is also a customary raffle with various prizes to be won. If you attend, please bring something for the raffle.

The cost of attendance is £30.00 per participant, which includes lunch.

[OPEN DAY BOOKINGS](#)

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## **COARSE WATER UPDATE**

Well, as I am sat here, it is raining again, the rivers are on the rise and once again we are discussing when and how we will hold a match or even open the lakes. Technology is great at times and having the ability to look back at river levels over the last 10 years it is clear to see that the last 14 months or so has been exceptional, for the sheer amount of water that has been in the valley and the duration of the high water. Looking at historical water levels, out of the last 9 years that are available at Downton 135 Days showed the river above 0.65m (Typical high) and over 50% of those have happened since the 6th January 23. The story is the same at Harnham with 187 days above typical high since 5<sup>th</sup> October 2014, and of those 125 have occurred since 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2023, that's 67% or 2/3 of all high water events in that time. Whether or not this is a sign of things to come we will have to wait and see, needless to say we are already talking about ways of working in these challenging conditions. In the short term we are preparing to get out and carry out the work to repair the damage that has

occurred across our waters. We have a list of damaged bridges, fallen trees and we need to get out and check the safety of the bank along certain sections, the bottom of Folds farm, for instance is currently cut off as one of the bridges being lifted out of its foundations.



That having been said, when it has been possible to get to the river there have been fish for the catching, I have been catching chub to over 5lb from all of the middle Avon Stretches, just go careful and make sure you know where the river starts and the bank ends if you are paddling along the edges.



Additionally, there have been good nets of roach to close to 2lb from within the city, again where people can get to the water safely. All this bankside activity has a cost and the limited areas that have been fishable are now suffering damage from the increased footfall, so that is one of the many jobs that are being added to the recovery list for this spring.

The high levels have also had a knock-on effect and restricted the winter management of our waters. We have been unable to net or SILTEX the lakes due to access, safety concerns and wanting to restrict damage to the banks. The

maintaining of the otter fence at Petersfinger has taken up a lot of time to keep it clear of branches, leaves and other obstructions as they float into it on both sides.

On a positive note, we have purchased a new Neptune weed rake, so once the water levels drop enough we will be clearing areas of weed from swims on all the lakes to enable more diverse angling. We have also received some support from the Environment Agency in the form of some crucians from Calverton Fish Farm that we have stocked into Hands Lake at Petersfinger. Please let us know when you catch any of them as it is part of a long-term plan to reintroduce a population into the lake.



We are hopeful for a nicer spring and summer and are waiting with baited breath to see what has happened to the rivers and lakes, whether it is the changes the floods have made to our favourite swims or how much we have to fix when we can get to it.

Ben Bentley

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## SMALL FRY

Things are starting to look up! With the average age of anglers seemingly at an all time high it's nice that the Small Fry and Junior membership of the club has increased. Currently there are 48 coarse junior members and 17 Small Fry, doubling the average of 25 of the previous 10 years. These young anglers are the life blood and future of the club and the Small Fry team are passionate about ensuring that this trend continues.

We are planning ahead for this year and in the new yearbook you will see 3 Small Fry evening sessions at Petersfinger. In addition to this we are working with local schools, local cub packs and, potentially, a Youth Club to give as many youngsters as possible their first taste of fishing or to encourage those that have already been. We aim to minimise any disruption to members and will always give 2 weeks notice of any waters that may be in use. Do not underestimate the difficulties that any youngster may have getting into the sport that we love if there is no angler in the family to encourage and guide them. We are looking at providing a pathway into the sport, not just a taster. We also run Saturday training sessions to help develop the various skills required.

The feedback we had last year from attendees, teachers and parents was quite amazing and heart warming. We would love you to join us in this drive to get more kids outside on the river bank and away from their screens.

If things are to go forward as we wish we will inevitably need more volunteers to work alongside the dedicated Small Fry team. You do not have to be a qualified coach as all we need is your enthusiasm and a few hours of your time, predominantly during the summer months. If you feel you may be able to help, please contact me either by email on [smallfry@salisburydistrictac.co.uk](mailto:smallfry@salisburydistrictac.co.uk) or my mobile 07590071952.

Alternatively, if anyone has any unwanted but serviceable tackle that we can hand out to deserving youngsters it would be greatly appreciated.

Finally, a massive thank you to everyone who has previously helped and hope you will continue and perhaps add a few more volunteers. Another thank you to those who have contributed to the small fry fund which helps so much to equip the sessions. It is easy to make a donation when joining and even if you forgot you can go back and help the future of angling.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Nigel Turner

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### **Online Returns.**

Cast your mind back to the dark days of Covid 19 when we were all washing our hands whilst singing Happy Birthday, making sourdough bread and banging pots and pans on a Thursday night to show our support and appreciation to our magnificent NHS workers.

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 first lockdown, a week before the start of our Trout season on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 all members notified of closure of all fisheries until further notice.

16<sup>th</sup> April lockdown extended and we were beginning to wonder if we would ever get a chance to fish in 2020.

