

ANGLING TRUST SUBSCRIBER MEMBERS' ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 30th November 2019, commencing **10:30am**

West Midlands Golf Club at The Lake at Barston, Marsh House Farm Lane, Barston, Solihull, B92 0LB

Minutes

Welcome from the Chair (George Stephenson)

"Thank you to all of you for coming today and it's great to see such a strong turnout. It seems that Saturday mornings and some form of conference (or perhaps it's the free lunch?!) are much more popular than a weekday evening battling with traffic!

It's great to see so many of you coming – welcome!"

Minutes and accounts

Members were asked to approve the minutes of the AGM held 18 November 2018 as a true and accurate record. **Approved.**

Members were also asked to approve the 2018/19 accounts. Michael Heylin proposed the accounts for approval, seconded by George Graham and the motion was duly carried. **Approved.**

"Thank you all for your ongoing support of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal. This year we celebrate our 10th anniversary- it's been one helluva ride!

I am pleased to report that further to our decision last year to address the issue of Membership, and how we become sustainable as an organisation going forwards - all categories of Membership have grown over the past year!

The club and fishery memberships have seen significant increases and this growth in your collective membership has enabled us to do more and more each year to represent anglers, promote angling and protect the interests of you, our members.

Take Angling Improvement – through our partnership with the Environment Agency, the Angling Improvement Fund has distributed some £540,000 of fishing licence money to protect fisheries from predation. And this year alone, more than £100,000 is being spent on providing otter-proof fencing for stillwaters.

We've also been very active in helping Fisheries Officers and the police to tackle illegal fishing and poaching. In the past year our Voluntary Bailiff Service carried out over 25,000 hours of patrols! I personally attended a workshop in the South West and was impressed by the professionalism and particularly the lead that we have taken in addressing the language barriers that we face – our efforts at translating the rules etc. have since been adopted by other sporting NGBs around the country!

We've continued to build our profile and credibility with government ministers and policy makers. We've worked hard to win concessions for angling in the new fisheries bill and made huge progress in establishing the rights of sea anglers. This year we were successful in getting the Government to commit to recognising sea anglers as a stakeholder in how our fish stocks are managed in the future,

and to provide funding to develop recreational sea angling. We've also raised the issue of over-abstraction of water from our rivers much higher up the political agenda. I'm sure you will have seen the coverage we've secured across the national media on this.

Through collaboration we have witnessed more people enjoying the sport that we love – with the Environment Agency, Sport England, the Canal and Rivers Trust, Get Hooked on Fishing, and most recently The Missing Salmon Alliance – an organisation that unites the Atlantic Salmon Trust, The Salmon & Trout Conservation, the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust and ourselves – in a bid to pool resources and convince donors that we can work together to improve both the environment, and thus the wellbeing of fish stocks and in turn the fortune of anglers! Several of us attended the conference, hosted by The Fishmongers, last week, and it was very positive to see the collaboration, and the support that was generated, launching a scheme that perhaps offers a model for other projects in the future.

As Chairman, the over-riding priority is generally to hope that our CEO and Management Team have everything under control and life is about turning up to Board Meetings, and meeting up with important players in the industry, presenting the odd awards etc!

Having effectively gone down that road for 6 years I was taken by surprise in January of this year, to be taken aside by Mark Lloyd – founder, leading light and driving force behind the Angling Trust and Fish Legal – to be told that there was only one other job in the world (short of Prime Minister!!) that he dreamt of - and that was head of the Rivers Trust! And the job had become available! He was the right man for the job!

As Board/Committee Members will attest, the search for a new CEO was interesting, at times stressful, and certainly the biggest decision that any of us had had to make. Nearly 20 candidates were gradually whittled down and ultimately we took the “brave decision” (Angling Times) and opted for youth and dynamism over other more conservative candidates. Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like very much to welcome and introduce you to Jamie Cook, who will take over as CEO in the New Year. I'm really looking forward to working with Jamie to take our organisation onwards and upwards! You'll be hearing from Jamie later in the day but can I please ask you to join me in welcoming him to our organisation?

