

## SHORT MINUTES RETA COMMITTEE MEETING, MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**Apologies.** There were no apologies.

**Minutes** of the Committee meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were slightly amended and signed.

**Matters arising.** The importance of knowing fish numbers entering the river through a fish counter on the weir at Trews was brought up. The FishTek quotation for a fish counting programme from May to September was £45k. It was suggested that finding 6 people to donate £5k each year should be possible. It would be preferable to have whole year data and it was also observed that Trews fish counter data is not wholly reliable as fish still use the weir and baulk pass in high water WRT will be asked to investigate options. A whole river approach to include Defra, EA and other funding schemes was suggested. A wide discussion ensued with concern whether such expanded objectives would assist or detract from the SEW project. Agricultural pollution and water temperatures were also mentioned as issues of concern.

**Treasurer** 32 members and 10 guests attended the AGM. The raffle raised £285, the on-line auction £3,484. 236 members have paid. In future the on-line auction list will be sent to a wider circulation.

**Fish the Exe** The scheme for young people who had attended a tuition day to book a day through the Fish the Exe without paying the RETA subscription is in place. Under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.

**South West Rivers Association.** William Entwistle, new chairman of SWRA is keeping up activity.

**Exe Mitigation Group.** Next meeting is 5<sup>th</sup> May. RETA will request £13k for electrofishing, £3k for GIS and £3.5k for gravel cleaning, with other funding requests yet to be firmed up. The dry spring will probably mean RETA will have to call for a Wimbleball water release.

**Exmoor Rivers and Streams, Headwaters of the Exe.** The recent Upstream Thinking report had been distributed. Water quality data collection will continue in 2022. 18 projects under Farming in Protected Landscape grants had been approved with more pending. Veterinary medicine pollution issues, HMG's Glover Review paper, the ENPA Partnership Plan, hydro power, access, beavers and the next 5 year Park Plan are issues to be considered.

**Robin Bailey Tuition Days** A beginners day (12 attendees max each day) in May, an intermediate day in July and possibly another beginners day in September are planned. The cost had increased to a subsidised £20 per head as Exe Valley Fisheries were charging more.

**Website** Nothing to report

**AGM** The AGM had been a success. Jackson Stops sponsored it with £500 The Taw association will be contacted to avoid a 2023 AGM date clash. Date now set for 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Environment Agency/DEFRA** The EA approach to salmon conservation is of concern. It may be just to hold onto a token number of salmon as a threatened species instead of working to maintain a viable and fishable population.

**Exe Strategic Weirs** Bridgetown Weir is the only weir with full design and planning permission and improvement at a cost of £210k was agreed for this year. This will need additional monies. WRT to finalise the contract price and search for additional monies. Plans at Bolham are advanced and SWW, WEIF and Viridor support might prove it a possible next project. At Mill on the Exe ownership was being determined and probably in the name of Exeter City Council who may work with RETA to try to discover if National Lottery funding might be feasible. An up-coming meeting with the owner at Perry Weir with a view to finding ways to improve it for fish passage at modest cost was discussed. The committee voiced its full support for the overall programme.

**Hatchery** SWRA are maintaining a hatchery system. RETA maintain interest for possible future use.

**Coppice work** DAA's winter coppicing and fencing work is complete.

**Gravel washing** As well as the Haddeo and Little Exe work should also be done on the Barle.

**Heathcoat Factory** Nothing to report

**Juvenile survey.** The EA is scheduled to cover a wider number of sites during 2022.

**Spawning observation** Last year's training and survey work will be repeated in 2022/23.

**GIS.** It is hoped that the system has now secured its funding.

**Riverfly** The first 2022 survey day will be in May.

**Canoes and access.** NE and Police advisory boards will be erected by the landowner around Lanacre, warning visitors about river access at critical times. The ENPA declined to add their logo to these boards.

**Predators** Nothing to report

**Committee dates for 2022/23** are 16<sup>th</sup> July, 10<sup>th</sup> October and 9<sup>th</sup> January. All meetings to start at 6.30pm