

P.G.R.B.L.A.C. Committee meeting minutes 11th April 2018

Present: SMc, SM, DM, JH, TP, KK, RN, RH.

Meeting commenced at 8.30p.m. following the New Members joining meeting.

1. Composition of Committee

It was agreed the Steve Mullins would continue as Fisheries Manager and that Dave Morris would take over as Assistant Fisheries Manager.

As Russ Hankey had volunteered to take over as Secretary this left one space for an ordinary committee member. SM agreed to approach Don Sinclair with a view to being co-opted as a committee member.

2. T-shirts

RN suggested looking into supplying T-shirts/hoodies etc., with the club logo, for club members to purchase. DM agreed to find out about the possible supply and associated costs.

3. Angling Trust Conference

RH attended the above conference in Maidstone in February. The meeting addressed the following topics:

- Making effective funding applications
- Engaging disabled anglers
- Safeguarding – enjoyable and safe angling for all
- Planning and delivering your improvement project
- Making the most of your volunteers
- Working safely at your fishery
- Exploiting social media to the full

The two most valuable/useful topics concerned funding bids and health and safety.

Money will be available to bid for from a sum managed by the Angling Trust that has been provided by the Environment Agency. Topics for bids are likely to be known in May 2018. RH is prepared to collate a bid, hopefully for protection from cormorants and also access (pathways and swim maintenance) but this will ultimately depend on the available topics. There are always more bids than money available.

Health and safety – we are insured for third party claims, public liability etc., through our membership of the Angling Trust. For our insurance to be valid we must have up to date written risk assessments for all club activities such as swim clearing. SM and DM to work on and provide relevant risk assessments.

An accident book is to be made available at the club lock-up. Relevant Personal Protection Equipment is to be identified and made available. The assessments and any associated equipment are to be in place before the summer walk round with the HIOWT prior to the summer swim clearing. Programmes of work will also be provided by the members responsible for each pond.

The Angling Trust offered to put a club advert on social media but the committee felt this was not relevant for us.

4. Ben's pond levels and fish refuges.

Ben's Pond and New Water have suffered particularly this winter from heightened water levels which have encroached on pathways and swims. The HIOWT are introducing sluices to control water levels, however this has not led to a drop in levels and swims continue to be flooded. The HIOWT have now agreed to lower the levels so that swims will no longer be flooded. This also fits in with the HIOWT wish that the area opposite New Road from the ponds remains wet. It has been pointed out to HIOWT that the normal levels of the ponds are historic dating back to the first creation of the ponds, swims and pathways were first cut to take allowance for this, minor fluctuations are caused by wet weather but otherwise water levels are always below swim level.

Fish refuges – DM talked about the location of fish refuges to further protect our fish stocks from cormorant predation. There followed a lengthy discussion. On the one hand positioning of refuges should be in the areas most used by cormorants and should break up their hunting pattern. On the other hand it was felt that the refuges could be too intrusive to anglers and create unnecessary snags.

The 'hedgehog' design of refuge could be an alternative. DM offered to email a link on information to KK.

No definitive decision was made on the way forward and this will need to be discussed further.

Due to time constraints RN called the meeting to a close at 10.15p.m. The next committee meeting is to be held at 8p.m. on Wednesday 2nd May.