



Minutes of Virtual Annual General Meeting Tuesday 19th January 2021.

Before the meeting commenced period of silence was held in memory of Lindsay Reynolds and Paul Lawrence

Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Nigel. Cowper, Howard Warren, John Galvin, Terry Thomas, Richard Bancroft, Lee Davies, Mark Lake,

Members Present

Lee Evans, John Arrowsmith, Mark Waters, Dave Collins, Lee Evans, Justin Connolly, Gareth Lewis, Dave Akers, Alan Parfitt, Mark Roberts, Lewis Parfitt, Mark Evans, Jerry Oddie, Rob Bowen, Alun Rees, Andy Parker, Anthonypa, Bill and Linda Bayliss, Billy Dickson, Ian Jordan, Ceri Thomas, Dave Smith, David ? David H? David Hahn, David Rymer, Duncan Smith, Dutch Cooper, Ewen Brierley, Saul Roberts, Gareth Rendle, Gayle Marsh, Home? iPad? Jon Harris, Jon Powell, JS7, Justin Connolly, Justin Goodbody, Keith Jones, Keith White, Lewis Parfitt, Mark ? Martyn Watkins, Mike Davison, Mike Hobbs, Mike Butters, Morten Ostergaard, Nigel Hartley, Philip H Bradney, Richie ? Robert Leachman, Robert Wheatcroft, Sarah Hodgkin, Simon Jones, Simon Wordingham, Stuart Smith(Guest), Terry Gould, Tony DiMaria, Peter Constantine, Jim Sharkey

Minutes of Previous AGM.

The minutes of the 2020 AGM have been circulated and were accepted as a true and accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

Proposed:

Seconded:

Carried

No matters arising:

Chairman's Address

Good evening and happy new year / noswaith dda a blwyddyn newydd dda

I would like to welcome you all and say how pleased I am to see so many of you supporting our club. A club that has 170 members and provides access to 16 miles of fishing on the Usk, Wye, Sirhowy, Llynfi and Taff.

I would also like to thank my fellow officers and committee members for supporting us this evening and all of their hard work throughout the year. It's a team effort and requires a lot of commitment, for which I am very grateful.

As outlined in the agenda I'm going to be followed by:

- Vice Chair's address
- Reports from Secretary, Treasurer, Website update, Conservation Officer and Bailiffs
- Election of officers and management committee

We have two new committee members for election:

- Ceri Thomas – Fishing Wales Manager
- Justin Goodbody – long-term supporter of the club and experienced angler

Catch returns

Catch Returns for 2020 showed that >1200 trout were caught but only 5 salmon. As expected, this represents a decrease in 2019 and can be largely attributed to reduced fishing effort.

I would like to thank those of you, most of you, for providing detailed catch returns via our online reporting system. This data allows to monitor the health of our waters and providing a return is an essential requirement for every member – even those of you who didn't fish.

Finances

I would like to reassure you that GAS remains financially strong, however, 2020 has been a very challenging year. While we didn't lose money, we received less income from memberships and day tickets while having some significant outgoings. More from this from our Treasurer later.

Water pollution in Wales

This has been a year where our waters have been blighted by pollution both acute and point source on the River Llynfi and diffuse on the River Wye. Our Vice Chair will discuss the Llynfi incident further but, be assured, we have done and are doing everything we can to seek compensation for the club and ensure this does not happen again (again).

The River Wye has suffered severe algal blooms as a result of diffuse phosphate pollution (from agriculture and human waste) coupled with prolonged periods of intense sunlight. While NRW have conceded there is a problem, whether this issue is to be suitably addressed remains to be seen.

In summary:

- From 2009 – 2016 there were 1,071 agri-pollution events in Wales; 87 of them resulted in fish kills
- In 2016 alone there were 29 fish kills (including the first wipeout of the River Llynfi)
- In 2017 the Chair of NRW wrote to Welsh Government expressing concern over the 'unacceptable' number of agri-pollution incidents (16 fish kills that year)
- In 2018 WG issued a written statement outlining a whole Wales approach to tackle agri-pollution (17 fish kills that year)
- 2019 WG committed to further action
- 2020 draft agri-pollution regs published – implementation delayed until after pandemic
- Under current system likely to be 15-20 fish kills every year

Something must be done, and we are actively lobbying Welsh Government and NRW to address this sorry state of affairs. We ask all club members to assist by acting as first responders, reporting incidents and hazards.

I would like to thank Mark Roberts and Dave Collins for their tireless work in relation to the River Llynfi pollution incident. Their tireless work, in the interest of the club, to publicise the incident and scrutinise the actions of regulatory bodies will hopefully drive the critical changes needed to protect the river.

Usk Salmon

For the Usk Local Fisheries Group, Guy Mawle provided a report on rod and net catches of Usk salmon and provided a stock status update.

- For 2020, the declared rod catch for the Usk is predicted to be between 280 and 380 salmon, best estimate 330
- Without C-19, the declared rod catch might have been ~460 salmon
- The average weight of salmon in 2020 was 9lbs
- There were encouraging numbers of 2-seawinter fish despite the exceptionally poor spawning season in 2015/16
- Adult stock status, based on catches, is likely to remain 'Probably at Risk'
- Concern is reinforced by continued low abundance of juvenile salmon, indicated in surveys conducted by the Wye & Usk Foundation
- Key reasons for low abundance are likely to be climate change exacerbated by poor agricultural practice and, locally, barriers to migration

Angling promotion in Wales

We submitted a proposal to NRW in February 2018 which provided the catalyst for renewed angling promotion in Wales. With the support of The Angling Trust, we secured £130k funding from NRW and VW to develop a promotional package for "Fishing in Wales". Over last winter and spring, we were delighted to be able to support club-member Ceri Thomas in his development of this excellent resource (on behalf of the Angling Trust). The launch of **fishingwales.net** in July 2020 shows what can be done if grass-roots anglers are prepared to produce evidence and to fight for change. Ceri has done a superb job and we are absolutely delighted that he has volunteered to join our committee.

