

Saturday 28th November 2020, commencing **10:30am**

Via Zoom Webinar

Panel: George Stephenson (Chair, Angling Trust)
George Graham (Chair, Fish Legal)
Jamie Cook (Chief Executive Officer, Angling Trust and Fish Legal)
Roland Caley (Chief Operating Officer, Angling Trust and Fish Legal)

Minutes

Welcome from the Angling Trust Chair (George Stephenson)

'Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen – and welcome to this virtual Subscriber Members Annual General Meeting of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal. I am George Stephenson, Chairman of the Angling Trust and I have on the panel with me here George Graham (Chair Fish Legal), Jamie Cook (CEO AT and FL), and Roland Caley (COO AT and FL) I am sorry that we are unable to meet in person today – though even with current Govt lockdown regulations, thanks to the amazing work of the Angling Trust, it at least means that I could go fishing this afternoon, rather than facing the delights of the M42!

Anyway, it's great to see so many of you attending this meeting today – we have a full programme and I would like to advise you that in order to facilitate minute taking we are recording the meeting. I would also like to emphasise that this is the first time we have held such a meeting "virtually", so please bear with us should things not go quite according to plan! Equally, if you are having issues with connectivity please feel free to log out and re-join. As you will have seen on the agenda, following the official business of the Angling Trust Meeting, and any questions, I will hand over to George Graham, to take us through the Fish Legal Meeting, where again, following any questions, he will then hand over to our Chief Executive, Jamie Cook, who will introduce a series of short videos to showcase a selection of our activities over the past year and answer any questions that arise thereon.

On the subject of questions, you will see the "Q & A" box on your screen – please feel free to ask questions of the panel – we will attempt to answer as many as we can in the time provided – should we run out of time, don't worry we will answer your questions and post them up with the Minutes of the Meeting.

"Unprecedented" and "challenging" are just a couple of the adjectives (without having to apologise for language!!) that are used to describe the times that thanks to the Covid pandemic we find ourselves living in right now. Who would ever have thought a year ago that we would have been forced to lock down our country not just once, but twice!

However, with my Angling Trust Chairman's hat on, I would like to say that thanks to the proactive leadership and concerted effort of all of us at the Angling Trust and Fish Legal, we have achieved for our Members, and the wider fishing community, something that other sports and Governing bodies are very envious of! We lead from the front, we reached out and consulted with anglers countrywide and convinced them and the Government that by adhering to certain protocols our sport could safely resume at a time when others could not! I could list any number of individuals, right through the organisation and thank them for their sterling efforts on behalf of the Angling community for our "When we fish again" campaign – but I believe it was a team effort, from the Board, the management, the staff and volunteers, with Jamie (Captain Cook) as helmsman, and as such, personally and on your

behalf, I thank the entire team – all Angling Trust staff and volunteers for a phenomenal achievement – thank you! It has led to more people taking up fishing – more rod licences sold – and importantly more anglers joining the Angling Trust.

But this is no time for complacency – we might be the poster boys of Sports Governing bodies for achieving what we did – and believe me I have been approached by several Chairs and Chief execs seeking advice on how they might structure a similar strategy for their respective sports. For our part we must capitalise on our success – we must make the most of the prodigious talent that we have in our organisation. Through innovation, collaboration and hard work I see a very exciting future for the Angling Trust and Fish Legal. For that to happen we must start by welcoming the many new members who have joined our organisation. We must seek out and embrace any potential sponsors, influencers and allies. We must appeal to and educate young people in the ways of fish and fishing. We must continue to fight to protect our waterways, our sea and our fish stocks. And of course, very importantly, we must not be afraid to diversify and reach out further to persuade all anglers, and potential anglers and even non anglers that by supporting us they are not only strengthening the voice of Angling, but ensuring that the sport we all love is handed on to future generations in a better state than ever.

This positive and wholly transparent outlook is recorded in our finances as published in our accounts and touched on briefly in our recently released and excellent “Angler” magazine, which I hope you have had a chance to enjoy.

The financial year to March 2020 saw a small deficit of £20K, slightly better than planned and fully in line with our strategic re-investment into membership marketing.

As a result of this investment, I hope members agree that we have improved our communications, particularly in relation to all the hard work we are doing for angling and on the benefits of club and individual membership, both of which have seen increased subscriptions.

We remain in a healthy state, with net assets of £487K at the end of March 2020.

