

**Notes of the National Angling Advisory Group meeting
held on Wednesday 12th October 2011
at the British Waterways Fazeley Office**

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 Johnson (Nottingham AA)

Dick Pilkinton (The Tring Anglers)

David Turner (Nottingham AA)

Peter Wade (British Waterways)

2. Introductions and apologies for Absence

John Castle (Grand Union South Anglers Consultative)

Peter Fieldhouse (Fenton & DAA)

Terry Wright (Kayak Anglers)

The meeting welcomed Dick Pilkinton to his first NAAG meeting. It was envisaged that in due course Dick would take over from John Castle as the south east (GUSAC) representative.

3. Notes & Actions from the Previous Meeting

3.1 Erewash Possible Invasive Species

DK to liaise with Richard Bennett at the East Midlands Waterway. Recently, a large quantity of floating weed, probably Azolla had appeared. Nationally BW had achieved some good results in eliminating this species using a weevil as a biological control programme.

3.2 British Waterways Stillwater Championships

DK reported on the outcome of the 2011 event which all in all had been well received by customers. The 2012 event would again go ahead as an AT/BW joint venture.

3.3 Kayak Angling

It has not yet proved possible to identify a BW stillwater which is entirely suitable. The trial at Terry's Pool, Earlswood had to be terminated early. Notts AA are happy to explore options for opening up sections of the River Trent to kayaks.

Action: David Turner and Terry Wright to take forward.

3.4 Olympic Legacy

JE reported on on-going negotiations between the Olympic park Legacy Company, BW and the Lee Anglers Consortium. Some angling opportunity would be restored post Olympics but little funding appeared to be available from the Legacy Company to dramatically improve angling opportunities.

Details of the Olympic torch route and the carriers are to be announced shortly.

3.5 Standard Angling Agreement Document Working Group Update

The working group met during July. JE would arrange to meet with Julie Smith (BW legal dept) prior to Christmas and produce a final draft for consideration at the January meeting. It was anticipated that use of the updated document would commence with the launch of the C&RT in April 2012.

3.6 Moorings – ongoing issues

RB and DC again raised the 5 metre spacing. BW's position is that if starting afresh with a new mooring site this is something that could be planned into on-line mooring locations but where a particular historic situation exists, any re-arrangement is challenging. BW's focus has been on achieving a clear statement and legal stance of continuous cruisers recently. CK will raise this issue with Sally Ash again.

4. Overhead Powerlines. An Update – Peter Wade British Waterways

Peter outlined the history of overhead powerlines and angling which first became a significant issue with the development of carbon fibre (graphite) technology. Sadly, a number of mortalities in the 1980s and early 1990s occurred when fishing equipment came into close contact with powerlines. As a consequence, the industry set up an Angling & Overhead Powerlines Working Group. Guidance developed by the Working Group required that an exclusion zone to angling was put in place where overhead lines run within 30 metres of a fishery. In some instances this meant that even when powerlines were 28 metres behind the angling customer with trees or even buildings in between the angler and the powerlines, fishing could not be permitted. It was recognised that anglers were ignoring warning signs where common sense indicated that it was safe to fish.

The Working Group has recently revisited this issue and now supporting documentation to the guidance allows a relaxation of this requirement where a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been carried out. Any relaxation of the

default exclusion distance must retain a minimum 7-metre clearance between the extremity of any angling equipment and the overhead power line (OHPL).

British Waterways will continue to observe the 30-metre guidance as our default exclusion to angling. Only sites where a specific risk assessment has been prepared can be considered for a change from this standard which may be requested by angling club customers. Production of the risk assessment document will be undertaken by the fisheries team in conjunction with the angling club and health and safety professional from the appropriate power company.

The Group's view of the proposals ranged from measured support to the more cautious stance that any change to the existing guidance could end up being misinterpreted. Advice was given that increased communication and explanation of the proposed changes would be most useful.

5. New Era for the Waterways. Summary of responses & implications for fisheries

Published in September over 350 responses were received but of these only a small number were from fisheries & angling interests. Generally the document had been well received. It had been hoped by angling and fisheries interests that there would be commitment to such things as guaranteed representation at National Council and local partnership level, but this had not been forthcoming in the document itself. Angling Trust continues to raise concerns regarding FOI Act and the importance of environmental information remaining publicly available.

DEFRA is considering these issues currently. CRT Trustees are eager for CRT to be no different to other third sector charitable organisations.

6. Charges for Fishery Authorisations 2012 EA Consultation Document

JE presented this paper. Both BW and many clubs in the south of the country are concerned about the fact that commercial crayfish trapping is taking place on their licensed waters without their consent or even knowledge. BW in their response would look to end this situation. It was agreed that BW's response would be shared with the NAAG (attachment to minutes)

7. NWC Name and Brand

The new name, Canal & River Trust, had recently been announced along with the new logo. The latter had been designed at no cost to BW and has been well received. Only certain key sites would undergo an immediate rebrand.

A useful discussion followed centred around rebranding of angling club signage and production of stickers for use by angling clubs. EB pointed out that if artwork could

be provided by C&RT, stickers could either be produced locally at reasonable cost or C&RT could produce sufficient to cover the needs of all angling club customers.

8. Waterway Partnership Recruitment

Advertisements for the chairman's role have recently been circulated and volunteers were being invited locally. It is important that suitable candidates with fisheries and angling interests are nominated.

9. Housing Minister looks to Canals

It was agreed that it was important to keep a watching brief over this issue. There could be benefits to angling if it leads to more robust management of permanently occupied boats and stretches lost to angling at certain location may be recovered. On the other hand excessive levels of residential moorings could reduce angling opportunity.

10. Risk Assessments made easy for volunteers

It was confirmed that for most tasks angling clubs would are likely to wish to undertake, a generic risk assessment would be available on request. These are available through local Volunteer Co-ordinators:

Karen Fishwick	Karen.fishwick@britishwaterways.co.uk	01908 302 586
Cassie Weaver	Cassie.weaver@britishwaterways.co.uk	01782 779 934
Lucy Bowles	Lucy.bowles@britishwaterways.co.uk	01452 318 088
Stephen Bicknell	Stephen.bicknell@britishwaterways.co.uk	01785 284 310

11. Major Pollution. Wyrley & Essington

JE briefly updated the group. A full report is attached to the minutes.

12. Reservoir Levels and Drought Update

Following the driest period for many years, BW reservoirs in the midlands and south, and especially those feeding the southern Grand Union and Oxford, were at critically low levels. At one stage it looked as if a fish rescue would be required at Boddington but this had been averted. Regular dissolved oxygen readings were being taken at those reservoirs deemed to be at highest risk.

With soil moisture deficits at an unseasonably high level the possibility of less than 100% refill by the spring remained a risk for BW as did winter ice cover at a time when reservoirs were well below capacity.

Update. As at 12th November there had been little recovery in the situation in the south east.

13. Angling Club and Constitutional Issues

Advice was sought from the group on a recent complaint which was centred on the constitution of an angling club. This matter was very briefly discussed and it was concluded that this was not a matter than BW should get directly involved with, constitutional disputes between clubs and their members were a matter for the two parties to resolve.

Matters Not Discussed

The following agenda items were carried forward to the next meeting:

- Visitor Moorings
- Reporting & Recording of illegal fishing activity
- Use of bivvies on the towing path
- Close seasons

Date of Next meeting

10.30 am on Wednesday 18th January 2012 at the BW Fazeley office.

Attachments

- Charges for Fishery Authorisations 2012 EA Consultation Document – BW's response
- Wyrely and Essington report
- CRT booklet