I would again like to thank Dave Collins, Mark Roberts and others for their work on this.

Working parties

We need help with maintenance. Please get in touch with your local bailiff if you can help. 5-6 willing locals could make a big difference to the quality of access and fishing on each beat. It will provide you with a good opportunity to get out into the fresh air after being cooped up for so long!

Sad news

It is with sadness that I inform you of the passing of one of our members – Lindsey Reynolds. As some of you may be aware Lindsay stood down early last year as one of our trustees as he was unwell.

He passed away in February. I think our secretary put it best when he wrote in our newsletter, *'He was a great personality and a real stalwart for the club, a brilliant angler and a man I was privileged to call a friend'*

I also regret to inform you of the untimely passing of Paul Lawrence. Paul was a superb fly-tyer who supported the club at our open days and, more importantly, was a lovely man.

Committee resignations

After many years of service Lewis Parfitt and Justin Connolly are standing down from the committee. I'd like to thank them for their dedication and support for the club.

I would also like to inform you that our esteemed secretary is standing down. Mark will continue in the role for a short while longer to mentor the incumbent but will then stand down to focus on his role as trustee. If anyone is interested in becoming our secretary then please let Mark or I know.

Thanks to the committee and members

I would like to end by again thanking the committee for their hard work in managing the club and ensuring that we are a successful and resilient organisation.

I would also like to thank you, the membership, for your continued support in these extraordinary times.

The coming season will be better and I'm sure that, after this terrible year, we'll appreciate every moment we spend on the water.

Many thanks / diolch yn fawr

Catch returns

Catch Returns for 2020 showed a decrease in trout caught on 2019 and a continuing decrease in salmon numbers but mainly due to the lockdown's during the pandemic.

I would like to thank the majority of you who provided detailed catch returns via our new online reporting system. As you know, this data is critical to allow us to monitor the health of our waters and providing a return is therefore an essential requirement for every member – even those who didn't fish.

Catch Returns 2019

Beat	Trout killed	Trout Returned	Salmon Killed	Salmon Returned	Sewin Killed	Sewin Returned	Grayling Returned	Hours fished
Bakers	10	171	0	0	0	9	n/a	272 hours
Ty Mawr	21	629	0	0	1	0	n/a	848 hours
Llan Farm	1	226	0	5	0	0	n/a	312.5 hours
Pen-Y-Worllod	4	250	0	0	0	0	n/a	197 hours
Dan Y Warren	0	61	0	0	0	0	n/a	85.5 hours
Sirhowy	2	193	0	0	0	0	n/a	106 hours
Gary Evans	9	43	0	0	0	9	n/a	60 hours
Llynfi (Pipton)	0	176	0	0	0	0	33	91 hours

Llynfi (Pontivithel)	0	52	0	0	0	0	26	69 hours
Wyastone Leys	0	2	0	2	0	0	3	266 hours
Abergavenny Town Water	0	282	0	0	0	0	n/a	275 hours plus WUF
Totals:	47	2085	0	7	1	18	62	2582 hours plus WUF

Catch Returns 2020

Beat	Trout	Salmon	Sewin	Grayling	Days Fish
Bakers	130	0	0	0	57
Ty Mawr	412	0	0	0	127
Llan Farm	139	1	5	0	85
Pen-Y-Worllod	50	0	0	0	35
Dan Y Warren	77	0	2	0	26
Sirhowy	220	0	0	0	31
Llynfi	173	0	0	24	27
Wyastone Leys	9	4	0	0	77
Abergavenny Town Water	53	0	0	0	20
Totals:	1263	5	7	24	485

Vice Chairman's Address

1. Angling promotion in Wales

As members will probably recall, Gwent AS submitted a paper to NRW in February 2018 which provided the catalyst for renewed angling promotion in Wales. With the support of The Angling Trust, and following subsequent meetings between us, the AT, NRW and Visit Wales (VW), The Angling Trust finally secured £130 funding in 2019 from NRW and VW to develop a promotional package for "Fishing in Wales". Over last winter and spring, we were delighted to be able to support club-member Ceri Thomas in his and the AT's development of this excellent resource. The launch of <https://fishingwales.net/> in July 2020 just shows what can be done if grass-roots anglers are prepared to produce evidence and to fight for change. Ceri has done a superb job and we are absolutely delighted that he has decided to join the club's committee.

2. Access to Water

Following WG's consultation over access to inland waters in 2017, members will be aware, that in April 2019 WG Deputy Minister, Hannah Blythyn, declared:

- the need for greater dialogue on inland water issues
- that she strongly encouraged stakeholders to find a practical joint solution
- that, if she were not satisfied of reasonable progress within 18 months, she had not ruled out future legislation on access

Since then, a sub-group of the National Access Forum was set up with the intention of providing clear evidence of progress by March 2021. This is the Access To Water sub-group (A2W).