Then on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May the then Prime Minister let us off the leash and fishing was to be allowed with some significant restrictions which was confirmed by the Angling Trust. These restrictions still required frequent hand washing and social distancing. We opened game fisheries on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May to lots of whooping and great relief to many members, some of whom were suffering serious cabin fever.

Signing in / return books had been removed from open fisheries and an online return form had been set up.

We ran this system for nearly 2 months and received 1780 entries and no complaints which showed a level of success. The downside was that all fishery data was presented on one spread sheet so took a little while to sift through.

Hard copy return books were replaced in early July.

The information we gather from the returns is essential for the successful management of our fisheries.

At the end of the trout season all the books are collected and the laborious process of compiling the data begins.

It took Brian Phillips our Bailiff Co-ordinator many hours to produce the catch statistics that are presented at the Annual Game Meeting.

This year we are reintroducing this online return system at the following fisheries. Durnford, West Amesbury below Ham Hatches, West Amesbury above Ham Hatches, Abbey and Queensberry.

Each of the above will have their own return form easily accessed either from a QR code or direct web link.

Management and members will have access to the result data for each of the fisheries again via a QR or direct web link.

Initially this system will be run in parallel with the hard copy return books. A belt and braces approach. It is important to note that the books should still be completed as normal but encourage as many of you as possible to complete a E return so we can look for any issues so there might be some tweaks along the way but if successful could be rolled out to all game fisheries in the future.

### **What is a QR code?**

QR Code is a two-dimensional version of the barcode, typically made up of black and white pixel patterns. Denso Wave, a Japanese subsidiary of the Toyota supplier Denso, developed them for marking components in order to accelerate logistics processes for their automobile production. Now, it has found its way into mobile marketing with the widespread adoption of smart phones. "QR" stands for "Quick Response", which refers to the instant access to the information hidden in the Code.

### **How do I scan QR codes.**



Depending on your device, you might already have a built-in QR Code reader or scanner. Open the camera app on your mobile phone and hold it over a Code for a few seconds until a notification pops up. If this doesn't happen, check your settings and see if QR Code scanning is enabled. Still not working? Don't worry, all you have to do now is install third-party QR Code readers from your app stores. There are plenty available free in either app store.



The QR & Web Links will be shown on the Return Boxes.

Example: **Please note these might not be final versions.**

West Amesbury Map 3 Below Ham Hatches.

Returns QR	Results QR
	
<a href="#">Returns Web Link</a>	<a href="#">Results Web Link</a>

I have a fairly old Android and use Google Lens from the Play Store which works a treat, not only for scanning QRs but also identifying plants, flowers etc. It is a bit like facial recognition in that respect!

If you have any comments or thoughts, you can air them on the forum or contact the Cart Shed.

Bill Latham

## BAILIFFS REPORT

S&DAC's bailiffs perform an important role supporting the function of our Club.

As members, you are aware the Club's portfolio extends to approximately 30 miles of chalk streams divided up into the many fisheries we look after, together with 2 Trout lakes and 3 Coarse Lakes.

We have a combined membership of just under 2,000 members, made up of Coarse & Game anglers. Our volunteer bailiffs are asked to look after one or more of our fisheries depending on their geographical location to the fishery and the time they have available.

Our function is to walk our fisheries and report anything that needs attention, a broken bridge, a damaged fence, pollution etc. to the office and the keepers.

We are also asked to check the membership of those fishing on SADAC waters, asking to see their membership book and EA license as well as giving advice and guidance to anglers and look out for poachers.

Our mixed fisheries in the middle Avon and coarse lakes at Steeple Langford, Petersfinger, and Dandy's, have specific bailiffs attached to them ensuring that anglers swims remain accessible and safe.

Looking at your membership book, you will be asked to sign in the signing in book before you begin fishing and sign out when you leave the fishery. This very simple request enables the bailiffs to know who is on the water and plays an important part in recording the pressure anglers put on that fishery. Not forgetting to lock or close any gate you may open.

We are in contact with each other through email, WhatsApp, telephone and face-to -face as and when necessary. Any member who would consider joining the bailiff team should contact me or the office and indicate where you live, what membership you have and what fisheries you would be able to look after.

Please remember bailiffs do this for the love of it and are approachable to ask questions. Greet them with a smile and a yearbook.

Brian Phillips  
(S&DAC Bailiff Coordinator)

### **CLUB IT & Communications.**

Do you have any experience of the following, WordPress, WooCommerce, PHPBB3 Forums, Web Site Updates, Maintenance, PC and laptop Mtce. and bulk email delivery?

Maybe you would like to develop a whole new cutting edge Web Site along with Ecommerce capabilities?

If so and you would like to take on this role and contribute to the running of our club then please get in touch in the first instance direct to the office.



## **Wiltshire Fishery Association**

### **Water Quality Group**

#### **Annual Report 2023**

*Water Quality Group - Volunteers are David Holroyd, Andreas Topintzis and Patrick Heaton-Armstrong*

### **Background**

2023 saw even more media exposure of the performance of Water Companies and the extent of illegal discharges alongside a background of excessive dividends and Chief Executive's bonuses.