As I said earlier more details on our finances can be found both in the Angler magazine and in the accounts which we have published on the website.

Despite this success, we are conscious that we will continue to face challenges in the months and years ahead and that careful monitoring of costs against income will be a key priority going forward. My judgement is that in the year to March 2021 we will be close to break even, provided we continue to receive support from our members and stakeholders. Overall, I believe that the Angling Trust is well placed to expand our impact on the sport and increase participation and representation across all angling disciplines. None of this would have been possible without the prudence and hard work put in by our COO – Roland Caley – from all of us, thank you Roland.

Speaking of good work ethic – your Board of Directors – who as volunteers give freely of their time, their experience and their knowledge – for which I salute them unreservedly and wholeheartedly – thank you Directors – have seen some change since this time last year. We have seen the retirement of 3 Directors - Chris Mills, Yvonne Webb and Nigel Hayward – it is always sad when Directors retire and I would like to personally thank Chris, Yvonne and Nigel for their immense input and support as Directors of the Angling Trust.

In the same period we are honoured to have been joined by Stephen Beverley (Nominated a year ago) and Jonathan Callcut (Co-opted Spring 2020) – I welcome and look forward to working with the two of them and am also very happy to say that Tim MacPherson has agreed to stay on for a further term as a co-opted Director and Peter Neale was voted in for a second term as a Nominated Director. I thank both of them for their continued input and support.

As per the rules we sought applications earlier in the year for two new Nominated Directors – put up and voted for by you the Members. I have to say the calibre of applicants was exceptional (back in the day you took people like me, today I wouldn't stand a chance!!) and 10 candidates were put to the membership as potential Directors – I'd like to thank all the applicants for doing so – thank you! I would also like to thank our Governance Manager – Karen Watkinson – for overseeing the applications and governance process at a time when the Covid pandemic caused havoc with all our normal procedures. Similarly, our ever-growing reliance on technology has put a large burden on Alistair Middleton, who has quietly risen to the challenge and enabled us to function in these different times - Thank you Karen and Alistair.

The nominated candidates put forward were:

Keith Elliot
John Ellis
Neville Fickling
Peter Gibbinson
Steve Mardin
Pippa Medd
Chris Munro
Tim Walton
John Williams
Andy Wood

*It is with great pleasure that I can announce that further to a very tight vote **John Ellis** and **Neville Fickling** gained more votes than the others and will be asked to join the Board.'*

[The vote results were: a total of 647 cast, of which John Ellis received 381, Neville Fickling received 67 and the remaining 199 were split between the other eight candidates]

'I much look forward to working with them on behalf of you and the Angling Trust, and I would like again to thank the other candidates and encourage them to remain engaged and supportive of all that we do moving forwards. You all have great skills and there are many ways you can help – so please stay in touch.

*Before moving on to any questions we have a couple of Resolutions that need to be addressed and signed off. Normally a show of hands would suffice, but I'm afraid that today we have to follow zoom protocol. As such we have come up with a test question - to see that a) the technology and b) ourselves are in sync and functioning! We then have two Resolutions to sign off – the first being to accept last year's Minutes as being a true reflection of our meeting on 30 November 2019. **[Approved – 47 votes in favour, 3 abstentions, zero against]**. The second resolution involves a basic tweak to our rules to make it easier to hold electronic meetings such as this in the circumstances that we find ourselves. **[Approved – 50 votes in favour, zero abstentions or votes against]**. Thank you for your cooperation.'*

'We now have time for any questions. As I said at the beginning and I reiterate, this virtual format is new to us, so please bear with us – we will try to answer as many questions as we can in the time permitting, but should we run out of time we will answer your questions and post the answers with the Minutes on the website.'

Pre-submitted questions were taken first:

Question from Nigel Phillips: Recognising the excellent work the Trust does in communicating its work to the members: what plans do the Trust have to publicise their work and Angling more in the mainstream media e.g. BBC and ITV and Sky news regarding Angling benefits and the broad church the sport encompasses in individual and competitive angling?

