

Minutes of Consultative Meeting held on 14th Nov 2020

Present David Hawley, Kelvin Allen, Hugh Bunker, Brian Balderson, Viktor Tzikas, Seumas Halliday, John Wadham & Neil Stafford Chris French, Andrew Pattison, Nathan Minter and Martin Barnett

Apologies John Newman, Ray Richardson, Chris Reeds, Paul Douglas, Mark Fox, Tony Machine

Matters arising from the previous meeting

None

Regional/National AT update.

Kelvin presented the following:

A permit was granted by the EA on 23 July 2020 for the installation of barriers on Hoveton Great Broad resulting in legal action with the EA and NE from the AT and BASG.

Much of this has been covered in the national press. https://youtu.be/2XfaMsxAH_o

The grounds of claim are, in summary, that:

- (1) The EA failed to publicise and consult upon the application for the permit to put in place the fish barriers in accordance with its statutory and common law duties
- (2) The EA failed to adopt the correct legal test/approach in determining whether the barriers would cause deterioration in the status of HGB/HB and/or other water bodies for the purposes of Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive.
- (3) It was irrational for the EA to give less weight to the evidence of its own fisheries specialists than to that of NE on the ground that the latter, but not the former, was based on “peer-reviewed” sources
- (4) It would be unlawful for NE to install the barriers for so long as the EA’s fisheries specialists consider that there will be a significant impact on fish

The EA has responded that it does not intend to contest the Claim.

It writes that: “The Environment Agency concedes that this claim should be allowed on Ground 1 only and the permit application remitted to the Environment Agency to be redetermined.”

NE has indicated that: “Natural England does not contest ground 1, and accepts that the claim should be allowed.. Natural England does contest grounds 2-4.”

Ongoing debate with EA on pollution poor enforcement actions with Water Companies

AT launched Anglers against Pollution campaign

East of England growth, challenge to our environment with little policy on water

Engagement with Building Bridges at Whitemills Marina Debbie Skinner with EE issues

Rod Licence sales now 15% above last year, 17% on revenue

Additional FIP scheme now in place due to this additional income

Discussion on the various poaching by Eastern Europeans on the Grand Union around Northampton.

Neil Stafford asked if some additional focus could be taken on this.

Action Kelvin to discuss with Paul Thomas and Janusz to arrange a specific conference call on this subject in the coming weeks.

Bryan Balderson reported that some considerable improvements have been made around Boston with joint patrols and police engagement, resulting in 3 anglers being prosecuted for theft of fishing rights in recent weeks by the police. Bryan talked about having the correct club rules and framework in place to enable such actions and agreed to forward the BDAA constitution as a reference to this.

Nenescape

Significant Impact from COVID during 2020.

Engagement with Welland and Deeping IDB on potential opening of some drains to fishing
Not a successful outcome, clubs and the IDB just too far apart. That said the IDB approach was against fishing, as just too much hassle. Some lessons learnt about angling in the 21st century.
BBC Countryfile to feature in early 2021 on the Building Bridges work.
Coaching to continue in 2021 and 2022
Evidence remains that the actual illegal poaching is minimal in volume
Large scale survey of the angling community in 2021.

EA Update and Enforcement Report.

Hugh Bunker provided a verbal update on the work of the FBG team

The FBG team dealt with a significant numbers of heat related fishery incidents over the summer.
One week had 20 incidents.

The enforcement team are out and about and do have the ability to issue tickets for SAFFA related offences However there remains a backlog in issuing summons due to COVID impacting on the team in Warrington. The enforcement team are improving their coverage by the use of drones and have resourced all Cat 1 incidents.

They have recently completed a number of stocking programs across the area.

The planned monitoring program was suspended, but is due to start again this quarter on the Witham and Welland catchments.

Hugh confirmed that the team structure previously on trial will be secured and the post of team lead is being advertised.

Nene Catchment Report

Viktor reported that COVID-19 has curtailed much of the deliveries this summer, but has completed the works at Nassington. The Wellingborough Embankment and Electric Cut projects are ongoing.

Welland Catchment Report

Chis highlighted the activities of the WRT, the WIG funded work at Marker Harborough is complete along with the upstream off channel wetland project.

<http://www.wellandrivertrust.org.uk/welland-headwaters-improvement-project/>

The group has successfully obtained a Lottery Grant for Community Engagement.

<http://www.wellandrivertrust.org.uk/our-welland-kicks-off/>

Stillwater Reports

John provided an update on the status of Rutland and Grafham water.

Seumas reported on the fishing across the various waters with some success and the continued use of the reservoirs for predator fishing.

AOB

All thought the zoom experience worked well and it could a solution for further meetings.

The date of our next meeting:

23rd Jan 2021