

RIBBLE FISHERIES CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007

Meeting held: Tuesday 19th June 2007
Venue: RCCT Offices, Ribble Cement, Clitheroe at 7:30p.m.

AGENDA

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks, Apologies & Apologies for absence.
2. Address by Mark Lloyd, Director of the ACA
3. Minutes of the last A.G.M. (attached).
4. Matters Arising.
5. Chairman's Report
6. Secretary's Report.
7. Treasurer's Report. (inc. Proposal on Subscriptions
& Appointment of Auditors)
8. Election of Chairman
9. Election of Officers
10. Election of Council of Management.
11. R.F.C.A. Business Plan Report
12. A.O.B. (as allowed by the Chairman)
13. Closing Remarks

MINUTES

Present: C.D.Hinks, J.W.Whitham, K.B.Spencer, F.Higham, B.Gaskell, J.P.Lord, Mrs. J.Clark, S.Hatton, D.Halstead, P.J.Taylor, H.Marchbank, J.S.Halford, T.Montgomery, G.Sewter, R.B.Broughton, W.J.Wood, B.Spedding, J.A.Thurnhill, D.E.Jebson, G.Parkes, P.Lewin D.Wilkinson, P.Linley, J.B.Swales, G.Brewer, and 4 other members whose names were not recorded (if those missing will let us know we will amend the minutes accordingly).

Apologies: M.Horner, S.Gledhill, B.Wells, J.C.Smith, J.C.Preston, E.N.S.MacKenzie, D.Jackson, A.Rowntree, C.Jackson B.Belcher, D.V.Soames, C.Heap, J.Weedon, P.Stevens, J.Cotton, J.Bradburn, M.Howarth, L.Hunt, M.Crump, G.Childs, B.Stanley, G.J.Murray, and I.Flemming.

Guests: M.Lloyd (Director ACA) A.Brown (E.A. Central Area Fisheries Team Leader) and Mrs. H.Nightingale (E.A. Central Area Environment Management Team Leader) F.French (NWFAC), Mrs.H.Whitham and Mrs. I.Hinks

1. Welcome and apologies for absence:

The Chairman (David Hinks) welcomed all present, indicating that he was pleased to see so many at the meeting. He then expressed apologies on behalf of those listed above – many of whom were off fishing so perhaps we may need to review the date of our AGM. He continued by extending a warm welcome to our guests and made several general comments about progress the association had made over the last year. He then introduced Mark Lloyd (ACA Director) indicating that with all our pollution problems it was appropriate that he is our guest speaker. He commented that this was not only a first for us but also for Mark as he has not addressed a consultative before.

2. Guest Speaker:

Mark Lloyd

Mark began by indicating what the ACA was and how it was formed in 1948 by a group of anglers who took action over pollution and won. They agreed that there was a need to repeat such activity across the country so the ACA was born.

He continued by explaining that whereas the E.A., who is responsible for prosecuting polluters, needed a high degree of proof (99%) to be successful the ACA use common law where the degree of proof is only 51% to gain compensation for loss of value and diminution of rights and their enjoyment.

The ACA work very closely with the E.A. and with many agencies nationally so as to provide a double attack on polluters, which should cause them to take more care. They also work closely with insurance companies to put pressure on companies to prevent pollution incidents.

The Association is totally funded by membership fees and membership is open to individuals, angling clubs, owners and Trusts. He then explained that when taking a case it was especially beneficial if all clubs and owners on a river system were members as collectively the loss was much more significant.

He commented on a typical case, which highlighted the following:

- a) Fish kill,
- b) Source of pollution identified,
- c) E.A. takes a criminal prosecution,
- d) ACA engage experts to assess situation and determine:
 - i) Diminution of value,
 - ii) Loss of amenity.

Owing to the difference in degree of proof required the ACA could win a case without an E.A. prosecution.

The ACA take on all costs and use their own, in house, legal team. Currently they are dealing with 55 cases nationwide. Typically costs can be high, especially, where barristers are involved.