As Mark, Lee and I had previously worked with Mark Lloyd (AT) before, during and after the last consultation, we had an intimate knowledge of the background to this issue. We also had concerns about how WG had managed the consultation and had serious concerns about how it had subsequently summarised and reported its conclusions.

Given that background knowledge, last winter we worked closely with Chris Mills, at that time representing the Angling Trust (now representing Afonydd Cymru) on the A2W sub-group and it was agreed that I should prepare a paper. With Mark and Lee's support, and following consultation with and inputs from Afonydd Cymru, The AT, WSTAA and Angling Cymru "*Angling on Welsh inland fisheries: evolution and tradition, social and economic benefits, sustainability and the debate on how to improve access to the inland waters of Wales*" was completed in February 2020. Chris subsequently submitted the paper to the A2W sub-group and, on behalf of the above organisations, Jamie Cook (AT) submitted it to Lesley Griffiths. The report concluded that "within the framework outlined above, angling representatives in Wales are prepared to engage in constructive discussion via the National Access Forum, in order to meet the Minister's desire to make reasonable progress in the delivery of increased access to water, by March 2021".

The A2W website can be found at <https://naturalresources.wales/days-out/recreation-and-access-policy-advice-and-guidance/networks-and-partnerships/national-access-forum-wales-sub-group-on-inland-water/>.

We have links to and continue to work alongside the A2W sub-group and will explore options for access arrangements on the Usk, which safeguard our and others' angling interests and assets.

3. The Llynfi pollution on July 31 2020

Unfortunately, the club was not notified of the pollution by NRW, to whom the pollution had been reported on the evening of 31 July. Belatedly, we only heard of it on the morning of Saturday 1 August via David James (Pontithel) who had heard from another local resident.

I visited the river and audited the effects of the pollution on 1 and 2 August and estimated that tens of thousands of fish had died over about a distance of 5k, from its upper limit, to the Wye

confluence. Photographs and video footage were taken, and some water sampling and invertebrate monitoring was carried out. I have since prepared an official statement of my findings which has been sent to NRW and Fish Legal.

Since then, we have been trying to monitor NRW's activities. We have a range of concerns, including why this pollution was not prevented following the two previous pollutions in 2016, but also about various aspects of NRW's investigation. Once we are clear on whether NRW will prosecute or not, and following consultation with Fish Legal, we will then decide on what possible actions might next be taken.

In September, we wrote to Lesley Griffiths expressing concern about this, the third pollution and second catastrophic fish kill in four years on the same 5k of river. We listed the numbers of fish kills in Wales before and since she came into office in 2016, and submitted an evidence-based catalogue of her and WG's failure to reduce agri-pollution, of their failure to enforce and regulate, and dismay at her intention to delay regulation until after the *Coronavirus* pandemic. Our submission which had been copied to The AT, Afonydd Cymru, Salmon and Trout Conservation Cymru, The WTT, The Wye Salmon Association, Angling Cymru and The Grayling Society, received their universal support and they too wrote to the Minister. The Minister evaded answering all of the core concerns which we and they had raised. The issue of delayed regulation and enforcement and its negative impact, not just on diffuse pollution, but on acute pollution events such as those which we have endured since 2016, has since been raised via the Wales Fisheries Forum. We shall respond to the Minister once we are clear on whether NRW intends to prosecute.

There is considerable media interest in this case in the context of widespread, and in our case repeated, agri-pollution in Wales and in the lack of and deferment of regulation.

See the Bailiff's report for catch returns and of work done in 2020, and of the need for work in 2021 on the Llynfi.

The Vice Chair also explained about some of the projects we are involved in including the lower Usk canoe access project as well a comprehensive review of the pollution incidents that have occurred on the Llynfi in 2016 and 2020.

Treasure's Report.

As per Annex 1 to these minutes

Auditors report.

The accounts were subject to an audit by the auditors. They concur they are fair and accurate record of the society's financial status.

Carried

Conservation Officers Report.

By Alan Parfitt

What a season it has been. Corvid 19, the floods, road repairs, fallen trees and the disastrous pollution have made for a very difficult year.

Dave Collins and me together with a few loyal members continued our work on the Llynfi. The floods had spread debris all over the fields alongside the river and transformed sections of it. At one location a large tree had filled a deep pool. Thankfully, the Griffiths family who own the land have been wonderfully supportive and James Griffiths organised for a 360-machine come and remove what turned out to be several tons of debris and so clear the flow of the river.

You may well have seen the efforts of this operation on the club's Facebook/website pages. We felt our efforts over the last few years despite the 2016 pollution were reaping just rewards and both Dave and I had no trouble catching fish. Then the pollution arrived. It is difficult to describe its effect on us but Dave and Mark have worked tirelessly to try and gain justice and compensation. Dave/Mark I am sure will update you on the progress.

I have mentioned the road repairs in my bailiff's report which unfortunately took several months to complete while the negotiations took place, but the road is in good condition at the moment.

The fallen Willow tree at Wyastone threatened to prevent us fly fishing the "Hotspot". Dave Akers was soon on the task and they have been completely removed.

The boats at Wyastone suffered from the floods and we even thought they would no longer be there (or even the

storage container) when we were at last able to visit. We are now considering the repairs. Sadly, there was the usual algal bloom on the Wye as the weather warmed and it looks as though the Usk is beginning to suffer too. All the Ranunculus beds at Wyastone have disappeared. Some like to claim it is the algal bloom which has reduced light entering the water, but it could also be a consequence of the huge floods. Dave and I have visited our new potential water and discussed access and possible bank side work for next season. We will need members to come and support any work parties. Dave has already organised some access, so it gives all a mouth-watering prospect for next season.