Answered by Jamie Cook: There has been progress in the last year, increasing the reach of various media platforms, the growth is staggering. A lot of that is internal and preaching to the converted. Our future plans included investing in specialist staff in post to engage further and wider than we have previously with the media. It is worth pointing out that through the 'When We Fish Again' campaign there was wide coverage by the broadsheets (Guardian, Telegraph, Times). A number of pieces have been done for the BBC, including an excellent piece from Nottingham Piscatorials. There is movement in the right direction and further investment in our staff and skills will enable them to engage from a PR and comms perspective and present the benefits of angling. The next layer is how to expand, not only our ambassadors but patronage and influencers in the wider world. We have to be brave and not always look at people who are embedded in angling. We need to push the messages of benefits to mental well-being and engaging with the outdoors wider and into mainstream media. It is an area of investment and focus and we need to capitalise on the relationship built during the 'When We Fish Again' campaign.

Questions from Mark Timerick:

1. As a coach who supports the online version of the Level 1 coaching course, why is the cost of the online version the same as the in-person course?
2. Would it be possible to have access to a database of coaches to facilitate communications between coaches?

Answered by Roland Caley:

1. The capacity for a physical Level 1 course is 12, however you can only have four attendees on a virtual course. The cost is a consequence of economies of scale as room hire is only a small part of the cost of the course. Other expenses include First For Sport registration, workbooks, AT membership, DBS checks and coach insurance. The price has been held and in the event of any surplus, which would be negligible, it would be re-invested in providing coach courses.
2. We have a map on the website which contains coach details. The information has been transferred from the old database to the new website and is currently being scrutinised to check for accuracy. We are also looking into creating a list of current coaches.

Question from Dale Whittaker on behalf of Nottingham Piscatorials Society: First, would like to record thanks to Jamie Cook, Martin Salter and all the team involved at the Angling Trust for their work to get angling permitted as an exercise and activity throughout the year. Noting that the increase in membership and so membership subscriptions looks to have been offset by a reduction in income from both Sport England and the Environment Agency, what plans are in place to maintain the financial stability of the Angling Trust, should this trend continue?

Answered by Roland Caley: Long-term viability and financial security is at the heart of everything that we do. The increase in membership has helped to solidify our finances, but also the fact that the Environment Agency has increased its revenue from Rod Licence sales means that there is a bright future for the next two years. The reduction in Environment Agency income last year was as a result in a fall in sales the previous year. We do know that we need to diversify our income sources and we will be focussed on that in the coming months and years.

Question from Steve Clamp: The Angling Trust have been exceptionally professional and effective in dealing with HMG during the Covid Crisis. What plans have the Angling Trust got to maintain these effective links and influence with politicians of all parties in the future?

Answered by Jamie Cook: The relationships in parliament have been absolutely crucial and show that we are stronger together as a sport with that voice. We can influence and engage at the highest level. Massive thanks and credit to Martin Salter, who has been involved for a long time with the organisation and has built those relationships over time in parliament. Jamie is working with Martin to also build those relationships. There are two All Party Parliamentary Groups. The APPG for Angling meets around six times per year, providing an opportunity to brief them. Their support was invaluable during the push for the resumption of angling. Angling Trust has been invited to become the secretariat for the APPG for Chalk Streams, which is a wider group providing an opportunity to engage with MPs from all parties with chalk streams in their constituencies. In summary, we are cementing the existing relationships and developing new ones on specific issues. The last year has demonstrated that the sports who have had an ability to influence the government and engage proactively have had a huge impact. Other sports are still waiting to hear what they can and can't do in their sports.

The following questions were asked via the Q&A function in the meeting:

Question from Iain Boulton: How has Covid-19 impacted upon the relationship between the Environment Agency and Angling Trust? Has it made it harder to deliver key joint partnerships and projects?

Answered by Jamie Cook: Certain aspects of the work delivered under contract to the Environment Agency has been harder to do, participation for example. The participation team has worked very hard to diversify. We have been approaching the Environment Agency proactively with plans for how we can continue to engage anglers, maintain the active habit and to influence new anglers as they come into the sport. There has been a big influx of new and returning anglers as a result of the 'When We Fish Again' campaign and they need support in a slightly different way, not necessarily the beginners coaching, it is more focussed on education. The Fishing Buzz website was launched with a broad spectrum of content for all anglers. The Get Fishing initiative has introduced awards for anglers to take them through different steps in their participation to become an angler and embed the habit. This year the engagement has stepped up through social media and 'how to' videos. Working with partners in the trade we have developed starter kits. We have evolved the participation offer, with support from the Environment Agency. There have been challenges and we have to act as a critical friend to the Environment Agency. On matters such as enforcement, we were vocal during lockdown on our expectations of what they should have been doing. Those discussions continue to ensure that our fisheries and waters are protected. A huge thanks is owed to both staff and volunteers, such as the Voluntary Bailiff Service, they took their daily exercise and maintained eyes and ears on the waterways, meaning we managed to ensure there was a degree of visual deterrent. There are challenges, but the Environment Agency have been supportive and we have continued to go to them with ideas of what is needed for the sport. We are here to represent anglers and fight for fish and fishing.

