

1. Apologies for absence were received from Dave Earney and Denise Kemp.

2. The minutes of last year's AGM were accepted as published on the Society's website by a show of hands.

3. Officers' Reports

3.1 Financial Report – Simon Greengrass

The Treasurer presented the Society's financial report and then ran through his slides on the screen:

Income for 2016
Expenditure for 2016
Historic income since 2001-02
Historic expenditure since 2001-02
The budget for 2017

There were no questions regarding the Society's financial position.

3.2 Membership Report – Paul Kyffin

Slides were shown by the Membership Secretary illustrating the following:

Current 2016-17 membership numbers by category
Seasonal membership variation
The number of memberships sold by our agents
Night permit sales
Membership fees for the 2017-18 season

The total membership is 878 and we had 226 new joiners this season, sold 58 half price winter tickets and 82 members joined on the cheque spread.

Membership was the second highest since the 2000-01 season and we have still never had an increase four seasons running.

Another huge thank you to John, Sam and Paul at JP Tackle for selling 366 memberships this season, an increase of 13 over last season. Kim at Angling Essentials sold a creditable 22 memberships. Specimen Angling re-opened early in 2016 and sold six memberships with WASS selling four.

All 120 standard night permits sold out by mid August and all 50 Howells night permits sold out by the 6th May. There are 24 people on the waiting list for a Howells night permit. Howells night permits are reserved for existing members until the 1st April but the number for next season will increase from 50 to 60 and the first ten members on the waiting list have already been offered a place.

The fees for next season will remain exactly the same as this season.

There were no questions regarding the Society's membership.

3.3 Senior Match Report – Russell Samuels

Russ said that his best turnout for a match was 17 anglers. Our waters had fished about the same as last season and it was hard going on the canal. If anyone wants to help out with the matches please speak to Russ after the meeting.

3.4 Concessionary Report – Keith Leverett

Keith said that his matches were a little bit better than last season and averaged 19 anglers over 40+ matches. The Chelmer was diabolical with one match being won with a single half ounce fish. Concessionary membership has remained stable.

Q. Bob Gower asked what has happened to the concessionary match reports in the Maldon & Burnham Standard.

A. Keith said he will only send in reports of matches worth reporting and that they don't always have space to print them.

3.5 Head Bailiffs Report - Shaun McGuinness

Our Head bailiff reported that nothing major had occurred this season and any problems had been dealt with on the bank. We have lost a couple of good bailiffs who have moved out of the area but we now have some new bailiffs and have four selling day tickets on the canal up from two previously. Bailiff meetings take place in the Jolly Sailor on the last Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm.

3.6 Fishery Management Report

Paul Kyffin ran through the main work parties, maintenance work and fish stocking carried out in each month of the previous year (see separate report) on Paul Kemp and Jamie Smart's behalf. The credit for this work must all go to Paul Kemp, Jamie Smart and their team of hard working volunteers.

The two winners of the photo competition who both receive a half price membership are Daniel Hilton with a 9lb 8oz bream from the canal and Michael Perkins with a cracking fully scaled mirror from Whitehouse Farm. Michael kindly asked the committee to pass on his prize to a junior member instead.

Q. Alan Hare stated that the side track to Whitehouse Farm is badly churned up.

A. We will take a look when Whitehouse Farm re-opens for fishing on 1st Feb to assess the level of work required to ensure it is passable.

3.6 Publicity Report – Paul Kemp

Paul and Denise are still doing the shows and a selection of hoodies, beanies, shirts and caps are available to buy after the meeting.

4. Election of Officers

Due to a technical problem (no laptop) this item was brought forward on the agenda to the start of the meeting.

President & Vice Presidents: As far as we know F J Capon is deceased as no one has heard from him for over twenty years. Ted Watson (President) and Alan Hare (Vice President) were re-elected by unanimous vote. Alan Hare proposed Bob Gower as a new Vice President and Bob was elected by unanimous vote.

Chairman and Rulebook Secretary: Malcolm Gardiner was willing to stand for re-election and was proposed by David Spalding, seconded by Bob Gower and returned to this position unopposed by unanimous vote.