In 2006 18 cases were settled and in 17 cases advice was provided for members. Some £142238 was won in damages and £53000 was recovered in costs. In addition to pollution cases the ACA was actively involved in the successful cessation of sheep dip and in co-ordinating the offer of a reward for information on a pollution (the bio diesel incident on the Ribble), in instances of fish disease and work concerning weirs and river works. Principle cases involve sewage discharges, sedimentation, leachate, pesticides, and slurry. Agricultural run off is a major problem as is abstraction. He commented on the effects of abstraction in the upper Hodder and indicated that with the effects of climate change this problem was likely to have a more profound effect and noted the likely consequences of the implementation of the Blueprint for Water and the Water Framework Directive and the need to support and influence these developments.

He continued commenting on the national picture and the work being done with OFWAT, Government Ministers, DEFRA and the E.A. He also spoke of the need to work closely with other bodies, such as RSPB, Natural England etc, so as to maximise the numbers of people represented.

Finally, he urged as many people as possible to support the ACA and such bodies in order to protect our heritage. He then indicated the ACA subscriptions levels, which were:

Junior membership (under 16)	£5 p.a.
Individual membership if club is an ACA member	£12 p.a.
Individual membership	£20 p.a.
Life membership	£250
Trade membership	£20
Clubs with under 50 members	£50
Clubs with over 50 members	£100-£500 depending on membership

Riparian Owner membership (less than .5mile)	£75
Riparian Owner membership (more than .5mile)	£150

He then took a few questions and comments from the floor during which J.P.Lord (RCCT) echoed the need for all anglers to become individual members of Associations and Trusts that support and work for our rivers.

The Chairman closed this part of the meeting by thanking Mark for his contribution.

3. Minutes of the last A.G.M.:

The minutes of the last A.G. were taken as read being proposed by J.P.Lord and seconded by F.Higham.

4. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. Chairman Report:

The Chairman started by thanking the Officers for their support during an eventful year and to K.H.Whitham for her services in preparing and getting the annual report done.

He continued by outlining the success over the year, which included:

- i) communications between clubs and individuals,
- ii) communications and closer relationships with other organisations (RCCT, Hodder and Lancashire Consultatives, RSPB, the Barrage Group, – thereby making us more effective,
- iii) the way an agreed position had been communicated,
- iv) increased co-operation between game and coarse anglers,
- v) the new NLO, the tagging scheme and the cooperation with tackle shops – all with RFCA involvement; thereby providing individual anglers with an opportunity to “have their say”,
- vi) structural changes to our organisation within the catchment – in particular the development of the Calder Catchment Group,
- vii) the development of sound relationships with the pollution teams and the excellent work done by our Pollution Officers,
- viii) the positive response that had been forthcoming from the E.A. pollution offices – especially Mrs. H.Nightingale and her team – the fact that responses were being provided by the E.A. to pollution reports,
- ix) the fact that Andy Brown had been promoted to a strategic role within our area and that he would be missed,
- x) these successes had raised expectations for the future.

On the “lows” side he commented on:

- i) the bio diesel pollution,
- ii) the Entrepose situation,
- iii) his frustration dealing with these matters and the lack of motivation of many anglers on the river bank.

6. Secretary’s Report:

The Secretary’s report had been included in the Annual report so K.B.Spencer indicated that he was prepared to answer any questions that members may have. He concluded by thanking all those who had supported him during his last year as secretary.

The Secretary’s Report was accepted by the meeting being proposed by J.P.Lord and seconded by D.Halstead.

7. Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer presented the audited statement of accounts to the end of 2006 commenting:

- i) The favourable response from clubs to make up any contributions towards the partial net buy off that had been missed. This has enabled the Association to remain in the black on our yearly expenditure.
- ii) The continued issue of annual statements of accounts to clubs and owners had again proved worthwhile.
- iii) There had been a significant increase in administrative costs due to postage increases, addition papers produced, our involvement in the NLO review and the production of a detailed Business Plan.
- iv) The fact that if all expenses were claimed the actual increase would have been at least double.
- v) He stated that in the future there would be increases in expenditure to meet the new structure and way of working but it was hoped to offset some of this by the increased use of e-mail and the website.