ClubMate – by Gareth Lewis

Over the past fifteen years, the Gwent Angling Society has produced fishing articles, instructional information from casting mechanics to fly dressing, as well as high-quality fishing videos. Throughout this time, we have utilised our website as well as our presence on several social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) to promote such media. As a result of this proactive initiative, the Gwent Angling Society has become one of the largest, most-respected

producers of high-quality angling information in Wales, and certainly within the UK. Throughout this time, however, the technologies we use continue to evolve rapidly, requiring we keep up with the ever-changing landscape of IT solutions, ensure our website is kept secure, up to date, and patched from a security standpoint. All of which requires time and money; time and money which could also be spent elsewhere.

In July 2020, the club initiated a review of its website, with the goal of identifying functionality requirements, what additional value we can give to members, where we can introduce automated booking and payment services, and where we can reduce administrative overhead and costs. The outcome of the review led to a relationship with ClubMate, an organisation specialising in angling websites and membership management solutions.

As of 19th January 2021, the club is extremely happy to announce that not only will our brand-new website go live, but will enable members to renew their membership online, replace lost membership cards online, purchase day tickets online, as well as to make online bookings to club events and waters. With the new membership management system in place, we also streamline the Society's administrative functions, allowing us to manage our membership queries and payments more effectively, allowing us more time to focus on club strategy and fishery management. Following the launch of these new services in mid-January, we will begin exploring even more member-facing functionality. Due to the increase in member-facing functionality, secure services, membership cards, etc., the Gwent Angling Society is proposing a £5 increase to its annual membership fee.

Stay tuned, as there are a lot more benefits and functionality to come.

Bailiff's Report.

Llan Farm Beat report

By Alan Parfitt

As we all know a very strange and frustrating year.

I was not able to visit Llan farm until the Bailiff's were allowed to patrol river beats by the police.

When I did so, it was the possible damage to the river banks from the horrendous floods which concerned me but I found our stretch was in good shape and even the hand rail at the bottom of the run was still there.

The big problem of the season was the condition of the road from the second gate down. The rain had created a mini canyon about a foot deep which meant it was not drivable with an ordinary car. Although a few vehicles did get down t they probably made matters slightly worse by breaking down the sides of the ditch which made it more difficult to repair. I approached the Owen brothers and they thought the best way was to lay down parallel concrete platforms. The Rodger Edwards education trust did not take this option, but the road has been repaired by in filling with aggregate. Although it is in good condition at the moment I have serious reservations about the long term future of this repair but we will have to wait and see.

To turn to the fishing the beat was fished on only 85 days for obvious reasons with just 1, 14lb

Salmon and some 139 Trout to about 2lb. reported.

Interestingly 5 Sea Trout were reported and Llan has traditionally produced a few of these fish most seasons. A few Dace have been reported which is excellent news following their collapse many years ago.

Ty Mawr and Maes y Belan report

By Mike Hobbs

The biblical February flooding did not do as much damage to our beat as might have been expected. It fortunately removed a fallen tree for us but did make potholes in the track to the carpark, which have been filled. A large amount of silt was deposited in some areas particularly on the access to the gas pipe and canoe pool. We don't know if this will have any long-term detrimental effect. When we can get a working party together it would be good to dig the silt out and reinstate the canoe pool bench. At the bottom of Maes Y Belan our bank was scoured out and is now much deeper on entering the river. We are planning on putting a ladder in for access to the top beat.

Due to the flood and Covid19 restriction the early season was lost to us and many anglers could not fish at all or until late in the season. Some 34 anglers did fish and recorded 412 trout caught. Sadly, no sea trout or salmon were caught although a couple of salmon were "on and off" in the canoe pool. Interestingly half a dozen dace were caught above the gas pipe pool. Could they be making a comeback!?

With plenty of trout in the river we look forward to the coming season with high expectations, as soon as we can fish. I look forward to meeting with you on the bank for working parties as well when fishing.

Dan Y Warren

By Justin Connolly

Where do I start, following one of the wettest winters on record that caused record high river levels in Feb that not only caused serious damage to our river, but to many peoples' homes and businesses around it.

After the river had dropped and started to return to "normal level" again, thoughts of early season fishing looked promising. Then Early March we saw the river rise once again and to top it all off COVID hit and 1st lockdown kicked in.

This stopped all angling activity until May 13th. Returning to the river there were signs of poaching or fishing activity everywhere. The number of poaching incidents this year must have been another record. Luckily at Dany warren, being a private stretch that's not easy to access without permission, no poachers we seen.

Trout fishing through the summer was good as always and slowing down towards the end of the season especially in September when fishing got quite tough.

Salmon fishing was not great this year on this beat any fish that arrived seemed to push on through very quickly.

There will be some bank work as usual on the beat, mainly tree cutting. I will organise work parties with Parf as soon as I can.

Don't forget if you wish to fish Dan y warren you must use the online booking system via the members area of the website.

Fishing stats

Number days of days fished: 26

Number of trout caught: 77

Number of sea trout caught: 2

Number of salmon caught: 0

All fish returned as per the rules for this beat.

Hopefully next season will be different, and we will be allowed to fish a little more.