At this moment, and prior to any eulogy over the work of Mark Lloyd, I would like to pay enormous thanks and deepest appreciation to the work of our stand-in CEO and ongoing Chief Operating Officer Roland Caley! Roland has guided our organisation through the past 6 months whilst retaining a cheery, positive and very professional attitude – and he's not really a fisherman! I would like to personally thank Roland for his immense effort and contribution to the well-being of The Angling Trust and Fish Legal. Roland – thank you for all that you have done and here's to an exciting future with you and Jamie!

Anyway, before moving onwards I must just pay some sort of homage to Mark Lloyd, who not only recruited me into our organisation (whether for better or worse!) but who basically initiated our organisation as it is today! Without his drive, his dynamism, his intelligence, his thick skin, his passion – our organisation would not exist as it is today! He was, he is, a colossus in the environmental world, a passionate environmentalist – a man for whom I certainly have a high regard (though go carefully if you fish with him, and I have, in England, Wales, Scotland and Russia! – he is a skilled dark horse!) and I hope that in his new role at the Rivers Trust we will be able to forge collaborative and exciting unions!

With that in mind, your Board and Committee have both unanimously agreed and approved that Mark Lloyd, David Kent and Dick Vincent be registered as Lifetime Honorary Vice Presidents, to join those very few individuals who have given way beyond the norm in their efforts to make our organisation what it is today. Thank you Mark, David and Dick!”

Lifetime Honorary Vice Presidents announced:

- Mark Lloyd
- David Kent

- Dick Vincent

“Moving on – We are obviously sad to see the retirement of Dick Vincent and David Kent from the Board. However, we are thrilled to be able to welcome Peter Emery, a skilled match angler and successful businessman to our Board. Welcome Peter. I will leave the new Fish Legal Committee Members to George Graham.

There is one nominated Director to be voted in today, and I would like to say that whilst in previous years we struggled to attract Board Members, we are incredibly fortunate to have been inundated with a huge number of extremely talented candidates! “

New Directors 2019

The Chair introduced one new co-opted Director, Peter Emery.

Members were then invited to vote for their preferred nominated candidate from the following list:

- Stephen Beverley
- Jeremy Bourke
- Stuart Leask
- Tristan Peniston-Bird

Votes cast in the meeting were added to those already received by proxy, resulting in Stephen Beverley being voted in as a Nominated Director.

“Getting down to business, I am delighted to report that the Angling Trust generated a surplus of £122,609 for the financial year ended 31st March 2019. This is an unusually strong financial result and has enabled us to strengthen our reserves and fund renewed investment in our marketing and member services.

Because Angling Trust Limited was established with minimal assets, we have had a policy for some years of aiming to accumulate reserves to provide greater financial security in the event of unexpected financial shocks in the future. This process is not yet complete, but the organisation is now fundamentally much stronger as a result of the last three years' results.

As a result of the investment we are making in improved marketing and member services, we anticipate making a small deficit in the year to March 2020, but we believe these investments will help us stride ahead in future years.

I would like to end with some “thank yous”. First, I would like to thank the Angling Trust Board of Directors, who give up hundreds of hours of their time voluntarily each year to read reams of papers, attend board meetings, and serve on sub-committees.

I would like to thank Karen Watkinson for all her efforts in organising today and finally, I would like to thank all the hard working Angling Trust staff and hundreds of volunteers for the work that they do, often long into the evenings and at weekends, to serve our members: as we are all aware the issues we face are often complex, polarised and thankless (as with so many things Political and in the angling world!!). The Angling Trust team deserves our gratitude for all that they do as they fight for a brighter future for our sport.

That’s all from me and concludes the Angling Trust Annual General Meeting. I now have pleasure in handing over to George Graham, Chair of Fish Legal, for the Fish Legal 2019 Annual General Meeting. George”

Questions from the floor:

Recognition of the achievement of having a united angling organisation established for 10 years.

Q: The work of AT is largely invisible to anglers. Who on the Board is the contact for coarse anglers?

A: The new AT Board member, Peter Emery, is a well qualified match angler, and the incoming CEO, Jamie Cook is also an experienced match angler. The Board takes it very seriously. A forthcoming Board away day will discuss Strategy for forthcoming years and will include match angling.

Q: What action will AT take in relation to invasive species?

A: Recognition it is a serious issue. AT has an Invasive Species Officer. It is a complex issue and there is a need to review policy for all invasive species. Catfish and Zander were referenced.