Response from Iain Boulton: I agree, we've been so impressed by how both EA and AT have managed to keep the relationship going - well done to all of the two organisations for their hard work and commitment.

Question from Neil Berry: Given the lobbying against hunting and shooting by various groups, what alliances are AT building to counter the misinformation and defend our sport?

Answered by Jamie Cook: There are various alliances that we have built and continue to do so. For example, Blueprint for Water focussed on the environment, which includes the Canal & River Trust, WWF, RSPB etc. There are many different areas where we work with stakeholders, examples include: the Water Framework Directive with DEFRA; CLA in relation to access and questions around canoeing, with alignment through riparian owners who do not want trespassers on their land. We have various alliances in specific areas to cover specific issues related to the areas of work we deliver.

Question from Richard Walsh: How do you reconcile challenging the Agency but at the same time taking funding from them?

Answered by Jamie Cook: We have touched on the 'critical friend' arrangement. We work under contract with clear deliverables. We need to get ahead of the discussion and clarify what the Angling Trust is here to do – what are our missions? – what is critical to anglers? The key being that we fight for fish and fishing and protect the environment that the fish are a dividend from. We have done so since 1948 through the work of the ACA that now spans the campaigns division, the Angling Trust and Fish Legal. The Environment Agency understands that we are an independent body and that we have our own views and we have to maintain the relationship as a critical friend. We have regular dialogue with them and they understand where we place pressure on them. The Hoveton Great Broad case, which will be touched on in the Fish Legal section of the meeting, is a really good point. We were supporting the Environment Agency Fisheries team and we have been successful. The Environment Agency is a huge organisation, and the people on the ground are passionate about a lot of the same things that our members are. We have to continue to fight for fish and fishing. The relationship as a critical friend, being open and transparent and will continue. Not just criticising, but influencing their policy is key. Speaking to them logically and helping them to see how they can better represent anglers gives a better outcome for us all.

Question from Martin Miles: The B word. From January 1st one can envisage a weakening of the environmental protection. What plans do the AT have to engage with other angling organisations (S&TA, WTT etc) to ensure we have clean rivers to fish in the future?

Answered by Jamie Cook: We have launched the 'Anglers Against Pollution' campaign. We work with WTT, Salmon & Trout Conservation and we are also part of the Missing Salmon Alliance partnership, which includes the Atlantic Salmon Trust and Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. We consider where we can influence; the Campaigns team move mountains compared to the size of the team and deliver phenomenal outcomes. It is incumbent upon us to take the lead. For example the Anglers Against Pollution where there are four clear calls to action, we have the support of the Salmon & Trout Conservation and we work with the Wildlife Trust. These relationships will continue to build, particularly where we want the same outcomes. There are certain things that all anglers can agree on and where we can we should work together.

Question from Andy Wood: How are you going to work with the CRT to promote Angling coaching?

Answered by Jamie Cook: We contract to the Canal and River Trust for them to deliver their 'Let's Fish' programme. There are also other stakeholders and CRT do a great job in delivering

the contact. We fund much of the work through our participation contracts and work closely with CRT.

Question from Kelvin Allen: Can we have some clarity on the objectives when viewed between the AT and River Trust(s). Seems lots of duplication of effort.

Answered by Jamie Cook: We are working on our focus and clarifying what we are here to do. The former CEO of the Angling Trust is now CEO of the Rivers Trust, so it is to be expected that he will look to build on the positive work started at the Angling Trust. There is regular dialogue with CRT, but if there are specific areas of overlap and where resource could be better used, please let Jamie know.

Question from Paul Harding: Given the failure of HM Govt to add Cormorants to the General Licence, can we be at all optimistic re some concession on this issue in the future?

