**Minutes of Usk Fishing Association Committee Meeting held on 26 May 2022**

**Present**: Harry Legge Bourke (HLB), Helen Harrison (HH), Mike Cowburn (MC), Tony Rees (AR), Gary Davies (GD)

1. **APOLOGIES**: James Cresswell (Resigned), Jonathan Carthew (Resigned), Rob Kerby, Charles de Winton, Stewart Matthews and Mike Gulliford.
2. The **MINUTES** of the Meeting held on 13 July 2020 were approved and there were a number of matters arising:

HLB, HH and Guy Mawle had met with the Chief Executive of Welsh Water, Peter Perry, to seek assurances for upgrades to sewage systems.

HLB had also met with the Welsh Secretary Simon Hart, the Brecon MP Fay Jones and representatives of other fishing organisations. Fisheries in Wales remain a devolved issue.

UFA would continue to support the Angling Trust; and it is important that Riparian owners are represented in Wales. Conservation would be the better emphasis.

Angling Cymru which represents coarse anglers, sea anglers and some game anglers had in the past received a grant for £35,000.

The subject of tidal lagoons around Wales is likely to reappear.

1. **MEMBERSHIP** is around 60 at present with 123 recognised beats on the Usk. Membership used to be over 200. There is a need to recruit more members including both riparian owners and fishermen. There is also £5 for associate membership with badges and car stickers.
2. **FINANCES**. The account with NatWest had become online. HH and HLB are jointly acting as Treasurer since the resignation of Jonathan Carthew. A financial statement would follow prior to the AGM. HLB said he will contact NatWest to get matters sorted with the account access.
3. **TREASURER**. There is an urgent need to recruit a new Treasurer.
4. The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** was provisionally set for Friday 16th September at 7 pm at The Angel Hotel. Peter Perry, the CEO of Welsh Water and Simon Evans of the Wye and Usk Foundation would be invited as speakers.
5. **POLLUTION AND WATER QUALITY**. This is an ongoing problem with both sewage pollution and agricultural pollution. A housing construction company had received a large fine for soil run off from a building site in Abergavenny.

A new group, Save The River Usk (STRU) has been formed in Usk with the intention of campaigning to upgrade sewage systems and improve water quality in the river. HLB, Merthyr Anglers and MC expressed a willingness to be involved in water testing.

HLB offered his own mobile number 07768010735 to pass on details of pollution incidents promptly to the CEO of Welsh Water Peter Perry by text message including film footage of the actual incident.

1. **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**: There are a number of current vacancies on the Committee. At present the Committee is as follows:

Chairman Harry Legge Bourke Deputy Chairman Helen Harrison

Secretary Michael Cowburn Treasurer VACANT

Lower Reaches (below Usk) Rob Kerby Deputy VACANT

Middle Reaches (Usk to Crickhowell) Gary Davies Deputy VACANT

Crickhowell to Brecon Charles de Winton Deputy VACANT

Brecon to Source VACANT Deputy VACANT

Industrial Rivers Mike Gulliford Deputy Stewart Matthews

Coarse Fishing Tony Rees

Membership Secretary VACANT

It is imperative that these vacancies are filled.

1. **ACCESS AND CANOEING**: Access agreements are currently being sought with Brecon Canoe Club, Abergavenny Canoe Club, MOD Brecon and Coleg Gwent. HLB will make contact with first three organisations and GD will contact Coleg Gwent to confirm an access agreement.

Further details regarding the current state of Access Forums will be sought from Charles de Winton.

The Canoe organisation is due to carry out a river clean up.

1. **FISH NUMBERS**: Salmon remain scarce. A few salmon have been caught in the lower reaches this year, but the overall numbers of salmon in the river is a considerable cause for concern.

Trout fishing this spring has been good with fish up to 3 lbs being caught.

The smolt project is being carried out for a second year. Last year smolts were helped down to the estuary by floods in May. It will be interesting to see the results for this year.

Fish Eating Birds remain a problem. A cull is due to be arranged for next February.

1. **POACHING**: There have been a number of successful prosecutions over the last two years. So far there have been a few poaching incidents this season, but not as many as in recent years. Anglers are reminder to contact NRW on the 24 hour number 03000 653000.
2. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**: Many thanks to Helen Harrison for keeping the UFA Website updated with the latest news and for setting up an UFA Facebook page.
3. **DATE OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**: There will be a brief meeting of the Committee prior to the **AGM** on Friday 16th September 2022.