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**Hon. Secretary**

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Dear Member,

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and are now looking forward to the start of the 2019 Trout season

I think it's fair to say that 2018 has been most interesting with a lot going on particularly regarding the platforms at Pexton, the meanders on Big Crooks and issues with Oxfold/Costa.

The beck this year due to the dry conditions has been particularly low but I'm told good catches were achieved if a careful approach, long leader and small flies were the order of the day.

Bob Booth once again supplied us with some superb hard fighting fish that have provided members with very good sport on both lakes and the beck above Ings Bridge.

Oxfolds/Costa.

As reported a lot of activity has taken place over the course of the year in an attempt to resolve the problems currently associated with Oxfolds/Costa. After hearing encouraging noises from the EA in May at the meeting held at the Forest and Vale, we thought we would see evidence of their promised cooperation and action to resolve the problems. Sadly, although there has been some movement not a lot else has happened.

In early December, Paul Wood kindly agreed to take committee members around Oxfold to give an insight into the problems and what action was being taken.

On the second of these meetings it had been and was raining heavily and the members present were able to see first-hand raw sewage was being discharged from the YW outfall directly into the beck.

Photographs were taken and the incidence reported to the EA.

To the best of our knowledge, no action that we know of has taken place.

Having now got the photographic evidence of both over abstraction and pollution, Paul Wood supported by senior figures in the AT and fish Legal is currently in the process of escalating the action we are taking.

**Grayling Matches.**

Entries to the John Gore match were disappointing and yet again it had to be cancelled due to lack of support.

The October Grayling match was held on the 28th October on Pickering beck and a total of 15 members and 2 guests fished. Also fishing were 3 juniors.

The day before owing to the amount of snow that fell it was thought that the match would be held in conditions that were cold, wet and miserable.

As it turned out, after a cold start except for a few light showers, the weather improved considerably and with one exception who measured his length in the beck, most members enjoyed a dry day.

The beck was pegged out once again by Paul Ridley between the second field above Low Mill down to the bottom of Big Crooks.

A total of 41 Grayling and 130 trout were caught, the majority of grayling being caught from 3 pegs.

Interestingly, some of the fish caught were no larger than 2 inches which would appear to suggest that our current policy of stocking only above Low Mill to preserve stocks of fry in the lower reaches of the beck is bearing fruit. This is especially important as all the fish we are now allowed to stock must be non-breeding triploids.

The overall winner was Neil May who fishing Cox's hole repeated his victory in the February match returning a total of 10 grayling with a weight of 2lb 10oz.

Missing out on tying for the first place by only 2 ounces but winning the Poor Sods cup with a total of 12 fish was Marc Allison who drew the deep hole on Benny's Bend.

The trophy for the heaviest fish won by Ade Bristow who fished the Stalag and weighed in with a fish weighing 1lb 3oz. Ade also won the Sheep field trophy.

The new junior trophy kindly donated by Brian and Bev Wray in memory of Christopher was won by Sam May with three fish weighing a total of 14oz in the stretch immediately below Low Mill.

Barry Parsons did particularly well considering his draw in the upper section of the Stalag. He was successful in winning the fly trophy with one grayling from what is traditionally difficult water for grayling.

The after dinner match and raffle was held at the Beansheaf Hotel on the Malton/Pickering road where members enjoyed homemade steak pies and good company as well as a few beers

The raffle was made particularly memorable on this occasion by the mystery prize donated by Marc Allison and won by Allan Haighton. To the amusement of all those present, when unwrapped it turned out to be a large, Gaby Brown Trout Fish Pillow that put all those caught during the match to shame.

My grateful thanks go to everyone who contributed to the success of the event.

### **Pexton Platforms.**

I'm pleased to report that thanks to the herculean efforts of Colin Shanks, Paul Ridley and Allan Haighton on the day, the three platforms facilitating disabled/wheelchair fishing have now been installed and ready for use by members and any disabled guests they may wish to take.

Much of the credit must also go to the Forestry Commission and their contractors who did a wonderful job in clearing the bank and providing new wheelchair user friendly access down from the car park to the lake and on then to the platforms. Anyone like me that is a bit dodgy on their feet will notice a significant improvement from the often slippery and muddy slope and path we previously had to negotiate.

They also made the actual installation much easier for us by excavating the banks to accommodate the platforms as well as driving in the posts and securing the frames.

Without their help it is doubtful if we would have been able to prepare the site and access without strenuous effort on our part. (Colin calculated that we would have had to shift c 40 tonnes of quarry waste by hand to provide access to the platforms.)

A letter of thanks expressing our appreciation for the work done on our behalf has been sent to the FC management.

Another major contributor to the project has been the Angling Trust who financed the timber and other materials by giving us an award from the Angling Improvement fund, which invests a share of the Fishing Licence income to improvement projects and activities at fisheries.

The issue of recruiting members who have disabilities has yet to be discussed by committee and is likely to require an addition to the PFA rules outlining fees and conditions of membership etc.

