

No 83 - Annual General Meeting of the Salisbury & District Angling Club – 9th January 2024

The meeting was held online using Zoom™ technology, beginning at 7.30pm.

Officers and Committee Members in attendance:

R. Leachman (**Chairman**), J. Stoddart (**Hon. Vice Chairman – Game**), B. Bentley (**Hon. Vice Chairman – Coarse**), W. Latham (**Hon. Communications & IT Officer**), P. Barnard (**Hon. Match Secretary**), B. Phillips (**Hon. Bailiff Co-ordinator**), D. Longley, D. George, A. Stafford, D. Barnes, N. Turner, B. Reece

Management and Maintenance Team: A. Topintzis (**General Manager**), S. Trevett, S. Thomas, P. Clancy (**River Keepers**).

Apologies: A. Rees, N. De Foubert, J. Butler, R. Grimshaw, W. Morris, E. Howarth, N. Horton, C. Perkins, C. Parrish.

The General Manager – Andreas Topintzis - opened the meeting, welcomed those members attending, and introduced the speakers. There were 65 Full members and 147 Associate Members registered for the meeting. He said that questions and comments would be handled at the end of the meeting under AOB. Questions could be asked via Q&A or the Chat function.

The Chairman - Robert Leachman – welcomed all members, particularly those attending for the first time.

The following was the Agenda followed for the 83rd AGM of the Club:-

1. Approval of the Minutes issued for the 82nd 2023 AGM by voting members:

Proposed: D. Barnes **Seconded:** R. Sumsion

65 In Favour, none Against

2. Matters arising 82nd 2023 AGM minutes:-

- Nil

3. Chairman's report:-

- Mentioned that in last year's AGM AOB the subject of Associate Member voting rights was raised by B. Reece. This had been discussed at committee. The membership categories had been introduced in 1967 to avoid control of the club passing to the greater number of associate members residing outside the immediate area. Associate members are fundamental to the club. Voting is only for approval of accounts, honoraria, previous AGM minutes, committee recommendations, etc. B. Reece had been invited to join the committee as Associate Members Representative. His role would be described in the new Yearbook. The aim was to be all-inclusive.

- The Open Day would be on May 18th at the Abbey Fishery.
- The chairman mentioned the club's Riverfly monitoring scheme, Fishing for Forces, and Academy courses. He said that Nigel Turner had taken over coordination of the Juniors and Small Fry training sessions and that helpers were needed.
- The Game Meeting would be held in November.
- 2023 had presented significant challenges, most significantly the EA decision to end weed cutting which had led to flooding of some beats.
- A new beat would be available for the 2024 season on the Upper Wylde, immediately below the Eastleigh beat.
- Thanked the bailiffs, ably led by Brian Phillips, who are now connected to the police via a WhatsApp group, also the 25 river monitors who also have their own WhatsApp group.
- Lindsay Moore and Rob Doyle bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Academy courses which have been well-received.
- Running the club has many challenges but the main pressure on the rivers comes at mayfly time.
- The waiting list currently stands at 60 full and 255 associate. Turnover is about 120 per year therefore there is a 2-3 year wait.
- Reported that there will be changes to the Yearbook and encouraged members to read it carefully.

4. Game Report: J. Stoddart (Vice Chairman - Game):-

- Very wet 2023 as compared to dry 2022.
- Stocking remained the same with 2,000 fish put in, obtained from Manningford. These were put into the higher pressure, poorer habitat beats at Durnford, West Amesbury, Abbey, Countess and Stapleford.
- Weed cutting was greatly impacted by the EA decision to totally withdraw from extracting the weed at short notice. All clubs and owners were affected. Levels were high. Solution established by P. Clancy was too late to save the season on some waters. Discussions continue. Funding is available from the EA. Parts of Durnford beats 3 and 13 will be affected by weed cutting operations.
- Barford St. Martin beat sold, club having discussions with new owner. Likely to stay in Yearbook, to be confirmed via forum and website.
- Countess/Ratfyn – huge project by Wiltshire Rivers trust, re-gravelling and re-profiling. Lords Walk improvements likely later in 2024.
- New beat below Eastleigh on the Upper Wylde. Long, very wild, very boggy woodland beat. Will be accessed from current Eastleigh car park.

