



**Title of Meeting:** Wales Fisheries Forum – Meeting 2

**Date of Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019      **Time:** 10:30    **Venue:** Elephant & Castle Powys

**Present:**

- Afonydd Cymru: Stephen Marsh-Smith, Alan Winstone (AW)
- Welsh Salmon & Trout Conservation Cymru: Richard Garner Williams (RGW)
- Welsh Salmon & Trout Angling Association: Paul Edwards (PE)
- Angling Trust & Fish Legal: Mark Lloyd (ML)
- Wild Trout Trust: Denise Ashton (DA)
- Institute of Fisheries Management: Nicola Teague (NT)
- Campaign for Protection of Welsh Fisheries: Chris White (CW)
- Countryside Alliance Wales: Rachel Evans (RE)
- Welsh Government: Johnathan Luke Davies (JLD)
- NRW: Ruth Jenkins (CHAIR), Peter Gough (PG), David Mee(DM), John Clark (JC), Emma Keenan (EK) Theresa Kudelska (TK)

**Apologies:** Tony Rees, Angling Cymru

<b>Item No:</b>	<b>Action</b>
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## 1. Welcome and introductions

Ruth Jenkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and covered:

- Apologies for absence – received from Tony Rees, standing-in for Carl Tonner
- Minutes from Meeting 1 were approved
- Actions from last time reviewed
- ToR were approved
- NRW Agricultural Advisor was invited but was unable to attend – will attend next meeting

To be posted on NRW website

To be circulated and posted on website

- Membership review
- Discussion on proposed new members
- Need to be wary that group doesn't get too large
- Noted there is no stakeholder rep from Severn/mid Wales
- Concern how WFF would represent LFG groups
  
- There was a discussion about the important need for DCWW representation on the Forum and PG was asked to formally invite Gail Davies to the next meeting and to become the DCWW representative
- RE – proposed GWCT (Dylan Roberts). Concluded an invite should be extended
  
- Proposal from Robin Parry (CCGRT) for LFGs to be represented on WFF discussed.
- DM explained past approach to reps of all LFGs and low response.
- Further discussion whether reps from each LFG should again be invited to join WFF. Outcome was that there should be nominated WFF members to represent the regions of Wales:

PG to extend invite to DCWW and GWCT

North Wales - Chris White to be rep  
 SE Wales - SMS to be rep (covering Wye and Usk)  
 SE Wales - RGW rest of SE  
 SW Wales – proposed to invite new members Creighton Harvey or Clive Roberts  
 Mid-Wales – No candidate identified

Pg to send invites to members suggested to rep

Noted that communication with LFGs on all outcomes of WFF meetings will be maintained

- NRW fora structure (verbal, for information)

RJ gave an overview of the NRW fora structure

- Water forum has taken over from WFD liaison panels
- Access Forum – ML reported that he has so far been unsuccessful to get invite to Access Forum even though this is of key interest to AT members.
  
- RJ reported on NRW organisational design – it has been a long process but will be fully implemented in July. NRW will consist of 7 geographical “Places” (including a “place” comprising all Welsh coastal waters) and therefore current “patches” will be changing.
- There was concern from the forum that there will be teams of generalists with few experienced individuals. There were also concerns around capacity, maintaining technical resilience and tackling succession and what initiatives will be in place for fisheries.

ML to forward correspondence to RJ for consideration

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## 2. Area Statements

- JC presented on Area Statements –
- There were many questions around the process behind these and the nature and role of the proposed opportunity catchments
- There were calls for better communication and engagement.
- Agreed that role of WFF members for Area Statements needs to be clarified, and to ensure effective communications.

**ACTION** – members to cascade area statements, contacts and outputs  
**ACTION:** invite all WFF members and their contacts to sign up to receive the area statements newsletter. Members to indicate which areas they wish to sign up for.

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## 3. Fisheries Local Inquiry: feedback and commitments made

- There has been interest in costs incurred by NRW. Some published estimates have been very inaccurate. In order to clarify PG stated the costs associated with LI were:
    - Legal - £259,000
    - Other professional - £26,000
    - Venue hire, travel, advertising, translating, subsidies (microphones etc) - £64,600
    - TOTAL COSTS - £350,000
  - JLD stated that WG costs were:
    - Accommodation and travel - 2000
    - Planning inspectorate costs - £37,000
  - Noted that NRW staff time costs not included
  - Noted that finance to cover these costs did not come from rod or net licence income
  - Concerns/comments:
    - Several comments (including ML and CW) regarding the way the barrister employed by NRW undertook his role, and the overall way the local inquiry was conducted. It was felt that the Minister should be made aware of how the decision to hold a local inquiry has affected relations with stakeholder groups.
    - It was noted that the byelaws only deal with a symptom of the state of fisheries not the cause.
  - Updates on ongoing actions arising from the Inquiry:
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- FEBs: update from advisory group:
  - Noted that the NRW Board will consider a paper on this very soon.
  - NRW will be reviewing the licencing process to improve it
  