Answered by Jamie Cook: This is an area of frustration. We haven't been able to get the result that we wanted. The size of the lobby that we are fighting against, it is an issue that we are trying to educate on. In all honesty, it is probably not an area that we can be optimistic on in the short term. We need to continue to educate. A social media thread around this cited the differential between the scale and the size of the people that our team are lobbying against to change hearts and minds and opinions. We are punching above our weight for the size of campaigning division. We need to continue to resource these fights. Rather than sitting on the side-lines arguing about right and wrong, action is needed. The only highlight of the year has been seeing anglers come together on a single cause and demonstrate what can be achieved when we do. Although there is no optimism in the short term, this is certainly not a fight that we will drop.

Keith Elliott: Not really a question, but following on from the point about the media, but I've been asked to revive the Angling Writers' Association and we are in the final stages of getting it up and running. It's been lying fallow for a decade! The name will change to reflect the new means of communication and to widen its reach, but we have about 300 potential names on our list, and when we have finalised these, we would make the list available to the Trust. We have Sir Ian Botham as president, and Hugh Miles, Fiona Armstrong and Jeremy Wade have all agreed to be vice-presidents. Keith Elliott, chairman

George Stephenson: *'Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen for your excellent questions.*

Now that we have concluded the formal part of the Angling Trust Subscriber Members meeting I'd like to thank you once again for your support – and I hope you have a great day! I will now hand over to George Graham who will introduce the Fish Legal Meeting'.

Angling Trust Subscriber AGM 2020 - Ends

Saturday 28th November 2020, commencing **11:10am**

Via Zoom Webinar

Panel: George Graham (Chair, Fish Legal)
George Stephenson (Chair, Angling Trust)
Jamie Cook (Chief Executive Officer, Angling Trust and Fish Legal)
Roland Caley (Chief Operating Officer, Angling Trust and Fish Legal)

Minutes

Welcome from the Fish Legal Chair (George Graham)

'Thank you George, and thank you all for joining us to today and for your support for our organisation.

The formal business of this annual meeting is for the financial year to the end of March – which now seems a world away. But those 12 months – pre-Covid – saw Fish Legal pressing ahead with a heavy case load.

I would highlight three:

- *In Cumbria, we helped the Kent Angling Association to challenge United Utilities over a waste water outfall.*
- *In Yorkshire, we secured compensation for Walton Angling Club from Yorkshire Water after a catastrophic sewage pipe burst.*
- *In East Anglia, after protracted litigation we won damages for Cambridge Fish Preservation and Angling Society over a significant pollution by Anglian Water. The Court went on to rule that Anglian Water must pay indemnity costs (rather than standard or ordinary costs) because of its unreasonable conduct.*

Over the last 15 years Fish Legal has fought 140 legal cases and won over £1.5 million in compensation for our member clubs affected by pollution. We have also advised members on over 180 planning threats, and taken the Government to court five times to hold it to its environmental responsibilities and helped to develop environmental law in areas such as the application of freedom of information to water and energy companies. That work must go on.

And go on it does. I want to thank the legal team for the amazing job they have done in adapting to changed circumstances. Despite slowdowns and blockages in the court system. I am really pleased that after many years fight we have recently secured compensation for our members at Rhymney & District over the botched works carried out by Caerphilly council.

We'll be showing you a video later where Ouse Angling Preservation Society talk about the slurry pollution they suffered at Plumpton College.

And many of you will be aware of the action we are now taking together to protect access to the bream spawning grounds in Hoveton Great Broad, which has already won a first round victory.

Our strength is our ability to speak for fishing with one voice, and that means we are at our best when we are pooling our capabilities across the range of issues we face. Fish Legal brings us a unique legal toolkit that can underpin Angling Trust's campaigning. Hoveton Great Broad is a perfect example.

My thanks, too, to the members of the Fish Legal Committee and of the Legal Advisory Committee, who contribute their knowledge and experience to making sure our organisation can keep moving forward.

I'd like to single out one particular member, who is stepping down at end of this meeting: Mike Heylin. Mike was signed up 60 years ago as a member of the Anglers Conservation Association by Dick Walker – I'd like to think it was the best pound he has ever spent. He has been an ever-present voice in a whole range of fishing organisations. He also chaired the Angling Trust in its early years. He has made a huge contribution to our sport and to our water environment. Thank you Mike; we'll miss you – but I have no doubt we'll hear from you if you think we're messing things up.

