

1 Attendees

Caroline Killeavy (British Waterways)
John Ellis (British Waterways)
David Kent (Director Angling Trust)
Eric Bootland (Walton AC)
Rod Bracey (Bathampton AA)
Dave Crookes (Bathampton AA)
John Castle (Grand Union South Anglers Consultative)
Peter Fieldhouse (Fenton & DAA)
John Johnson (Nottingham AA)
David Turner (Nottingham AA)
Terry Wright (Kayak Anglers)

2. Purpose & Role of the National Angling Advisory Group

A brief outline of past strategic liaison between fisheries and angling interests and British Waterways was given. The former National Fisheries Liaison committee has ceased to function around the time of the formation of Angling Trust. The NFA and NAFAC had been active participants in this important committee. DK had remained an active participant on the BWAFF group.

CK confirmed that now as the right time to relaunch strategic consultation with our fisheries and angling customers and thanked DK for pulling together the volunteers for the inaugural meeting. There was an excellent geographical spread of delegates.

CK confirmed that the function of the group was to offer strategic advice on fisheries and angling issues to BW going forward. A similar group, the Heritage Advisory Forum had also been set up. It was important that specific local issues did not dominate proceedings. What would be dealt with primarily would be big picture principles and policy matters.

CK and DK agreed to draw up terms of reference for the committee.

One such policy issue raised was the issue of fishing amongst boats moored on the towing path bank. Several years ago an agreement had been reached with the local Waterway Team whereby Bathampton AA were granted a number of fishing pegs between boats, a 5 metre gap being left between each mooring space. Generally this has worked very well and DC asked BW to look into the principles of adopting this on

other sections of his club water and even nationally where such a solution would open up more angler access. CK agreed to discuss this with the Head of Boating but noted that achieving this retrospectively when moorings had already been granted and installed was unlikely.

3 New Waterways Charity Update & Progress

This item lead on from the previous item and CK outlined details of the significant progress that BW had made in moving towards charitable status as and from 1st April 2012. CK outlined the various advantages of this move. The coalition government had now confirmed their support for the move. No decision had yet been taken on a possible transfer of some or all EA's navigations to the new organisation but a decision was expected shortly. There was no name yet identified, New Waterways Charity (NWC) was the name being used in the interim. The public and BW staff had been invited to take part in an exercise where several possible names were suggested as options.

CK emphasised the need for BW/NWC to evolve. Community engagement and volunteering would become an increasingly important part of NWC's day to day way of doing things. The fisheries and angling community could play an especially valuable role going forward. In the north at least, the local fishing club remained a vital part of local community life.

The future governance of NWC was outlined. At local level a local waterway committee would be set up for each Waterway Unit and it was hoped that high calibre fisheries and angling interests would put themselves forward for nomination. User Group meetings would continue as at present.

EB expressed disappointment that the last remaining angling only UGM was being disbanded in the Yorkshire BU and that as elsewhere fisheries and angling issues would form an intrinsic part of the business of the single waterway wide user group. It was therefore vital the angling clubs made their presence felt, being proactive in asking advance written questions and suggesting agenda items.

JC also highlighted the excellent work done by local canal consultatives such as GUSAC, who represented clubs in the southern section of the Grand Union for more than a decade. A similar group has been established by DK on the Erewash and a third group had existed on the Kennet & Avon for many years although it had not met recently.

At national level there would be a NWC Council comprising of around 40 to 50 persons representing all stakeholder groups from direct customer through to local authorities. Fisheries & angling interests should be represented here.

4. BW Angling Competitions

In the spring of 2010 JE had met with Sandra Drew to discuss options for the BW stillwater championships becoming the BW/Angling Trust stillwater championships in 2011. It was agreed that JE & DK would get together in the near future with a view to taking this forward, either to relaunch in 2011 if logistically possible or failing that in 2012

Between 1993 and 2003 BW though the auspices of JE had run what became known as the Canals 200 Team Championship, an event for teams of 4 anglers. The record attendance has been 121 teams of 4, in the latter years around 65/80 teams was a more usual attendance. British Waterways and Angling Trust were keen in principle to relaunch a canal based event(s) starting in 2012. Discussion took place regarding the relative merits of a one off match verses a series of matches on several canals followed by a national final. The former would require less administrative resource but the latter would benefit many more clubs.

Action. Delegates to put forward their views for discussion regarding the proposed canal championships in advance of the next meeting.

TW right then explained the increasing popularity of kayak fishing and kayak match fishing. He enquired as to whether BW had any reservoirs that may be suitable both for 'pleasure fishing' and match fishing events. JE agreed to give the matter some thought and liaise directly with TW.

5 Proposed Standard Angling Agreement Licence Amendments

JE had recently met with Julie Smith from the BW internal legal team and jointly they had come up with a 'first go' various suggested amendments. (see attached document) It was agreed that no change would take place immediately and the new agreement document would be used in new agreements as and from April 2012 to coincide with the launch of the New Waterway Charity. An amended reservoir version would also be adopted.

JE highlighted the principal suggested alterations as set out in the attachment. The angling representatives on the committee were asked to revisit the existing document (attached) together with the proposed changes. A more thorough discussion of this subject would take place at the next meeting.

With regard to the advanced liaison regarding third party events taking place on clubs licensed waters in some parts of the country things were working very well indeed, but in other parts the process was still developing.

An issue that needed further work was the issue of priority at different types of mooring locations and this would be revisited.

One further item that was highlighted was events notification/approval. BW was suggesting that the size of event that required notification be reduced from 100 to 50.

As angling clubs already had permission via their license agreement an event could not be refused except in the most exceptional circumstances.

Action. JE agreed to compile a waterway by waterway list of the contacts for events co-ordination.

Similarly, the fishing from moored craft issue will be revisited.

6 Waterway Wanderers Scheme Update

JE gave a brief resume of the Waterway Wanderers Scheme (WWS) from its roots in the north-west region of BW in the mid 1990's through to the relaunch of the nationwide scheme in April 2010. The administration is undertaken by John Harding, a well-known and respected figure on the north-west canal fishing scene. JE was firmly of the view that WWS is serving its purpose. Several clubs, mainly in the west Midlands & North West had taken on new license agreements for sections of canal formerly in WWS and some feedback indicates the relatively high WWS permit fees were encouraging some anglers to join their local clubs or purchase day permits on the bank from clubs. It was hoped that more club bailiffs would help patrol adjacent sections of canal covered by WWS and encourage them to use club waters, rather than WWS waters.

There was some concern amongst delegates that WWS permit holders might inadvertently fish in club waters as the details on Waterscape did not include pictorial maps but no club had yet raised this as an issue directly with BW.

7 2012 Olympics

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

8 Hydropower

A discussion was held regarding BW's strategy to work with partners to develop hydropower schemes on its land. Concerns were expressed by delegates regarding an apparent lack of consultation on some recent schemes on the Trent. CK informed the meeting that discussions with AT had commenced regarding future consultation standards and ecological concerns the AT and local angling clubs had expressed.

CK suggested that a member of the BW team leading on this area be invited to the next meeting to give a strategic overview of BW's position.

9 Any Other Business

9.1 Kayak Angling

TW gave an outline of the requirements of kayak anglers. Kayak Anglers regard themselves first and foremost as anglers rather than canoeists. One unique advantage of kayak angling is that participants were able to access parts of fisheries that were out of bounds to virtually all other anglers. The chances of conflict were much less than most appreciated.

10 Date of Next Meeting.

Tuesday 7th June at the BW Hatton office.