Pen-Y- Worlod:

Report by Mike Shaw

Not a lot to report, with very few anglers visiting the beat in surely the strangest season on the river ever. The few that did fish reported having some good fishing days, when the conditions allowed. Fly hatches were very unpredictable – as seems to have been the norm for the past few seasons. On certain days, there were some fabulous Marsh Brown hatches and then nothing on the following day. Not sure what the catch return was for the beat for the season. Fish stocks seem good. There were no reports to me of any salmon being caught on the beat. There were very few, if any, caught on the opposite bank (Red Barn). There were a few minor poaching incidents, which were dealt with without too much of a problem. Some minor bank work is required for 2021.

Bakers and Garry Evans – Bailiff Report 2019:

Report by Lee Evans

Year	Days fished	Trout returned	Salmon returned
2020	342	130	0
2019	272	171	0
2018		83	0
2017		130	3

There has been relatively low fishing effort on the beat. It appears that it is being fished by 14 of our members.

As ever down here, we experienced a slow start to the season. Although no one was fishing, things warmed up in the last week of March when we experienced reasonable hatches of March Brown and Large Dark Olive.

May – July saw the best of the trout fishing with big hatches of large green dun and Danica mayfly. Many of the larger fish were taking Danica and a good number of 2lbbers were caught on mayfly patterns.

There are only a few salmon anglers fishing the beats.

Other issues

Steps and railings have been installed along all of Garry Evans's beat (hopefully they'll still be there in the spring...). While this improves access to the water, please take care if you chose to wade as many of these spots are not wadable in anything other than summer levels. Again, BE CAREFUL! The field is currently pasture and so access through the maize has not been an issue. If anyone would like any advice on fishing these beats, then please get in touch. My number is on the website.

Sirhowy:
By Lee Davies

Unfortunately, the 2020 fishing season didn't get off to a good start due to the Corona virus lockdown being applied just after our fishing season started on 3rd March. Despite this some of us did manage to get out before and after the lockdown restrictions where an excellent catch rate was recorded for only 9 anglers and 31 days fished there were 220 trout caught. This exceeds last year's total by 25 fish so that's an excellent result taking into consideration the shortened season due to the lockdown restrictions.

During the lockdown the summer was very hot and dry which drove the Sirhowy down to its bones. This caused a mild level of pollution to occur due to the iron present in the water that filters out from the old mine workings in this area. This type of pollution is out of our control and commonly affects rivers of the south Wales valleys and mostly affect the upper reaches.

This problem normally arises in long periods of drought which allows the dissolved iron to build up in the water. The obvious signs of this are an orange rusty colour that covers the stones especially in the margins.

There is a very healthy head of fish and other aquatic life in the in the river so I do not feel that this has too much of a negative impact the rivers health but we must be mindful that we do not fish when the river is low and the temperature exceeds 20 degrees or when any algal blooms are present.

This is very quickly reversed when the rain comes and clears the river back to normal in short time.

Hopefully we can get back to some form of normality soon and carry on with the work parties which we had planned for last year to clean up and remove any obstructions from the river.

Wyastone Leys:
Report by David Akers

2020 has been a difficult year with many trials and tribulations although rewarding for those who eventually managed to venture out and cast a line!

The year started with storm Clara and then storm Dennis came along shortly after with many weeks of heavy rain. The Wye is of course a spate river so the gauge will fluctuate. Normally 1.5m during the winter months but by 16th Feb it was 5.7m which is high enough to go over the banks. 2 days later it reached an all-time high of 7.14m! Those that know the river we were stunned. There was significant damage throughout the river system. When the waters eventually receded, we had to retrieve our boats – both drowned and full of water and mud. Unfortunately, now too damaged for them to be usable. Repairs are scheduled and hopefully they can be ready again for next season.

With the pandemic lockdown fishing couldn't get properly started until May/June. During this time, we also took to chance to improve beat access, clear away debris from the flood and make the boats safer albeit looking dishevelled.

Club members visited the water in good numbers during the rest of the season.

3 Salmon caught by Tim Hughes (12lb), Steve Howlett (14lb) and Rodney Welsh (6lb). No Seatrout caught – although they are there! – and 9 trout reported.

Coarse fishing has been excellent with plenty of Barbel and Chub being caught. 2 Pike have been caught 10lb and 18lb but there are bigger ones there to be had. No reports of Grayling yet but again they are there and I hope we get some reports over the winter months whether by fly or float and maggot.

We hosted a visit by the Angling Trust in July; many thanks to Ceri Thomas. It was a lovely day with 4 very nice Barbel caught.

In September the high winds landed one of the big Willow trees right in the middle of the gravel run at Boys Rocks. This was quickly removed and some of the other trees also tidied. Spey casting is now much easier. More tree surgery and access work will be done before the start of next season – there are so many excellent parts of the Wyastone beat yet to be fished.

My last comment is one of concern for the health of the Wye. This year phosphate levels increased dramatically due to intensive agriculture upstream. The algal blooms have severely affected the rivers ecology during the season. We must keep the pressure on the NRW and EA to actively monitor, intervene and prosecute. We can all help by being first responders – reporting what we see every time we see it. We then need our regulators to act with more purpose, determination and real impact to protect this national treasure.

Steve Howlett was awarded the Wyastone Leys Cup for landing the largest fish of the season at 14.5 lbs.

River Llynfi: Report by Dave Collins

Although we have two beats on the Llynfi, Pontithel and Pipton, catch returns are combined. In future, we shall request separate catch returns for each beat, and also seek returns to cover winter grayling fishing between September and March.