For the year to March 2020 we are reporting solid financial results: a surplus of £85,000, largely reflecting a significant increase in the legal costs we have been able to recover from opponents after victories in court.

We are only able to take on contested cases on your behalf because of the strength of our investment fund. At the end of March the fund stood at just over £1 million, reflecting the stock market turmoil that hit as Covid began to strike us. I am pleased to report a significant recovery since then, in line with financial markets, to over £1.3 million.

I would like to acknowledge at this point the significant legacy left to us by our late member Peter Howse of Sleaford. Generous bequests like his play a significant part in building our reserves so that we can continue to fight difficult cases. We recognise Peter for his support.

May I also pay tribute to two important figures in our history who have recently passed away.

Stephen Marsh-Smith, well known at the Wye and Usk Foundation, was chairman of the Anglers' Conservation Association and was the first chairman of the newly formed Angling Trust.

Jim Glasspool, who was for 20 years secretary of the Test & Itchen Association, was one of the most significant figures in the formation of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal in 2009. He continued to bring his calm and disciplined sense of what was right to bear on the Fish Legal Committee until 2018.

Our thoughts are with their families.

On with the business of our meeting. As George mentioned, we are still feeling our way a bit in the context of online meetings and voting. I apologise if any of you have experienced any difficulties with the voting system, and I hope you will bear with us as we try to iron out the quirks.

I do have a number of votes in already and in normal times we would have a show of hands for those in the room. Today we will do that by an online poll. I hope you will now all have got the hang of how the polling works.

The questions being put to you are:

- *Approval of the minutes of last year's meeting; **[Approved]***
- *The re-election of the existing committee, with the exception, as I have noted, of Mike Heylin, and of our Treasurer, Roland Caley; **[Approved]***
- *The election of two new committee members: Mark Phillips, a lawyer who has played a significant part in helping us navigate our way through the ever-changing Covid laws and regulations this year; and Simon Bourne, who brings a valuable set of business and operational experience; **[Approved]***
- *The adoption of the accounts for the last financial year; **[Approved]***
- *The re-appointment of our auditors, Adkin Sinclair; **[Approved]***
- *And finally, some rule changes. I hope you have had a chance to see these on the members' section of our website. In essence they would make it possible for us to continue to hold meetings electronically in the future. **[Approved]***

Thank you very much for your support of those 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.

That mission is important and it's not going to get easier. Lockdown brought us some noticeable environmental improvements in things like traffic pollution and air quality. Water quality did not get the same benefits – quite the reverse. There is too much untreated sewage going into our waterways; too much water being abstracted from our rivers and lakes to meet development demands. And we know that we can't sit back and wait for government agencies to take action – it is up to us.

So, thank you, with that, I'd like to close the Fish Legal Annual Meeting and hand you over to Jamie Cook, our Chief Executive.'

Fish Legal Committee AGM 2020 - Ends

Review of the work undertaken by the Angling Trust and Fish Legal in 2020

Welcome from Jamie Cook, Chief Executive Officer:

'Thank you to everyone listening and joining today, thank you for taking the time this morning. I will now share a series of short videos from the team and there will be a chance to ask more questions via the Q&A box.

There are a number of members who I met year ago, on a freezing cold morning at Barston Lakes in the Midlands. No-one could have foreseen what this last year would bring. I want to say a huge thank you to the existing members, to those who have supported the Angling Trust for a long time, it is the first time that I can join the AGM as a Chief Executive and I am honoured to do so. I hope you have seen in the past year a real manifestation of where your support gets us and the value of it, because without it we couldn't do what we do.

I want to take the opportunity to thank our new members. We have had a lot of new members join over the past year and it's absolutely fantastic to see. I was open and clear that before I joined the Angling Trust I didn't have a sense of half of what we do. There is huge amount of work that maybe historically isn't publicised or shared to the extent that we should. When we educate people and help them to see the work that we are doing, generally people join us. The challenge for us is to continue to spread that word and the message of the positive work that we are doing. Massive thank you to the new members who joined this year, it really makes a difference, giving us financial security moving forwards and allows us to do more.