- Open Day and Academy courses received great feedback.
- Rainbow trout lakes were closed at times of high temperatures. Leominstead started later than Hamer. Hamer slow this year. Check forum for latest info.
- Results were on par or better for most fisheries.
- April 1st 2024 season start uncertain. Priorities are to reopen West Amesbury and weed cutting. Reopening of West Amesbury may be held back by floods, very treacherous at present. May be taped off areas. Weed extraction will take much time. Please be patient.
- Thanked S. Thomas for handling maintenance while P. Clancy busy with weed cutting planning and trials.

5. Coarse Report: B. Bentley (Vice Chairman – Coarse):-

- 2023 was very challenging, with high water both at the beginning and the end of the year. Petersfinger and Steeple Langford were expected to be unfishable most of the winter.
- Lots of fish caught, especially on the rivers. Big chub and barbel, and also big tench from Petersfinger.
- There was good weed growth, although at times this made fishing difficult on the lakes.
- About 200 youngsters received coaching at a variety of sessions. Hoping to increase the numbers of Small Fry and Junior members.
- Rebuilt track at Burgate. Rebuilt bank at Steeple Langford. Commenced installation of solar apparatus to run aerators at Steeple Langford. S. Trevett and P. Barnard installed new platforms on the Avon and Nadder. Landowner at Haywards Pond cleared canal section. Purchased weed rake.
- Stocking of crucians at Petersfinger anticipated once water levels have dropped.
- There will be some developments at White Horse. Pollarding of trees at Petersfinger may cause some disruption. The number of floating islands will be increased at Steeple Langford.

6. Match Report: P. Barnard (Match Secretary):-

- Match attendances through the summer were steady, best on our club lakes.
- Petersfinger fished very well in spring and summer, boosted by no close season. Tench, and quality roach and perch were among the catches.
- There were rumours of a 40lb mirror carp being caught from Hands Lake.

- Good to have one match at Steeple Langford. Weed growth and filamentous algae made further matches impossible in summer. The algae is #1 enemy countrywide.
- Petersfinger aerators operated regularly. Installation of an aeration system was commenced on Kingfisher Lake at Steeple Langford but had to be stopped due to weed and then floods. The floods also impacted the management plans at Petersfinger.
- River matches started but had to be suspended due to floods.
- Charity match generated £575 from the anglers for the Salisbury Hospital STARS Appeal.
- Salisbury River Park work now in full swing. Some impact on our fishing, don't know if it will improve.

7. Manager's Report: A.Topintzis (General Manager):-

- Last year RPI was at 14% in November. Subs for new year expected to be increased by approximately 3.5%.
- As always costs were a challenge.
- Went through the Income and Expenditure figures line by line. There was a slow start with membership, had to invite approximately 160 from waiting list. Day ticket revenue was down due to closure of West Amesbury. Good revenue was achieved by interest earned by the Money Market account. Club hats sold well. Rents were lower with Nightingale Lake no longer on the books, also two partial refunds were received, one for West Amesbury and one due to the solar installation at Hamer. Thanked M. Griffiths for his work for club. Restocking was lower as there had been 2 coarse fish stockings in 2022. Maintenance lower due to WA closure. Electricity costs reduced at Petersfinger. Postage higher due to sales of hats (offset by income). Honoraria higher as B. Phillips declined payment in 2022 but was paid in 2023. Corporation tax higher due to interest earned. IT costs higher due to new server for forum. Water quality benchmarking costs higher. £26K surplus overall. Approval of accounts was requested:

Proposed: R. Hillier

Seconded: N. Parrish

68 In Favour, none Against

8. Subscriptions 2023/2024:-

Game Full £330 (previous £320), Game Senior £295 (£280), Game Junior £57 (no change), Coarse Full £150 (£145), Coarse Senior £103 (£100), Coarse Junior £29 (no change), Small Fry £5 (no change), Night Fishing £25 (no change).

Discounts for full-time students and disabled anglers 30% on agreement with General Manager.

The chairman mentioned the £26K surplus. The Finance Committee met in December to set the new rates which were agreed at the January 2nd committee meeting, with one exception. It had previously been decided at the 2019 AGM to bring Senior Game rates within 10% of Full rates. The new figure was adjusted to bring it closer with the aim of achieving the 10% difference next year.

Approval of subscription rates was requested:

Proposed: M. Madden **Seconded:** J. King

67 In Favour, none Against

7. Honoraria:-

- P.Barnard, W.Latham, B.Phillips, M.Britten, J.Stoddart, B. Bentley.
- Increase of 6% to £1540 per person.