Sadly, our fisheries (and another above Pontithel Bridge: WUF's Pontithel beat) were destroyed for the second time in four years when the river was subject to yet another catastrophic pollution

on 31 July 2020. NRW has gathered its evidence and its legal team will consider whether there is a convincing case for prosecution. We are working closely with Fish Legal and, together, we will consider what of a number of potential actions we will take, irrespective of whether or not NRW prosecute. We will be seeking funding from NRW, as we did following the 2016 pollution, to facilitate recovery of the lower Llynfi's trout population.

A huge amount of in-stream work was done, by a just few club members after lockdown, to clear the unbelievable devastation caused by last winter's record floods, which included the two highest on record. We even recruited the services of the farmer at Pipton and his mate's 360 to clear a mega logjam which, if left, would have caused significant future erosion and obstruction. Ironically, the last clearance was completed at Pipton in July, only two days before the pollution. Thank you so much to those who helped.

Between the start of the season and the pollution, five members fished 27 days and caught 24 grayling (8 - 15"; 20 - 38cm) and 173 trout (6 - 15"; 15 - 38 cm).

Following the 2016 pollution, as bailiff, I have monitored trout population dynamics based upon my own catches over the last two seasons. As noted earlier, the 2020 data are only until everything was killed again on 31 July this year. These are fish sizes based upon a sample of 100-110 fish caught each year, mainly between late-April, May, June and July - largely coincident with the *E. danica* mayfly hatch:

2020 season 18% > 25cm; 65% =/<25cm; 17% =/<15cm

2019 season 14% >25 cm; 54% =/<25cm; 32% =/<15cm

As would be hoped, in 2020 trout were proportionately getting bigger and we were also still recruiting juvenile fish from previous winters' upstream spawning. In addition, larger fish were clearly also migrating upstream from the Wye and remaining in the river. All of our grayling are the result of upstream migration from the Wye as there are none recorded by WUF in catch returns from the Llynfi or Llynfi Dulas above Bronllys.

There will be much work to do to maintain habitat over the next few years as we begin the river's restoration once again. These are two beautiful pieces of water and the Pipton beat is the only stretch of river which the club actually owns anywhere, so please help in their restoration.

Abergavenny Town Beat Report 2021

By Mike Roberts

We continue to share this beat is with two other angling clubs and we are required to sell day tickets as part of the lease.

We sell tickets via the WUF website and through the garage in St Michaels St, Abergavenny. The season started and almost immediately the first lockdown was introduced. This lockdown appears to have had the effect of encouraging levels of poaching on the Lower river and the beat

had a number of those incidents. The culprits appeared to be mainly young teenagers. One incident was reported whereby an individual caught and killed a salmon on the bridge pool, but the culprit was never identified.

No salmon were reported but 53 trout were caught and returned as a result of 20 days fishing in total.

The beat has the potential for some excellent trout fishing especially when they are able to go down stream of the Castle Meadows where the dog activity does not interfere with the fishing. There are some exceptional wild trout present with some great opportunities to practice the many disciplines of fly-fishing both up and down stream.

Due to work commitments I have decided to stand down from my bailiff duties and I understand that Paul Slaney will now take over those responsibilities.

Events Officers Report No Report this year

Election of Officers

The following officers are standing for re-election.

Chairman.	Lee Evans
Vice Chairman.	Dave Collins
Secretary.	To be nominated
Treasurer.	John Arrowsmith
Membership Secretary.	Jerry Oddie
Events Officer.	Dave Akers
Conservation Officer.	Alan Parfitt

Prop. Rob Bowen

Sec: Terry Gould

Carried

The following have been nominated for election in the following Offices:

Data Protection Officer	Gareth Lewis
Proposed by Mark Roberts	
Seconded by Alan Parfitt	
Carried	

The following officers are standing for re-election as members of the management committee.

Mark Evans, Richard Bancroft, Dave Smith,
Carried

13. The Election of a new committee members.

The following are standing for election as election on the management committee.
Ceri Thomas and Justin Goodbody.

Carried

14. The Election of a Trustee

Mark Waters and Mark Roberts will remain as trustee's

Carried

15. Election of Club Bailiffs

Llan Farm: Alan Parfitt

Dan Y Warren: Justin Connolly

Pen Y Worlod: Mike Shaw

Bakers: Lee Evans

Sirhowy: Lee Davies

River Llynfi: Dave Collins

Ty Mawr: Mike Hobbs

Wyastone Leys: Dave Akers

Abergavenny Town Water. Paul Slaney

Proposed by John Arrowsmith

Seconded by Richard Bancroft

Carried

16. Any other business.

Proposals for Gwent Angling Society AGM

1.

Proposed by Jerry Oddie

Seconded by Alan Parfitt

That we have a scheme whereby members who have at least 5 years membership will be eligible to apply to purchase life membership at a one-off cost of £2000. This would be limited to a maximum of 20 of this type of membership.

Carried

2. Review of Rule 5 of Appendix 1. (Fishing Rules).

That rule 5 is changed as follows.

Proposed by John Arrowsmith

Seconded by David Akers

Carried

- The limit of fish that may be killed and taken from either fishery is:

Brown Trout: - Season's limit of 12 with only a single fish killed per day. (This is to maintain and manage fish stocks on our beats.) This ruling will be reviewed each AGM.

Salmon: - as per new NRW byelaws i.e. compulsory catch and release

Spinning for salmon is not allowed from 1st September on the River Wye.