I want to mention the 'When We Fish Again' campaign. I came in bright eyed with lots of views of things I wanted to get stuck into when I joined at the end of January. We were hit with floods immediately and then six weeks later COVID and by March we were in lockdown. I have huge pride in the work we have done with government on the 'When We Fish Again' campaign to get us fishing again. I have to say a massive thank you to the team who delivered that work, because we became the 'poster child' for other sports and provided a blueprint for other sports to follow in how to progressively engage with government to drive a sensible and safe agenda. I hope that as members you are pleased and proud of the representation given at the highest level. Particular thanks has to go to Martin Salter, who has been a trojan in getting us in front of the people we need to be. A huge amount of work has gone in from the communications team: delivering policy documents; amending guidance; working through pieces of legislation. We have individual advisors who provided invaluable support, without which we wouldn't have got to where we were without that.

The earlier question around what will we do to continue to portray angling positively to the wider audience is a really good question. We have got to promote the benefits of angling. We have seen through the 'When We Fish Again' campaign the benefits that delivered in terms of growth. Clubs had been seeing declining membership, but that trend has reversed. The same for fisheries and tackle shops, with record sales reported due to fishing being at the top of people's agenda. We need to harness that and build on the foundations that we have laid. The Environment Agency had previously seen a decline in participation, but our proactive efforts have arrested that. Promoting angling is one the key areas for us to work on.

I am now going to introduce four films which cover broadly the work that we have done. They should give you a good sense of the breadth of the things that your membership goes towards delivering. The first film will be presented by John Cheyne and will show the work of the Freshwater team.'

Freshwater Video

Jamie Cook: *'I hope you all enjoyed that, it shows the scale of the work undertaken by the team. Thank you to all the staff members involved in putting it together.'*

I would now like to introduce the Participation and Competitions section. Competition is one the areas by which we maintain active habit and Participation is obviously crucial to the future of the sport'

Participation and Competitions Video

Jamie Cook: *'Thanks to Jimmy Willis and the team for that video. I would echo Jimmy's sentiment in thanking the volunteers in all areas of what we do. I would encourage anyone who represents a club or a fishery who is interested in increasing participation and working with your local community to get in touch with the Participation Team on a local level. There is a huge amount that we can do and we need to look at different ways of engaging, not only young people, but people who want to try fishing for the first time and help them to do that. We know that lots of people come into the sport as a consequence of the support they gain from a family member or friend, so the 'Take a Friend Fishing' initiative has been a huge success and we have convinced the Environment Agency to run another session over Christmas. Through the period when you can get together with people, perhaps take them out fishing and create a new Christmas tradition in the family.'*

Moving on to the Campaigns and Marine team, to give an overview of the work they have undertaken in the past year:'

Campaigns and Marine Video

Jamie Cook: *'I hope you enjoyed that video, apologies for any sound issues'. We will now run the Fish Legal video:'*

Fish Legal Video

Jamie Cook: *'Thank you to the guys for filming that video. It is something I am incredibly proud of. I hope you have enjoyed reading the testimonials through the Angler magazine, to see first hand the impact of some of the work the Fish Legal team does.'*

Jamie handed back to George Graham to take a pre-submitted question for the Fish Legal AGM:

Question from Dale Whittaker (on behalf of Nottingham Piscatorial Society): Canoeists, Kayakers and other forms of illegal paddling activities have become more common on the Non-navigable stretches of the River Trent. Can I ask what resources and support will be available to member angling organisations to protect our members rights and to protect the fish spawning areas which are being damaged by these activities?

Answered by George Graham: Canoeing has been a vexed issue for a long time. The Fish Legal team and the Angling Trust have been working to clarify the law and have secured a lengthy QC's opinion. We believe the position is a lot clearer than some of the canoeing organisations are willing to acknowledge. It is, however, complicated and varies from river catchment to river catchment, with some quite complex rules. The Angling Trust has been working to promote voluntary arrangements that manage the usage of rivers as a shared resource so that we don't have the damaging impacts of spawning beds in particular. We haven't always had

the co-operation that we would hope for from the canoeing governing bodies. We do have more detailed advice sheets available on canoeing from Fish Legal. It is difficult to take a case and is dependent on specifics.