There was further exposure of the lack of investment and enforcement by the government and its agencies both historically and within the term of the existing Government.

As an example, our research has illustrated the dramatic reduction the Environment Agency's water quality monitoring activities and its dependence upon the Water Company's monitoring, both locally and nationally.

The Water Quality Group continues to work with WildFish as its key partner and in collaboration with the Wessex Rivers Trust, to drive local campaigns to improve the water quality of the upper Avon catchment areas.

We continue to use WildFish's SmartRivers programme (33 sampling sites – Avon, Wylde, and Nadder - We are extremely grateful to those volunteers who go out month after month to carry out this important work) to monitor the water quality trends and is the key data for illustrating the need for action. An analysis undertaken by WildFish's science team of the last five years data has been used to prove further to the Environment Agency, and more recently to Natural England, that there is continued deterioration which requires urgent attention. The key areas continue to be Durrington (below the fish farm), West Amesbury (below two Sewage Treatment Works), Upper Wylde, below Warminster (various sources) and Upper Nadder (various sources) and River Till (Shrewton Sewage Treatment Works).

This work has also been used to illustrate the failure of the current Water Framework Directive to protect special rivers like the Avon. Just to remind

everyone, the Avon catchment is a SSSI and SAC, which are the highest categories of importance and protection nationally and internationally. We are presently pressing the Environment Agency to use our data and 5-year trend analysis of the Avon as a case study to illustrate the need to change or replace the Water Framework Directive.

### **Summary of Action**

SmartRivers programme – 33 sampling sites on the Avon, Wylde and Nadder. All samples collected and analysed Spring and Autumn

**Deliverables** – arising out of influencing and lobbying.

- Wessex Water’s £3m investment in Ratfyn & Amesbury Sewage Treatment Works.
- Legal action by WildFish – Wessex Water (WxW) failing to meet conditions of discharge permit.
- Construction of reed bed system – Shrewton Sewage Treatment Works. Work ongoing to ensure WxW meet the conditions of their discharge permit.
- Bio-swale systems being installed at Barford Sewage Treatment Works and Fovant sewer overflow into the River Nadder.
- Environment Agency commissioning of Portsmouth University to undertake Chem-catchers analysis pilot study – West Amesbury and Upper Wylde.
- Agreement between the Portsmouth University and WFA/S&DAC, in November, to initiate an ongoing annual Chem-catchers survey of the key ‘hotspots’, sites defined by WFA. This will deliver chemical analyses of these sites which can be reviewed alongside the SmartRivers data to identify important pollutants and their impact on invertebrate life and river water quality.
- Assisted Tisbury Parish Council to challenge a Planning Appeal for a large development using Smart Rivers data.
- Wylde Farmers Group – monthly chemical monitoring throughout the Wylde Valley. A similar scheme is being considered by Nadder Valley Farming group.

- Proposed housing development in Amesbury not included in the county plan.
- Lobbied for the Avon Catchment - in Wessex Water's Asset Management Plan 2025/2030 which will see all STWs in the Avon Catchment Area having to reduce their phosphate discharge levels down from 1mg/l to 0.25mg/l.
- Managed monthly invertebrate monitoring. Established a River monitor WhatsApp group. Delivered a river monitor training course, four new sampling teams (S&DAC).

### **Influencing Activities**

- BBC National News feature on impact of dairy farming on rivers.
- BBC Wiltshire Radio – impact of muck spreading on river life.
- Presentations on the need for action on the Avon
  - Cambridge Chalk stream Conference.
  - CPRE – Wiltshire AGM.
  - Tisbury Village meeting.
  - Wylve Farmers Group presentations.
  - Nadder Farmers Group presentations.
- Regular meetings with Environment Agency and Natural England.
- Regular meetings with Wessex Water.
- Member of Avon Catchment Partnership.
- Liaison with Danny Kruger MP for Devizes – offer to help directly.
- Challenge to John Glen MP's article in the Salisbury Journal, illustrating the inadequacy of the government control of the water companies' activities and their environmental policies and priorities to protect the Avon.

- Looking closely and challenging Wessex Water - Water Resources Management Plan.
- Feargal Sharkey's attendance at WFA's AGM and water quality presentation to all participants.

### **Working Collaborative Relationships for 2024**

- Wildfish – SmartRivers – key partner for resources and expertise.
- Wessex River Trust – access to stakeholders.
- Windrush Against Sewage Pollution - access to analysis of sewage works discharges.
- Portsmouth University – Chem-catchers programme.
- Natural England – developing the standards expected of the Avon as a Special Area of Conservation.

### **Priorities for 2024**

1. Pressure on the regulator to change Water Framework Directive to be effective in driving the improvement of the Avon and agree minimum standards with Natural England for the Avon as SAC.
2. Press the regulator to review the impact and the standard of fish farm operations within the Avon.
3. Continue to develop our understanding of the impact of expanding housing developments, water abstraction and Wessex Water's Water Resources Management Plan, which we consider to be unrealistic.
4. Work with Wessex Rivers Trust and other parties like the Wylfe Farmers group to develop a common format/process for reviewing the various forms of water quality data.