



# *The Bintry Mill Trout Fishery*

## **Minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting**

**Held on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at The Stower Grange Hotel**

**In Attendance:** Hugh Berridge (chairman), Dave Pitchers (secretary), Kevin Pollard (treasurer), Terry Lawton (river manager), Mike Rudd (committee member), Kevin Freezer (committee member), Richard Fannon, Jeremy Hadaway, Richard Nelson, John Powell, Tim Weston, Bill Emrich, Tony Simmonds, Charles French-Constant, Clive Rainbird and Paul Cook.

**Apologies for absence:** Stephen Kerridge, William Dann, Mark Aitken, Richard Youngs, Bill Wicksteed, Lance Sharpus-Jones, Richard Champeney, Robert Taylor, Noel Guckian and Steve Udberg.

**Minutes of the last AGM:** The minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup> AGM, held on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016 were approved and signed by the chairman.

**Chairman's opening remarks:** The chairman, Hugh Berridge, opened the meeting by thanking all those who were in attendance. He also thanked Richard Fannon for kindly agreeing to host the meeting once again.

Concern was voiced that the waiting list was down to three so if any members left the club our membership might fall below the target of 50. He requested members to inform the Secretary if they knew of anyone wishing to join.

He went on to say that rod fees for 2018 would remain unchanged at £220 despite the fact that we will be facing a rent increase in 2018. The WPL will also remain unchanged at £60 and that the fishery rules had been redrafted to reflect that all members will be expected to pay the WPL along with their membership subscription upfront. The WPL levy will then be reimbursed at the end of the year to those members who complete a minimum of three working party duties.

Hugh said that the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in September were a complete success and thanked Dave and the rest of the committee who had made it all possible. He also thanked the committee for all the work they had put in over the year.

Stocking next year will be increased to 440 fish, the first stocking of 110 will be on or about the 24<sup>th</sup> April followed by further stockings of 110 fish in mid-May, mid-June and mid-July. The upper limit of stocking will be above the cattle crossing on the Bintry Mill beat and the lower limit of stocking will be just downstream of the two right angled bends on the Yarrow Farm beat

about 200 yards above County School Bridge.

Having consulted with Rob Mungovan of the Wild Trout Trust it is anticipated that we will, subject to approval of the Bidewell family and the Environment Agency carry out river improvement work at four locations on the Yarrow Farm beat during next year, probably either in the spring or autumn. The purpose of the works is to increase flow and thereby produce better conditions for spawning

**Treasurer's report:** The Treasurer, Kevin Pollard told the meeting that income for 2017 has fallen by £655.00 on 2016.

Membership was only 49 of which one member paid an initial £100 and subsequently moved from the area.

As an incentive to recruit additional members the joining fee for 2017 was dropped.

Day ticket sales were very disappointing with only 16 being sold against 25 in 2016.

The move to include the WPL with the membership fees was well received and will continue for 2018. £60 will either be returned to those members who completed the required working parties; alternatively it can be set against their membership fees for 2018.

Stocking cost increased in 2017 by £1,053.75 for a total of 400 fish (275 in 2016). Stocking costs will increase slightly in 2018 due to an increase in stocking to 440 fish.

The budget forecast for 2018 shows a small shortfall but it does rely on our ability to maintain a full membership of 50 and a small increase in day ticket sales.

Membership fees and WPL will remain unchanged for 2018.

**Secretary's report:** The Secretary Dave Pitchers opened his report by highlighting the changes that had taken place within the management committee since the 2016 AGM. Kevin Pollard was now the club Treasurer, Dave Pitchers is the Secretary and Terry Lawton had been given a newly created role as River Manager. Kevin Freezer had joined Mike Rudd as a committee member.

Dave said that this year had been a bit of a mixed bag. We decided to delay the first stocking until early May for two reasons; one was to get an idea how many of the previous year's stock fish had survived the winter and two to gauge the number of untagged fish there were in the river. As a result he thought that it was safe to say that the catch returns for the first 3 months of the season provided scant information to make any meaningful assessment in either case. It wasn't until the third stocking went in in July that the number of stock fish being caught began to increase.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BMTF held on Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup> September. Approximately 48 members enjoyed a hog roast down by the river at Bintry Mill. Thankfully the weather was good; it wasn't until much later in the day that the rain came, by this time most of the members and friends had left. Sadly a number of members who said they would be coming failed to turn up. There were some late cancellations due to other commitments which were expected but a lot failed to show the result was that a lot of food was wasted.

## **LOWLIGHTS**

There were a number of members who for whatever reason didn't fish this year, but, of greater concern was the number of members who did fish but failed to catch. The river Wensum is a challenging river to fish even for a competent angler, that said the club has a number of experienced anglers who have fished the river successfully for many years who Dave was sure would be willing to pass on some of their knowledge to those who are struggling. If a member would like some assistance please let him know so that he can arrange it. If you don't ask you don't get, it's not a sign of failure if you don't catch a fish, it takes time to understand a river like the Wensum and there's no substitute for experience.

To date 68% (33) had said that they will be renewing their membership next year. 14% (14) had yet to make up their minds and 3% (2) had already resigned. There were 3 names on the waiting list.

**Election of officers for 2018:** Tim Weston proposed, seconded by Bill Emrich that the officers be re-elected en bloc. This was approved by the meeting.

**Open Discussion:** Charles French-Constant congratulated Dave on his organisation of the hog roast celebration which he said were exceptional. Charles asked if anybody was aware of kingfishers nesting on the fishery and if so would it be possible to give the nesting site/s a wide berth so as not to disturb them during this critical period. If sites are identified a note can be placed in the signing in box asking anglers to be aware and fish elsewhere if possible.

Charles also suggested if members could be persuaded to identify on their catch returns where about on the beats they caught fish as this may help members struggling to catch. Consideration will be given to inserting in the next print run of the catch return cards an entry (optional) 'where caught'

Kevin Freezer suggested that a river walk would be a way of identifying the most likely fish holding areas.

Bill Emrich suggested that we give serious consideration to setting up a website. When a website was suggested a few years ago the majority of the members were not in favour, however, in the intervening years circumstances have changed. In the past 2 years we have lost far too many

members, recruitment has been a struggle and we are selling fewer day tickets. There are 3 names on the waiting list. For the fishery to be viable we need 50 members. Bill offered to set-up and run a website for the Club. The opinion of the majority of those present was that we should proceed ASAP particularly as we need to attract more interest in the Fishery.

Clive Rainbird suggested that it would be nice to have a fishing hut on the Bintry Mill beat in the area by the picnic table. Terry Lawton said that in the past we had 2 fishing huts and they both had been stolen. It was felt unlikely that we would be able to install a fishing hut in the area by the picnic table as the area is prone to periodic flooding. It's also doubtful that we would get permission as the area is SSSI protected. The possibilities will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Signed .....

Chairman

Date .....