Proposed: N. Parrish **Seconded:** T. Rowcliffe

65 In Favour, none Against

8. Committee Proposals:-

None.

9. Election of Officers and Committee:-

The chairman said that the club constitution had been changed in 2018 to specify that the officers and committee would be up for re-election every 5 years instead of every 2. This was to ensure better continuity. Within the last year A. Bowditch had left the committee and N. Turner and B. Reece had joined. Long time members R. Hillier (Club President) and R. Sumsion (Vice President) had also relinquished their posts.

Proposed: S.Tarpey **Seconded:** J. Del Nero

61 In Favour, none Against

10. Members' Proposals:-

None

10. AOB:-

- A. Roberts asked J. Stoddart about brown trout stocking. It was the same as the previous season. He asked A. Topintzis about water quality. At West Amesbury the stretch is compromised by the presence of the two sewage treatment plants and also the expansion of Amesbury. Investment in infrastructure is lagging behind. The Wylve is in good shape apart from Stapleford which has a sewage treatment plant above. More phosphates come from the River Till Shrewton sewage treatment plant. Eastleigh is fine with a plant opposite! The combination of these plants and agricultural run-off cause major problems. Chemical monitoring started last year.
- A. Watling asked why the meeting couldn't be face to face. J. Stoddart replied that, although he favoured face to face but the meeting was more effective online. The Game Meeting reverted to face to face. The AGM is more of a business meeting, with more members involved including some from far away. A Zoom meeting also saves money. B. Bentley said there were plans for small face to face meetings in the Salisbury area.
- A. Watling enquired about the possibility of coarse fishing on game waters. J. Stoddart said there had been matches at Amesbury in the past. Grayling fishing goes on after trout season is over. Our leases and licenses are for game fishing, above Salisbury most landowners let fisheries as game waters.
- G. McGregor asked if there could be something about pike on the Avon at the Open Day. This could be added.
- C. Saunders enquired about the possibility of family memberships. J. Stoddart replied that the topic had been discussed and the Barford and Burcombe club has a similar such arrangement. However, we are a large club and it could cause too much expansion.
- C. Sutcliffe asked about weed cutting. P. Clancy described the trials which had taken place. Durnford had been cut as we wanted. West Amesbury had a first cut then the EA ban came into force. Following the trials, it was too late to further cut at WA. Cutting would have interfered with other fisheries. All is now in place to do as in the previous seasons. High water may inhibit cutting during the first window.
- N. Owens asked if there would be any additional parking at Eastleigh for the new beat. J. Stoddart replied that the new fishery would be open on different days so it wouldn't be an issue. Thursdays would be non-fishing, maintenance days on both beats.
- W. Wickstead queried the presence of donations as expenditure in the accounts. A. Topintzis replied that the club had made donations to Wiltshire Fisheries Association and Wardour Chapel following the sad passing of Tom Putnam. The club also made a donation to charity following the passing of Ricky Polden.
- P. Marshall asked what the minimum age for Senior Members is. The answer is 66.
- C. Hope asked what roles were required to be filled on the committee. Nothing specific, speak to HQ.

- S. Gill wanted to know the qualifications for joining the committee. Full Members with at least 5 years membership, Associate Members at committee discretion.
- R. Smythe asked what proportion of stocked fish had been removed. This was reported at the Game Meeting and could be viewed via a link on the forum.
- N. Owens asked if there were plans to access Stonehenge Tunnel funds. J. Stoddart responded that Highways Agency funds were paying for the work at Ratfyn and Lords Walk. Wessex Rivers Trust were spending it.
- G. Morgan-Plum questioned whether if West Amesbury was closed could other fisheries be opened up for day tickets? A. Topintzis replied that it had happened in 2023, being trialled at Durnford outside mayfly.
- H. Staartjes asked if the weed cutting operations by the club will increase financial impact. Hopefully not, other beneficiaries will contribute, also EA costs (£18K in 2022) have gone away.
- P. Blythin expressed his appreciation of the club's efforts to resolve the weed cutting issues.
- C. Hope asked if the floods could damage the riverbed while trout were spawning. P. Clancy said the Wild Trout Trust think that wild fish spawn over a wider window. The flush of water is good, creates clean gravels, although some redds may be washed out.

Meeting Closed: 21:25.

Next AGM to be held 7th January 2025.