

## MINUTES RETA COMMITTEE MEETING, MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Treasurer** 63 members and guests attended the AGM. The accounts had been approved at the AGM but perhaps RETA should have a qualified accountant to view the accounts.

**Fish the Exe**, Nothing to report except the suggestion that the scheme should receive more exposure via website and newsletter.

**SWRA**. RF has handed over the SWRA chair to William Entwisle. SWRA membership fees for the river associations to remain the same. SWRA has a reserve of £12k. SWRA will draft a response on the beaver consultation for wider SW river association use. ENPA to be asked for their policy on beavers but any policy will no doubt reflect Defra's policy or that of the NPs in general. SWRA is lobbying for Defra to follow the Welsh approach on canoeing. It was noted that SWW has a poor record of raw sewage discharges.

**Exe Mitigation Group**. It was noted that the EMG monies from SWW is £45k pa for four years.

**ERaSG/HofE** Water sampling surveys had found disappointing higher levels of phosphate and nitrate. Work was in hand to understand the timings of these peak concentrations and a 2022 survey may be done

**Robin Bailey Tuition Day**. It is hoped to hold 3 days in 2022.

**Website**. It was felt that more news should be on the website, especially following some un-informed criticisms at the AGM. It was suggested that the WRT presentation could be made into a video which could have wider use than just the Exe. It was also suggested 3 newsletters per year should be RETA's aim

**AGM** The Committee thought the 2021 AGM was very successful and that the membership appreciated the work being done and rejected the criticisms brought by two members. RF, GD and PT were congratulated on their most able and interesting presentations. PT to be asked if his notes, once edited, on Trews and Mires could be added to the website. The 2022 AGM will be on 18<sup>th</sup> March

**EA/Defra matters**. It is anticipated that all SW rivers could be made mandatory catch and release although the Exe voluntary catch and release had shown success with 90% plus being released. The EA official catch return appeared to under record the returns known to RETA for some Exe beats. This is unhelpful.

**Exe Strategic Weirs** Bridgetown weir renovation is ready for action. Bolham awaits National Fish Pass approval. Bickleigh Bridge work might be held up by English Heritage. Helebridge although partially breached the concentrated flow is excessive for fish and therefore action is required. Mill on the Exe is a very damaging weir for fish passage and needs urgent attention however the ownership issues need finalising. We need to maintain the SEW fund raising pressure and it was suggested that donors might consider a four year standing order or such like. The identity of donors will be held in total confidence

**Membership** Discussion centre on the idea of a junior membership but it was felt that the amount of work involved did not justify the proposal. Thought was given to the idea that junior rods attending a tuition day might be given a year or two free RETA membership which then would allow them to book in through the Fish the Exe Scheme without the need to take out RETA membership at £30. The idea is to be discussed with Pat Veale at Lance Nicholson.

**Hatchery**: SWRA continues with the hatchery and hatcheries might become essential in the future because of the adverse impact of high winter temperatures on spawning and egg/alevin survival

**Coppice work**, More volunteers are needed especially if work was to be done outside DAA owned beats. It was noted that a considerable length of river below Bridgetown had been clear coppiced but the reason was not known..

**Gravel washing**; As the work is arduous a contractor should be used for summer 2022, and WRT will be asked to advise on potential areas. Using a contractor should allow larger areas of gravel loosening .

**Heathcoat Factory**: Nothing to report

**Juvenile survey**; SWRA will plan the work for 2022.

**Spawning observation**: Training for such observation takes an hour or so and then members could be asked to report their findings. A members' training day is planned.

**GIS**: WRT should continue to develop this essential tool for the management of the river.

**Riverfly**: It was noted that differing riverfly insects responded to different levels of nutrient and sediment.

**Canoes and access**. Nothing to report.

**Sawbill and Cormorants**; It was recalled that Andrew Maund at the AGM had called for volunteers to assist him. This request to be added to the website with a contact number

**Committee dates** 2022 AGM Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March. Committee dates:- Mondays, 10/1/22, 11/4/22, 18/7/22 and 17/10/22