Q: A lack of coaches is affecting the ability to run participation events. What is AT doing to address the issue? Will on-line courses for coaching become available?

A: Recognition of the passion and efforts of volunteers in supporting participation events. EA funding has enabled some training. There is an ambition to recruit more volunteers. An offer was extended to discuss further with the Head of Participation and Coaching Manager to explore ideas.

Q: People cannot afford to enter national competitions. What plans are there for funding?

A: Recognised as an issue and had been discussed at length at a recent Board meeting. It is high on the Board agenda, but there are no answers as yet.

Q: Would the Board appoint someone to look at funding across all competitions?

A: The importance is known and it will be given further consideration.

Q: Can a register of coaches be made available?

A: To be discussed in the coaching element of the workshop later in the day.

Q: Is there a plan for unified communications?

A: No current plan in place, but there is an emerging plan. The work with the Missing Salmon Alliance is an example of an area where efforts are already been made.

Q: What is the update on the new website?

A: Work is ongoing to bring 12 websites together. Ambition to launch in April 2020. Wireframes and site maps have been developed. Over 10,000 pages need to be migrated or archived to ensure the new website is up to date and relevant.

The meeting closed at 11.00am and was followed by the Fish Legal AGM

Minutes

Saturday 30th November 2019, commencing **11am**

West Midlands Golf Club at The Lake at Barston, Marsh House Farm Lane, Barston, Solihull, B92 0LB

Welcome from the Chair (George Graham)

“Welcome, and I would like to echo the other George’s thanks to you all for coming and for your support of our organisations.

The financial year to March 2019 was a busy one for Fish Legal. Our lawyers have successfully secured compensation for many of our members whose waters have been polluted.

There are lots of great case studies in this year’s edition of The Angler, which includes a 10-year anniversary supplement. I want to pick out three themes, where we have seen increasing activity:

- 1) Abstraction. I hope it won’t sound insensitive at a time when a number of communities are just getting back on their feet after flooding, but water resources are under increasing strain across many parts of the country. In 2018 Southern Water were forced to temper their water abstraction ambitions on the lower River Test and commit to major long-term infrastructure investments instead. But just one year later they applied for a drought permit to allow increased abstraction this summer, justified by an alleged ‘exceptional shortage of rain’. Fish Legal argued for much better protections for the Test’s fragile migratory species, and the hearing Inspector agreed in his report that these need to be accelerated.*
- 2) Hydropower. Fish Legal has responded to a peak in requests for assistance from members concerned about potentially damaging hydro-scheme applications being submitted ahead of the end of the Feed-in-Tariff scheme in early 2019. A number of applications have been withdrawn. We have also secured changes to protect fisheries on schemes that are already operational.*
- 3) Anaerobic digesters: last year we secured compensation for Gloucester Angling Club, after tonnes of digestate were released into the river Leadon, killing thousands of chub, dace, bream and roach, as well as endangered bullhead, lampreys and eels. We are still representing members after the disastrous 2016 pollution of the Teifi, which killed tens of thousands of salmon and sewin. Natural Resources Wales decided not to prosecute. Realistically, I believe we must expect to have to pick up more of the strain in cases like this. Neither the Environment Agency nor NRW have anywhere near the budgets they need to pursue all the cases they should be pursuing.*

I want to thank Penny and the legal team for all their hard work to manage this growing caseload and secure redress for our members.

Financially, income rose last year to £523,000 from £456,000 in the prior year. The increase resulted principally from higher than expected costs recovered in successful court cases. Balancing that, we spent more than anticipated on barristers and experts to support our cases, with total costs also rising to £498,000, from £449,000 in the prior year. That means we recorded a surplus of £25,000 for the year, which has strengthened our reserve funds and enabled us to invest in some much-needed improvements to the legal software supporting our team.

We are only able to take on contested cases on your behalf because of the strength of our investment fund. The fund has grown significantly over the past few years in a favourable market to £1.2 million

and I am very grateful to the Committee of volunteers who also serve on the Board of the ACA Trustee Company Ltd., which oversees the management of our finances. Over the last year we have taken steps to reduce significantly the investment management costs of this fund.