Other existing committee members willing to stand for re-election were:

Secretary and Vice Chairman: David Spalding

Treasurer: Simon Greengrass

Fishery Management Officer: Paul Kemp

Assistant Fishery Management Officer: Jamie Smart

Membership and Minute Secretary: Paul Kyffin

Senior Match Secretary: Russ Samuels

Concessionary Match Secretary: Keith Leverett

Head Bailiff: Shaun McGuinness

Publicity Secretary: Denise Kemp

Other members: Dean Andrews and Peter Harden

The eleven named individuals above were proposed by Mick Jones, seconded by Alan Hare and returned to the committee on block by unanimous vote.

This left four spare seats on the committee:

Ryan Boot had already been co-opted at a committee meeting. Ryan was proposed by Jamie Smart and seconded by Shaun McGuinness.

Andy Thomas had also been co-opted at a committee meeting. Andy was proposed by Shaun McGuinness and seconded by Peter Harden.

Kim Naish, who has served on the committee previously, was proposed by Russ Samuels / Keith Leverett and seconded by Alan Hare.

There being no further nominations Ryan and Andy were elected by unanimous vote and Kim was elected by majority vote with 3 against.

5. Proposals

None were received from members by the 30th Nov deadline but the following rule change had been agreed by committee and published on the Society website and in the winter newsletter:

"All anglers must be in possession of an unhooking mat except at organised matches where an unhooking mat will be provided by the match organiser." To take effect from 1st April 2017.

Two members had complained about this rule in writing to the Chairman and a number of others were not happy with the wording. The Chairman agreed that items 7 and 8 in the constitution are not clear regarding the amendment of rules and he will look at these for next year. As a result he was happy to propose the following rule change as suggested by Bob Gower prefixed with "It is recommended that all members be in possession of an unhooking mat":

"All anglers unhooking or handling fish on the ground/bankside must use an Unhooking Mat with minimum dimensions of [to be agreed] or Carp Cradle, no other device may be used. If the fish is to be subsequently weighed and photographed the Unhooking Mat must be positioned under the fish at all times during these processes. The fish should be returned to the water as soon as possible and released when fully recovered."

Following discussion that acknowledged that fish welfare must be our main priority this wording was accepted as the preferred amendment to rule 6.9 subject to committee ratification at the 1st Feb committee meeting.

6. Any Other Business

Q. Bill Woolcott asked if we have negotiations planned with the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation Company as every year we lose more bankside?

A. Yes, we have contacted David Smart who has taken over from Hugh Turner and a meeting is being arranged along with our partner clubs. The agenda for this meeting will include access, car parking, fish stocks, cyclists, boat owners, where we can and can't fish and bank maintenance.

Q. Bob Gower asked if we can park in the Museum of Power car park making it easier to access the Speeney stretch of the Chelmer & Blackwater?

A. We are trying to gain access and Ilford AC do not have an issue with us sharing the car park with them.

Q. Bob Gower asked if we can access the Chelmer & Blackwater by using the Ricketts Mere track as the Navigation Company has access.

A. No, the new owner has told us in no uncertain terms that this is not going to happen.

Q. Bob Gower asked if now that we have a new ten year lease on Totham Pit are we going to address the weed and tree growth, the mussel problem and do we have an action plan?

A. We have recently contacted Pembertons, a local company who specialise in weed removal, and will discuss their quote at the next committee meeting. The jury is out on whether the mussels / water clarity or the silt are our main problem but we are looking into it.

Q. Can we chain off an area for anglers to park at Browns Wharf as at a recent concessionary match anglers who parked on the grass verge were threatened with parking tickets if they did not pay for parking?

A. Kim stated that there is no signage stating that you cannot park on the grass verge and that he has successfully appealed a parking ticket that he received for parking there. This will be followed up at the next committee meeting.

Q. Does another fishing club lease the fishing rights on the opposite bank of the River Blackwater at Wickham Hall?

A. No.

Paul Kemp thanked everyone who has attended his working parties over the past year.

Paul Kyffin thanked Hugo Bibby for his excellent work on the winter newsletter and for rushing back home to fetch his laptop.

Alan Hare thanked the committee for all their hard work and lead a vote of thanks by way of a round of applause.

Keith stated that the concessionary match at Lakelands on Tuesday 24th January is cancelled as the lake is frozen.

Thank you all for attending and the best of luck for the end of the season.

Chairman

Executive Committee Member