Answer from Jamie Cook: This summer has seen an influx into the countryside of individuals who want to enjoy the outdoors, we need to be clear as a sport that we are not against a fair and equitable share for people enjoying the outdoor environment. Whilst there is the legal angle from the Fish Legal perspective, this is an area that the Angling Trust Campaigns team are working on. Stuart Singleton-White has regular contact with British Canoeing and I will be having my first conversation with their Chief Executive in January. From our perspective, we are championing the use of voluntary access agreements on a local basis, specific to the region and the particular river and challenges faced. There are arguments from British Canoeing that go back rights within the Magna Carta, which we have dispelled legally, but that doesn't mean that canoeists are willing to accept that view. In terms of resource it is an area where we are stretched, we don't have the same level of resource as British Canoeing as an Olympic sport. There are areas where their PR has been more progressive than ours, looking at the positives that canoeists are offering to bring to the local environment. We have to be smarter and more tactical in showing angling in a positive light. The Fish Legal team have done a huge amount of work and we need the right case to take forward. The Angling Trust is working with a large number of clubs and fisheries who have been in touch over this issue. If we can get further concession, we will do, but it is not something that will go away.

Comment from Iain Boulton: Fantastic presentations from the Team. 2020 has certainly been a year of understanding and coping with impacts upon mental health and personal wellbeing. Angling has shown, through these presentations and more besides, how it has helped alleviate and mitigate for these impacts, so we should be ready to use what we have learnt and applied to secure additional resources, including government and grant funding, to continue to go forward. Lots of opportunities so let's maximise them!

Response from Jamie Cook: Good point and as a membership organisation we are acutely aware we rely on members joining as clubs, fisheries or individuals. A key area of focus has to be to increase membership. There are also other stakeholders we can work with, for example working with the trade to promote participation. We are working with the trade individually and starting to work collaboratively with the ATA. We need to be creative and more commercial in the way that we approach stakeholders to try to find further means to fund the good work that we are doing. I hope you will agree from watching the videos that the breadth of the work we do is quite staggering. For a small team, not heavily resourced, there are people doing a lot of work and putting a lot of hours in to achieve the outcomes. There is great pride in what we deliver, but I agree, we have to look at different routes and diversifying our funding streams to be able to do more and I am acutely aware in our strategy and delivery moving forward.

Comment from Tim Macpherson: Great videos explaining what our staff and volunteers have been doing on behalf of angling. Considering our limited resources we have delivered a lot in the last year and we need to keep up this good work across all areas.

Response from Jamie Cook: Thank you, we would all echo those points. It has been a challenging year and not the year I expected when I took the job on, but I am very proud of what the staff have delivered and how they have faced the operational challenges.

Closing Statement from George Stephenson

'Jamie – thank you and your team for four excellent presentations, showcasing the breadth of work and significant impact that AT and FL have contributed over the past year and moving forwards. The fish and fishermen and women of our country are very lucky to have you representing and standing up for them. This has been highlighted by a) your very successful approach and management of angling during the pandemic, b) the outstanding successes achieved by Fish Legal particularly in making polluters pay and c) the increase in Membership, participation and support (for the most part!) on Social Media – all of these things, when added together, have helped develop a far more unified organisation that has a purpose, means business and we can be proud of! Well done and thank you.

On that note, Ladies and Gentlemen, we must draw to a close. Thank you again for your time and your support - I hope that you have enjoyed our meeting today, but I also hope our next AGM will be in person and with lunch - until then I trust you all keep well, stay safe and enjoy tight lines!'

Meeting Closed at 12:30pm

Angling Trust/Fish Legal AGMs 2020

In Attendance:

Ian Wilks
Sam Frost-Jones
Martin Salter
Richard Hadley
Peter Emery
Keith Elliott
Neil Berry
Steve Clamp
John West
Chris Munro
John Pritchard
Pete Neale
Tim Earthrowl
Mark Timerick
Daniel Williams
Mark Wilton
Iain Boulton
Neville Fickling
Richard Walsh
Philip Chamberlain
Stuart Singleton-White
Martin Miles
Oliver Smith
John Ellis
Sarah Collins
Gary Hodsdon
Stephen Mardlin
Andrew Wood
Paul Harding
David Moore
Peter Gibbinson
Peter Fieldhouse
Will Smith
David Munt
Will Smith
Jemma Phillips
John Pope
Philippa Medd
Mark Summerfield
David Kent
Janusz Kansik
Nigel Phillips
Dean Asplin
Kelvin Allen
Russell Hicks
Richard Pilkinton

Tim Macpherson
Rosemarie Chapman
Andre Grandjean
Mark Johnson-Jones
Dominic Garnett
Stephen Beverley
Richard Bamforth
Kelly Latimer
John Saunders
Geoff Hardy
Dale Whittaker