We are very conscious of the 70-year history of our organisation (previously known as the Anglers' Co-operative Association and the Anglers' Conservation Association), and that our reserves represent many generous donations and legacies over the decades. We respect the wishes of these donors by managing our funds prudently and ensuring that they are only used for the purposes they were intended. Without the fund, we would not be able to take on the difficult cases, where if we lose, we could face many thousands of pounds in adverse costs.

Particular thanks on this occasion should go to Mark Lloyd, who stepped down this year as chief executive of Fish Legal as well as of the Angling Trust. And we look forward to welcoming Jamie Cook when he takes up this role in January.

Thanks, too, to Paul Stafford, who is stepping down after serving on the Fish Legal committee but has agreed to remain on our Legal Advisory Committee. The Legal Advisory Committee, chaired by Andrew Nathan, gives us the benefit of their expertise and experience to support and advise the legal team through some of our most thorny legal cases. We thank them.

I am pleased that we have been able to recruit two outstanding new members to the Fish Legal Committee, Mike Greenwood and Dean Luker. Along with the rest of the committee, we will shortly be asking for your approval for their appointments.

We now need to hold a number of votes to re-elect the Committee and Treasurer, adopt the accounts and to re-appoint the Auditors Adkin Sinclair."

Approval of the minutes of the 2018 AGM

The Chair asked for comments prior to approving the minutes of last year's AGM. None were received and the minutes were duly approved.

Re-election of the Committee

The Chair sought approval to re-elect the Committee by block vote, in addition to the proxy votes already received in favour:

- George Graham
- Phil Chamberlain
- Tim Goode
- Mike Greenwood
- Michael Heylin OBE
- Jamie Lamb
- Dean Luker
- Charles Nichols
- George Stephenson

This course of action was seconded and carried by a show of hands. The Committee was duly re-elected.

Re-election of the Treasurer

The Chair sought approval to re-elect the Treasurer (Roland Caley), in addition to the proxy votes already received in favour.

This course of action was seconded and carried by a show of hands. The Committee was duly re-elected.

Approval of the accounts for the period ending 31 March 2019

The Chair sought approval of the accounts, in addition to the proxy votes already received in favour.

This course of action was seconded and carried by a show of hands. The accounts for the period ending 31 March 2019 were approved.

Appointment of the auditors Adkin Sinclair

The Chair sought approval to appoint the auditors, Adkin Sinclair, for a further year.

This course of action was seconded and carried by a show of hands. Adkin Sinclair were duly appointed for a further year.

The Chair made the following closing statement:

“Thank you very much for your support of these motions. Thank you most of all for your continuing support for Fish Legal. Without you we wouldn’t be able to carry on with our mission to protect fish and fishing.”

No questions were received from the floor. Members were invited to contact staff or Committee Members during the breaks.

The meeting closed at 11.25am

Angling Trust/Fish Legal AGMs

In Attendance:

Neil Berry
Leva Breitereyte
Adam Brown
Chris Burt
Pat Byrne
Roland Caley
Owen Chapman
Steve Clamp
Sarah Collins
Clive Copeland
Paul Davis
Bryan Dray
Tim Earthrowl
Eric Edwards
Mal Ellison
Peter Emery
Andrew Fairclough
Terence Fell
Peter Fieldhouse
Samantha Frost-Jones
Penny Gane
George Graham
Mike Greenwood
Robert Gregson
Paul Harding
Geoff Hardy
Michael Heylin OBE
Nigel Howard
Rob Hughes
Craig Hunt
Dennis Hunt
Donald Jones
Janusz Kansik
David Kent
Daniel Kirk
David Lancaster
Stuart Leask
Dean Luker
Nick Main
Eoin McDonagh
Christopher Mills
David Mitchell
Richard Morley
John Morrall
Charles Nichols
Brian Owen
Robin Pearson
Richard Pilkington
Jon Portman
Philip Reade
Mick Rowley

Dilip Sarkar
Karen Sarkar
Martin Salter
Tom Sherwood
Roger Simpson
Stuart Singleton-White
Allyson Smith
Paul Stafford
George Stephenson
Mark Timerick
Dominic Webb
Ian Wilks
Martin Wise
Amanda Wynne-Jones

Staff (non-voting)

Karen Watkinson