- Fisheries habitat restoration plans
  - Afonydd Cymru are NRW's framework contractor
  - Several catchment-based plans have been commissioned and currently reviewing budgets to deliver outcomes.
  - Looking at how we work with partners and deliver this
  - Needs to be engagement with stakeholders about these plans
  - The plans will be placed on NRW's website
  
- Stock assessment methodology review
  - In progress, NRW and EA committed to completing this in 3 years. Noted that this is ambitious.
  - With CEFAS, we are reviewing methods in NI, Ireland and Scotland and the broader NASCO community.

**ACTION** Links to where these reports will be circulated once they are completed

Also looking at methods for collecting evidence and timeliness of implementation of assessment outcomes. Don't want delays between assessment and decisions to implementation. Focus on achieving the outcomes we all want

**ACTION** – CW to share comments on Scottish Methodology with PG

#### 4. Fisheries Strategy

- Feedback from members

RJ explained that:

- there is no longer a fisheries department. Instead fisheries outcome will be delivered across each part of every area of the business
  
- The model now adopted is:
  - Fisheries Head of Business – Ruth Jenkins
  - Fisheries Head of Service – Martyn Evans
  
- The programme of work will be developed to match available resources.

PG introduced brief paper “Planning for New Fisheries Strategy for Wales” and debate followed.

- Concerns/Comments
  - Angling wasn’t mentioned enough in the strategy
  - Does it only set out what can be achieved, or what we *could* achieve?
  - Due to the state of the environment we currently can’t expect thriving freshwater populations
  - Can this emerging strategy be linked to the marine strategy as well – considering salmon and sea trout at sea
  - Other species of fish need to be considered rather than just those recreationally fished for.
  - discussion around the recreational multi-use of rivers and that equity requires all users to make a financial contribution.
  - Evidence and education are two essential parts of the strategy
  - Need a strategy for angling participation
  - Little information on fishing for visitors to Wales
  - Noted that there has been resistance to joining the Welsh Passport scheme
- Agreed that a sub-group should meet to consider this. Prospective members: D; RGW; ML; SMS; CW.
- Initial matters for consideration to include: -
  - Participation/promotion of angling
  - Angler demography
  - Angling strategy
  - Health and wellbeing
  - Education, including schools
  - Little information on fishing for visitors to WalesNoted that there has been resistance to joining the Welsh Passport Scheme

**ACTION** set up a task and finish group to consider a WFF ‘action plan’

**ACTION** – WG to consider how they can support information on angling opportunity to visitors (via Visit Wales?) JLD.

**ACTION** – AW/CW to explain to DM the barriers that prevent uptake of passport in North Wales

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## 5. Stock Assessment Papers

Papers on salmon and sea trout stock assessment were briefly considered.

- All 23 principal river salmon stocks are currently assessed as ‘At Risk’ or ‘Probably at Risk’ of failing to achieve the management target
  - Salmon as a feature of 4 N2K SAC sites are all classified as ‘unfavourable’
  - Nationally and Internationally, salmon stocks considered to be “at lowest level ever” (NASCO and AST)
  - The provisional total nominal catches of Atlantic salmon in 2018 (all countries) the lowest in the time-series. Catches in England & Wales and Scotland were also the lowest in their time-series.
  - Salmon stocks remain in a depleted state throughout much of the North Atlantic, with more southerly stocks in both North America and Europe generally being more severely affected.
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Sea trout stocks have also declined markedly across Wales

33 main sea trout rivers, 29 (88%) of stocks assessed as 'At Risk' or 'Probably at Risk' only 4 (12%) are 'Probably not at Risk'

only 4 catchments (Gwyerfai, Seiont, Ogwen and Conwy) are 'probably not at risk' which could be considered to have a harvestable surplus

Links to the stock reports can be found on the NRW fisheries pages at <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/fisheries/salmon-and-sea-trout-stocks-in-wales/?lang=en>

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## 6. The Wales Land Management Forum Sub-group

- RJ gave an overview of NRW's role on this group.
- Amendments to Agricultural Act 1947 (England & Wales) will come into force on or before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019. This may have an impact on the land mgmt. forum.