Sea Trout: - All to be returned

These rules are overridden by any change in laws by NRW

- **Annual Fee's**

That the fees be increased by £5 to £180 for full membership and £95 for those Llan Farm members who have been ring fenced. This is to cover the costs of the new system of membership renewal each year.

Proposed by John Arrowsmith

Seconded by David Akers

Carried

All members were offered the opportunity to ask questions at the conclusion of the meeting but there none forthcoming.

The meeting was concluded at 2054 hours.

A summary of questions asked via the chat facility were recorded and are disclosed at annex 2.

Annex 1

Finance Summary Gwent Angling Society 2020

GAS is financially strong, however 2020 has been very challenging compared to 2019.

- **2019**
 - The capital increased by £15,058.13 (compared to 2018)
- **2020**
 - The capital increased by £2,264.44 (compared to 2019)
 - Less income from Memberships, Day Tickets
 - Increase in Maintenance costs
 - Cost of upgrade of GAS website to Clubmate
 - GAS has 2 accounts in the bank. A Current Account and an Instant Access Account. GAS money has been transferred out of the Instant Access Account into the Current Account. The instant Access Account is now a holding account for Abergavenny Town Water.

Key Changes in Finances since 2019 AGM

	2019 (£)	2020 (£)	Effect on Bank Balance (£) (19 vs 20)
TOTAL £ (current + Abergavenny Town Water Accounts)	39,334.61	41,599.05	+2,264.44
GAS Subscription Fees	33,810	24,257	-9,553.00
Maintenance *	(2,832)	(3,999.70)	-1,167.70
Leases **	(12,650)	(12,795)	- 145.00
Skills Day	(945.81)	0	+ 945.81
Website, stamps etc	(779.19)	(2,326.48)	-1,547.29
Guest Tickets	340	100	-240.00
WUF Tickets	739.60	415.20	-324.40
Memberships (WSA, WUF, Fish Legal, UUF.)	(708)	(678)	+30.00

* Excluding Wyastone boat repairs ca £1,500 -2,000.

**Abergavenny Town Water

Gwent Angling Society Statement of Accounts 2020

Income (£)

Current Account (£)	
Membership Subscriptions	24,257.00
Guest Tickets (GAS)	100.00
Casting Clinic	0
Donations to GAS	466.00
Other	1,668.85
Sub Total	26,491.85
Transfer from GAS Instant	7,086.71
Total	33,578.56

Expenditure (£)

Current Account (£)	
Leases (inc ATW)	14,795.00
Maintenance (contractors, tools)	3,999.70
Website (maintenance and development, stamps)	2,326.48
Memberships (WUF, WSA, Fish Legal, Angling Trust)	678.00
Skills Day/AGM	0

Donations from GAS	494.00
Other	2,778.38
Total	25,071.56

Abergavenny Town Water (£) – formerly Instant Access Account	
Account Opening Balance	510.23
Day Tickets	415.20
Interest	1.23
Total	962.66

Account Summary (£)

Account Summary (£) as of 18/12/20	
Opening Balance	39,334.61
Current Account Income	26,491.85
Current Account Expenditure	(25,071.91)
Transfer from Instant Access Account	7,086.71
Final Balance	40,632.07
Abergavenny Town Water*	962.66
Petty Cash	4.32
Total	41,599.05

*Abergavenny Town Water is an account that includes GAS, ISCA and Merthyr Angling

Annex 2.

19:26:20 From Bill's iPad (2) to Everyone : Linda is here as well Gareth
19:26:39 From markroberts to Everyone : Welcome both
19:27:14 From Alun Rees to Everyone : Gareth Lewis...how much hair have you lost!!!
19:27:24 From Alun Rees to Everyone : Wear a hat, the glare is blinding
19:27:37 From Gareth Lewis to Everyone : I was fighting a losing battle ALun!
19:28:07 From robjb to Everyone : welcome to the club garethh
19:30:51 From johna to Gareth Lewis(Direct Message) : can you hear me. John
19:31:59 From Gareth Lewis to johna(Direct Message) : I can't I'm afraid John. You might need to enable your audio at the bottom of the Zoom app
19:33:01 From letto to Everyone : Apologies but my mic seems permenantly muted!
19:33:42 From home to Everyone : terry Clease may not make ot his wife has just died
19:33:45 From Gareth Lewis to letto(Direct Message) : Hi, do you have an option to enable audio at the bottom of the screen?
19:34:41 From letto to Gareth Lewis(Direct Message) : Hi Gareth, tried that but still no audio. I can hear you so will try plugging in an external mic
19:36:51 From Terry Gould to Everyone : Do we have any information as to how the RiverUsers Licences will work? Canoeists only or include anglers given we have a rod licence?

19:37:43 From Gareth Lewis to letto(Direct Message) : Give it a try. We don't expect a huge amount of audio usage as it'll get quite chaotic. Any queries throughout the evening, just use the chat feature

19:38:05 From Dutch to Everyone : what time will the annual curry be delivered ?

19:41:54 From Billy to Everyone : The Fishing in Wales promotion has been fantastic. Well done all involved.

19:42:53 From Ceri Thomas to Everyone : Thank you all for supporting Fishing In Wales!

19:47:51 From Philip H Bradney to Everyone : happy notes are taken as read

19:53:49 From Alun Rees to Everyone : Do the canoeists not want unfettered access without payment?