Once agreed by the committee, their decision will be included on the AGM agenda for approval by the membership.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Colin for the tremendous amount of work he did to prepare the platform designs, ordering materials and preparatory work to the frames without which we would not have had the information required for the approval of the FC or for the project to proceed as smoothly as it did.

Grateful thanks also are due to Paul Ridley for his help and use of his vehicle to transport all the assembled frames and posts to site.

### **Further developments.**

After further recent discussion with the Forestry Commission, they are now allowing us to relocate the existing gate, fit a barred grill on the outfall and erect more signs restricting access and banning cyclists from the newly laid pathways at Pexton.

Colin is now engaged in the process of preparing designs for the grill and new signs etc.

### **Trail Cameras.**

Poaching continues to be a problem at both of our lakes.

In order to combat this and provide evidence to the Police that will allow us to prosecute offender's two cameras have been purchased originally with the intention of siting them at Little Crooks.

As previously reported, the Forestry Commission have in the past been reluctant for us to site CCTV cameras at Pexton due to Data Protection issues.

Mike Mycroft, Paul Ridley and I attended an evening Rural Watch discussion at the FC Visitor centre organised by the Police and FC at which, although primarily attended by members of the farming community primarily to look at establishing a Rural Watch scheme to prevent/prosecute

illegal shooting and property theft from farms, we were able explain our current problems and ask whether the use of trail cameras was an acceptable alternative as suggested by the Police.

After the meeting we were asked by the FC representative to write to him giving further details so that he could raise the issue with his senior colleagues. This was done and we are awaiting an official response.

### **Big Crooks.**

Thanks to a lot of hard work on behalf of Allan Haighton, we now have planning permission from Ryedale District Council as well as all the other approvals necessary for the project to proceed.

Tony Walsh is actively pursuing grants and has so far been successful in obtaining a grant of £7150 from Ryedale District Council towards the cost of the project.

Investigations into suitable contractors to carry out the work are currently being carried out by the East Yorkshire Rivers Trust.

### **Grayling fry.**

Following on from the last newsletter when I mentioned that we were looking at the possibility of stocking grayling fry in the beck to boost the numbers.

Unfortunately enquiries revealed that the EA have a policy of not stocking fry to replace predation?

However, as reported in the grayling match report, some of the Grayling caught were quite small which would appear to bode well for the future.

### **Cliff Hardy's Will.**

In order to clarify the terms of Cliff Hardy's will with respect to the legacy he left to the PFA, we need the date on which Cliff passed away in order to complete the application for a copy.

From what I can gather this was sometime early in 1990.

Various attempts to find out from several sources have so far been unsuccessful.

If anyone knows or can obtain the actual date of his passing, it will allow us to get a copy of the will and clarify exactly what the legacy can be used for.

### **Christmas Work Party.**

Seven members attended the Christmas Work Party and although few in number managed to carry out a significant number of outstanding jobs, including the selective clearance of overhanging branches and erection of shelving in the new lock up.

Five members later enjoyed the carvery and each other's company at the Beansheaf Hotel.

Sadly this event and the John Gore Fly Match for whatever reason do not appear to command the support from members that they used to enjoy?

If anyone has any ideas as to how we might stimulate members interest in both of these events please let me know for the committee to consider.

Finally, on work parties in general I would like to thank those members who have attended work parties throughout 2018 without which we would not enjoy the fishing we do.

### **Returns.**

Returns have begun to trickle in and my thanks go to those who have submitted these in good time. Members are reminded that returns are due in by 31<sup>st</sup> January. Those wishing to continue fishing the lakes, or who want to enjoy the grayling fishing can simply retain the outer cover of their book, and submit the inner pages. Please ensure that there is a name on there somewhere, as this makes life much easier and prevents any confusion with surcharges.

### **Dates for your Diary.**

#### **Grayling Match.**

The February grayling match has been scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> February meeting at Ing's bridge at 9.30 am. Hopefully the weather will have warmed up a little by then?  
Fishing from 10 am while 2 pm followed by steak pie and a pint at the Bean Sheaf Hotel  
Further details will be sent out later.

#### **AGM.**

This is schedule to take place at the Pickering Memorial Hall on Wednesday the 13th March starting promptly at 7.30 pm.

#### **Pexton/Papermill Work Parties.**

Colin has planned work parties to take place up at the lakes throughout 2019 as follows:  
27<sup>th</sup> January: 24<sup>th</sup> February: 31<sup>st</sup> March: 28<sup>th</sup> April: 26<sup>th</sup> May: 30<sup>th</sup> June: 28<sup>th</sup> July: 25<sup>th</sup> August:  
29<sup>th</sup> September: 27<sup>th</sup> October: 24<sup>th</sup> November: 29<sup>th</sup> December.

As in 2018 details giving time, location and work required will be circulated closer to the day.

Work Parties for Pickering Beck will be notified as appropriate when arranged.

#### **Finally.**

Well that's about it for now except for me to wish everyone a Very Happy New Year and a enjoyable time fishing the lakes and on the becks.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