<https://www.nfu-cymru.org.uk/nfu-cymru/documents/new-regulation-details-for-public-information/>

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2019/863/pdfs/wsi\\_20190863\\_mi.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2019/863/pdfs/wsi_20190863_mi.pdf)

**ACTION** – EK  
to circulate  
Agricultural  
Pollution  
Measures –  
NFU Cymru

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## 7. Angling Promotion Update

ML updated on the award of a £100k grant for this work by Visit Wales and the match funding of £30k to be provided by NRW.

Work will: -

- Provide information sources for anglers
- Update 'Fishing in Wales' website
- Include sea angling
- Feature articles from known angling journalists
- Include social media updates
- Provide videos

Hope to build on this in 2020/21 – the 'Year of the Outdoors'.

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## 8. Items for Information

- INNS:
  - Angler pathway action plan – Led by Theresa Kudelska and due to be complete by the end of the year if not before.
  - Check. Clean. Dry. Campaign has relaunched
- TLSB:
  - NRW will shortly respond to next set of modelling by TLSB.. CEFAS to carry out some of the modelling with revised parameters

**ACTION** – EK  
to Circulate  
INNS  
Strategy when  
complete (by  
the end of the  
year)

- Severn/Thames
  - Proposed major new water resources scheme starting early stages of feasibility study
  
- Coarse Fish Close Season
  - Over 13,500 responses received to EA informal consultation. This has impacted on the date of EA announcement of minded-to position.  
Over 70% of respondents provided comments on the risks around the different options and other information.  
It's notable that so many people took part and have a view on the close season, but it will take time for EA to examine and consider comments.  
There is also a need to consider what the principal stakeholder bodies and other agencies have submitted. All need to be taken into account before EA with NRW determine if there is a case for change.

**ACTION** –  
SMS to send  
Severn  
Monitoring  
Reports/Water  
resources  
proposals to  
PG/DM

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## 9. AOB

- Access to rivers
    - Ongoing issue around arrangements for access to rivers.  
Noted that WG stated failure to reach voluntary agreement could lead to legislation being put in place instead
    - Access to be on next agenda
  - ML announced that he is leaving Angling Trust
  - ML gave an overview of the bailiff scheme in England  
With 500 volunteers on patrol with hands off roles, this is intelligence led and cover non-fisheries issues too.
  
  - Proposed date of next meeting
    - 14/11/2019 Carmarthen
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## Appendix 1

### Actions carried forward from last meeting (October 2018)

No.	Action	By	Deadline	Status
6	NRW to provide note on issues at Maes Elwy and invite Gideon Carpenter Senior Policy Advisor Hydropower to present at future meeting.	NRW	21 <sup>st</sup> Feb. 2019	Ongoing
7	NRW to produce update on hydropower compliance checks and enforcement for future meetings.	NRW	21 <sup>st</sup> Feb. 2019	Ongoing
12	NRW to observe progress in England for voluntary bailiffs and keep the Forum updated.	NRW	21 <sup>st</sup> Feb. 2019	Ongoing
21	Forum NGO members are asked to approve use of their organisation logos.	All	12 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2018	Open

### Draft Actions (May 2019)

No.	Action	By	Deadline	Status
1	Invite DCWW and GWCT to present their case for membership at the next WFF	Pete Gough	Oct 2019	Completed
2	Forward correspondence on request for membership of the access forum to RJ for consideration	Mark Lloyd	ASAP	Completed
3	Members to cascade area statements, contacts and outputs to their organisational and local contacts	All	June 2019	
4	Invite all WFF members and their contacts to sign up to receive the area statements newsletter. Members to indicate which areas they wish to sign up for.	Dave Mee	June 2019	
5	Fish Eating Birds Links to where the report and Board paper will be once they are completed	Pete Gough	July 2019	
6	Share comments on Scottish Methodology for stock assessment from CPWF and Mike Ashwin with PG	Chris White	May 2019	
7	ACTION – WG to consider how they can support information on angling opportunity to visitors (via Visit Wales?)	Jonathan Luke Davies		



8	To produce brief account of the perceived barriers that prevent uptake of passport in North Wales with potential solutions to DM	Alan Winstone/Chris White	September 2019	
9	Fisheries Strategy: set up a task and finish group to consider a WFF 'action plan'	Peter Gough	September 2019	
10	Circulate Agricultural Pollution Measures – NFU Cymru	Emma Keenan	July 2019	Completed
11	Circulate INNS Strategy and Angling Pathway Action Plan when complete (By the end of the year)	Emma Keenan	December 2019	
12	ACTION – SMS to send Severn Monitoring Reports/Water resources proposals to PG/DM	Stephen Marsh-Smith		
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed date of next meeting</li> <li>- 14/11/2019 Carmarthen</li> </ul>			