The accounts were approved by the meeting being proposed by B.Gaskell and seconded by W.J.Wood.

The Treasurer proposed that Moore & Smalley LLP be re-appointed auditors for 2007/8. This was unanimously agreed.

The Treasurer reported that the subscription proposal was supported by the Council of Management who was commending it to the meeting. The proposal was then put to the meeting and was unanimously approved.

8/9. Election of Chairman:

As no nominations had been received for Chairman and he was willing to continue he was re-elected unopposed.

Election of Officers:

The Chairman indicated that no nominations had been received for any of the Officers and all were prepared to continue with the exception of K.B.Spencer as Secretary they were all re-elected unopposed.

The Chairman continued stating that a member had indicated he may be willing to take over as Secretary next year so he was suggesting that we continue as we are at present with the Chairman and Treasurer covering as secretary to the Association. This was accepted by the meeting.

10. Election of Council of Management:

The Chairman gave details of the changes in membership (M.Howarth – Manchester Anglers and the continuing vacancy for Bowland Game Fishing Assoc, and a vacancy for Prince Albert member) of the Council of Management since the last A.G.M. and these were confirmed en-bloc being proposed by J.P.Lord and seconded by R.B.Broughton.

11. R.F.C.A. Business Plan:

The Chairman took the meeting through the reviewed Business Plan page by page inviting comments and discussion on each item. He provided greater detail and further explanation for some items.

During these discussions:

- i) Mrs J.Clark informed the meeting that there was now an Environmental Councillor (Cllr. A.Cartwright) appointed to the County Council.
- ii) There was concern expressed that abstraction was not included as a significant water management issue in the North-west.

- iii) F.French stated that there may be advantage in contacting Natural England on a number of issues being pursued as they now have an arm dealing with recreational issues.
- iv) The Chairman indicated that while progress on the new structure had been significant the idea of a middle and upper Ribble Committee may have to be reviewed.
- v) Canoeists will not give up and we need to be sure that we have an organisation that can represent anglers against this threat. We must ensure that we work and stick together on all fronts.

12. **A.O.B.**

- i) A.Brown (E.A. Central Area Fisheries Team Leader) thanked the Association for their contributions to the many discussions that had taken place during his time as Fisheries Officer and for the co-operation that had been forthcoming during the NLO review. Particularly, during discussions where there had been a difference of opinion. The meeting wished him well in his new post and expressed the hope that his successor would continue the excellent start that had been made to engaging anglers in the development of the Ribble catchment. He did, however, indicate that he would still be involved with the monitoring of the NLO and salmon bye-law and the tagging scheme. He also indicated that it might be some time before all the proposed changes in the structure of the E.A. were fully implemented.
- ii) J.P.Lord gave a brief update on the work of the Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust which included:
 - i) proposals for dealing with the Signal Crayfish problem – a 3 year option,
 - ii) the developments with regard to a fish pass in the weir at Padiham,
 - iii) work on Stocks Beck,
 - iv) finance still needed for the Brennand and Whitendale,
 - v) finance still needed for work on Bashall Beck but Prof. E.Molby working with a student would begin shortly.
- iii) The meeting were informed that James Carr, Chirf Executive of Preston City Council, had finally agreed to meet representative of RFCA and the meeting would take place on Friday 22nd June. A memo would then be sent to Council.
- iv) W.J.Wood proposed a vote of thanks for the officers of the Association for all their hard work and this was endorsed by the meeting.

The Chairman again thanked Mark Lloyd for his contribution and thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the discussions during the meeting. He thanked J.P.Lord and S.Hatton for allowing the association to use their offices for meeting.

He then closed the meeting at 9:05p.m.

J.W.Whitham
June 2007

.....Chairman

.....Date