

# LODDON FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION CONSULTATIVE

## Agenda

**DATE** 26<sup>rd</sup> May 2022  
**VENUE** Swallowfield Village Hall  
**TIME** 7.20 pm arrive for 7.30 pm start, 9.30 pm finish.

**Item:**

### **1. Welcome MM 10 mins**

Apologies: Rob West. Ian Campbell, Chris Gardner.

Attendance: Martin Moore, Ian Watson, Russ Hatchett, Trevor Ashton, Mike Wharmby, Trevor Blake, Kevin Jarrett, Trevor Cottam, George Whittick, John Sutton, Alan Muller, Trevor Hopkins, Ade Bicknell, Lou Sykes

EA now have Catchment Coordinator Tammy Gray (until autumn) and Lauren Giddings has taken over as Biodiversity Officer. Thanks to IW, TA and RH for getting Mailchimp up and running and updating membership lists. LFCC has been responding to RBWP and engaging with Landwise etc. Also involved with Uni Reading projects on heavy metals in bunds – all good results showing no significant contamination. There are also Uni Reading eDNA projects. Emmbrook project waiting for EA flood clearance. Heath Lake project included in Thames Water work. River Hart, Itchel Brook near Crondall some improvements planned to improve river. LFCC planning more fry surveys this year, including Charvil backwater. For Mailchimp Russ explained that under GDPR subscribers must agree to chose which emails they receive so please check inboxes and make sure you subscribe.

### **2. EA news (Ade Bicknell) 15 mins**

Tices Meadow top of Blackwater improvements have been successful, TM Trust aim to improve nature reserve. Big improvement especially for macrophytes but nearby river is overwide and shaded so in poor condition. Potential to improve this section, using local materials and volunteers. Applying to EA for FRAP, might be good for rivers week. Might even be some wild BT upstream.

EA survey team has been out. At Hawley Meadows they caught usual spp. Lots of LWD. At Twyford R and L channels found a few fish including tench. Also found a few small barbel probably from Calverton stock, on the

## Blackwater at Riseley

Got some FIP funding for rivers week. Expecting fish from Calverton again but can only stock into sites with site permits so get permits organised. Mainly barbel but some other spp.

Not a lot of close season action seen by enforcement team. One fish kill on Basingstoke canal probably due to contractors stirring up sediment.

### **3. News from SERT and Loddon Catchment Partnership 10 mins**

Lou Sykes is the new SERT catchment officer and lives near Blackwater so knows area. Came from HiOWWT. Planning Loddon rivers week (late Sept). Wants people to put forward projects and venues.

### **4. Fleet Pond update John Sutton 20 mins**

JS member of Fleet Pond Society. Happy to host visit. FP is a special environment. Largest FW lake in Hants (21ha). Was bigger but in 70's was lowered to allow developments, despite being SSSI. Extensive reedbeds also important habitat. Also lots of wetland. Great diversity of plants and animals. Some rarities such as bladderwort. Diverse woodlands. Owned by Hart Council which aims to improve access which had good and bad elements. Unfavourable recovering position. Brookly stream and Gelvert stream are very important for water quality. Fleet small pond became virtually shut off by railway. Outflow Fleet brook. First reference to the Great Pond was 1200 when it supplied fish to local monasteries and the Bishop of Winchester. Lake drained in WW2. Max 1m deep mostly <60cm. Was popular mixed fishery. 1970s change in land use as army changed types of vehicles use which had catastrophic impact. Decline in water clarity, macrophytes, inverts, etc. Possibly also stocked with lots of bream, during 1976 drought, which stirred up sediments so lake very turbid. Also a few large carp. EA found 15 spp by eDNA but might not all be in lake as opposed to streams. Brookly stream has road drainage, misconnections, and sometimes raw sewage when pumps break down. Restoration project 2010 diverted Gelvert stream through a reed bed, with dredging, making islands with spoil. Spoil could not be exported off site as contaminated. JS assessed after a few years so had aquatic macrophyte survey done. Due June 2018 but dense blue-green algal bloom so put off to 2019. 106 samples found 12 spp most common was *Zannichelia* but also stonewort which likes clean water. Intense blue-green bloom July 2020 caused serious concerns. Samples showed it to be *DyclospERMUM* which is potentially very toxic. 11<sup>th</sup> Aug massive fish kill. Counted >800 fish >2kg plus 000's smaller fish. Water quality has since been good, maybe due to removal of fish stirring up sediments and recycling nutrients. Carp spawned which is bad news for future as they stir up sediments. MM fish survey to check recruitment on 19<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021, electrofishing, seine (v difficult), traps. 9 spp, mainly small perch. Fish mostly in good condition. Council and FPS say not to restock, just wait and see what develops. Lots of diving ducks. Also shovellers. New Colonel on military training area has limited access to areas where impact is greatest. Gelvert

stream remains clear. Now trying to deal with urban catchment. FPS aim to have a fishery which is compatible with biodiversity needs.

## **5. Break 20 mins**

## **6. Duncan Fisher Wokingham Borough Council Loddon catchment - Modular River Survey**

Biodiversity net gain needs 10% gain from developers. Measured against DEFRA biodiversity metric. There are measures for rivers. Does allow for offsetting. Might be able to use this as a means to get funding if projects ready to go. Morph 5 river surveys current technique – see website. But can only do this work if trained on the use of Morph. Can be used to develop and rank benefits from projects. There is an opportunity for training LFCC and LCP members to allow them to do surveys. Likely to be delivered by SERT with support from WDC. DF to provide slides plus notes for LFCC website.

## **7. White claw crayfish and signal crayfish DNA studies (IW and MM)**

MM and IW have been working with Soon Gweon from Uni Reading to collect water samples from the Barkham Brook for eDNA analysis to see if white claw crayfish are still present. WDC has agreed to fund the cost of reagents but we need to find a way to get this money to Uni Reading. Population of WCC is probably very low so needs a very sensitive technique to detect.

Also preparing to do some preliminary work in whether signal crayfish predate barbel and chub eggs and fry. For this we need members to let us know when the fish spawn so we can take samples. We also plan to put in fry drift traps to check for emergence. If this work is successful we plan to expand it to look in detail at the impact of signal crayfish predation of barbel and chub recruitment.

## **8. AOB – news from clubs etc**

Veolia sustainability fund small grants scheme offers grants of £1000 to communities to take part in small environmental projects. Details can be found at [Sustainability Fund | Veolia UK](#)

Angling Trust feedback on sewage outfall consultation. There is also a response from Fish Legal [What's the Government's plan for measuring storm overflow volumes? - Fish Legal](#) The consultation had a lot of background info but the responses were limited to a tick box. Subsequently, Ministers were reported to be against tightening up on outfall discharges as this may limit housebuilding. IW encouraged members to write to their MPs to complain about this.

AT Water Quality Monitoring Network. This is a new activity from AT

[Anglers Against Pollution - Angling Trust](#) – scroll down to find details of the water quality monitoring network and how you can become involved.

**9. Date of next meeting TBC**

Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> with maybe another meeting in Nov or Jan. suggested topics Paul Wyatt Riverfly monitoring, Anna Forbes from ARK, David Solomon book on the Thames. Microplastics researcher.

**END**