19:54:16 From Stuart Smith to Gareth Lewis(Direct Message) : Asking owners, clubs and anglers their needs for access seems very sensible

19:54:27 From markroberts to Everyone : What they want is not necessarily what they will get

19:55:05 From home to Everyone : where does the lower Usk start from does it include ISCA beats

19:56:32 From markroberts to Everyone : From Crickhowel. Bridge to the estuary

19:59:58 From David Akers to Everyone : what is the potential for penalty/compensation from the NRW and those that caused the incident?

20:00:38 From markroberts to Everyone : It is advised at present that we should not prosecute NRW

20:03:28 From justingoodbody to Everyone : Does the NRA issue summary fines for pollution on a graded scale i.e. by fish deaths?

20:06:07 From Philip H Bradney to Everyone : I don't have a video feed from our treasurer.

20:07:08 From Gareth Lewis to Philip H Bradney(Direct Message) : Looks to be the same for me Philip. John can't be sharing his video. There's no problem on your end

20:08:05 From Alun Rees to Everyone : I have used Club Mate and it simplifies things and automates them.

20:08:42 From Alun Rees to Everyone : Well done Alan. Thanks for your commitment!

20:09:01 From Philip H Bradney to Gareth Lewis(Direct Message) : Hear Hear

20:09:08 From Lewis Parfitt to Everyone : Well done Alan! And good to know it's in safe hands with John.

20:11:30 From Alun Rees to Everyone : I found no discrepancies and gave the accounts the thumbs up.

20:12:55 From Philip H Bradney to Everyone : Read the reports and have no questions

20:14:02 From David Akers to Everyone : If anyone wants to help me with Wyastone please let me know - coffee and cake provided!

20:14:47 From mike.butters to Everyone : Is there a date yet for an email link to Clubmate?

20:15:07 From Gareth Lewis to Everyone : There will be an email including all info tomorrow morning, Mike

20:15:10 From justingoodbody to Everyone : David, I'm on for the coffee and cakes

20:17:26 From Alun Rees to Everyone :
http://www.rwga.co.uk/archive/Llanstephan_to_Hay.pdf

20:19:03 From David Hahn to Everyone : Congratulations Dave - access to Boughrood is some recognition for all your work.

20:19:33 From Billy to Everyone : Well done on the new Wye beat. I have fished the WUF Llangoed beat above it, and that holds plenty of trout and grayling.

20:21:05 From Lewis Parfitt to Everyone : Well done Dave & Mark - your hard work is appreciated. This is a great addition!

20:23:06 From David Hahn to Everyone : Is that the idea of the £2000 life membership deal? Getting money in before fishing Boughrood?

20:25:11 From markroberts to Everyone : No it is about putting money back into a reserve as potential waters may be coming available to purchase rather than lease

20:35:05 From Alun Rees to Everyone : Gareth, at the appropriate time of course...I have used Club Mate to renew for both MTAA and Ogmores Angling. Can you advise whether the 'change club' is usable and can GAS be accessed as an existing user? Or do we still need to register again...?

20:36:14 From markroberts to Everyone : Yes you can swap from club to club

20:36:54 From Philip H Bradney to Gareth Lewis(Direct Message) : Hello Gareth, two of my grandchildren are junior members and I cant round them up at the moment to renew because of covid. Any thoughts?

20:39:03 From Morten Ostergaard to Everyone : Can we continue to renew our membership using a normal electronic payment?

20:39:38 From markroberts to Everyone : Yes

20:40:34 From David Hahn to Everyone : I've just followed your process & successfully used the new website to rejoin - very smooth.

20:41:49 From Gareth Lewis to Everyone : Brilliant! Thanks David!

20:42:21 From Philip H Bradney to Everyone : in favour

20:43:12 From Tony DiMaria to Gareth Lewis(Direct Message) : 👍

20:45:17 From Tony DiMaria to Gareth Lewis(Direct Message) : 👍

20:45:28 From JS7 to Everyone : In favour

20:46:06 From Tony DiMaria to Everyone : 👍

20:46:15 From JS7 to Everyone : In favour

20:49:43 From Alun Rees to Everyone : The question you asked was were there any objections...

20:51:21 From Dutch to Everyone : on the Abergavenny town water do MTAA and Isca follow the same 'on water' rules as us such as spinning etc

20:52:27 From justingoodbody to Everyone : Very well run meeting team!

20:52:41 From Terry Gould to Everyone : Well done guys!

20:52:59 From Billy to Everyone : This worked well. Thanks for the effort.

20:53:13 From david holden to Everyone : thanks and all the best to everyone

20:53:20 From richie to Everyone : Just in time, have to go to work, stay safe all

20:53:20 From David Hahn to Everyone : First AGM I have managed to attend from London - one small benefit for me from the lockdown. Many thanks to all involved.

20:53:26 From David Akers to Everyone : well done - very helpful and a brilliant new website

20:54:00 From robjb to Everyone : thanks to all the committee for your hard work

20:54:10 From mike.butters to Everyone : Excellent meeting well done to the committee

20:54:18 From Sarah Hodgkin to Everyone : Thanks everyone see you on the river

20:54:20 From Nigel Hartley to Everyone : Thanks

20:54:22 From Morten Ostergaard to Everyone : Thank you

20:54:29 From Tony DiMaria to Everyone : thank you

20:54:41 From Jon Harris to Everyone : Very good thank you.

20:55:34 From Keith White to Everyone : Great meeting. Thanks