

# LODDON FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION CONSULTATIVE

## Minutes

**DATE** Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025  
**VENUE** Swallowfield Village Hall RG7 1QX  
**TIME** Meeting has usual 7.30 pm start, 9.30 pm finish.

**Apologies:** Trevor Cottam, Alan Muller, Kate Tuck, Mike Wharmby, Trevor Blake, Sean Doyle

**Item:**

### **1. Welcome MM**

Petty's Brook survey produced lots of fish including trout. SERT doing habitat works and looking to do more u/s . Gresham walkabout on Lyde and Petty's Brook to look at habitat improvements. Borough Marsh stream floating pennywort picking on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. Balsam bashing lined up in May. Berks Nature Recovery Strategy LFCC continuing to make inputs on fish, & WCC. UoR student eDNA white claw crayfish and signal crayfish is going ahead but not yet defined exactly what will be done. Diglis weir visit to see the fish pass 13<sup>th</sup> May please join. More gravels going into St Pats. Rights of the River event LFCC will send a letter of support to Councillor Kate Tuck.

### **2. Rob Britton Bournemouth University *Ecological and physiological effects of catch and release angling in coarse fish and fisheries see here for the paper on which part of this talk is based:***

The angled-web: Recreational angling as an underappreciated disruptor to the interconnectedness of terrestrial and freshwater food webs

Aims to be neutral party as an angler and a scientist. C&R assumes high survival. Fisheries quite heavily managed. Stocking from exogenous sources is not recommended unless there is no other choice; but we do. Can be impacts from stocking. Hatchery reared fish can be very different. Stocked barbel may move d/s over a few months, a few move u/s. Baits now very different from 1970's – 80's– maggots then, pellets and boilies now. Stable isotopes show importance of marine sources from baits. Large adults eat different foods but, due to inputs from baits some have a profile very much like marine fish. Even more difference in wild vs fishery lakes, wild eat natural foods, fisheries eat mainly angling baits. Can be passed up food chain to e.g. pike. Lots of bait can lead to eutrophication. Some individuals easier to catch than others. Some may never be caught or very

rarely. This may be due to feeding choice – fish which eat mainly natural foods are hard to catch, those that eat mainly anglers' baits are easier to catch. Capture can cause stress but this can be minimized. Fish can avoid capture and others can learn this behaviour but may not last that long. Can now use scales to assess impacts of long term stress as they record cortisol levels. Barbel which are caught by angling frequently tend to have lower cortisol levels and those caught by electrofishing have high levels. Carp caught frequently also had lower levels of cortisol so fish may become habituated. Food webs changed by angling and stocking.

### **3. Ian Watson does stocking coarse fish work?**

Despite many years of stocking, evidence to show that it works is at best inconsistent. EA study showed that persistence of stocked fish was short, less than 2 years but this may just mean they moved out of the area where they were stocked. Best practice is to stock 1+ fish in the autumn; this is what happens on the Loddon. We have little evidence about what happens to barbel stocked in the Loddon. We know a few fish have moved but reports of marked fish are so rare we have no real idea what is going on. More evidence is needed. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the most successful stocking, as shown by introductions to the Severn etc, was with adult barbel.

### **4. Break 20 mins**

### **5. EA news by Ade Bicknell**

FIP had lots of applications but funding tight. 3 successful from catchment. Gresham funds for gravel. T&DAA gravel. Wish stream £5k to WTT to deliver. Should be another round later in year. Wish stream weir removals, 8 weirs barrier to fish passage. Looking for funding sources for this. Need to survey for wild BT. FP Wyndhams Pool has been successful. Very little left. BC still got some. AB has asked EA survey team to give a talk to LFCC.

### **6. LCP update**

Done lots of site visits. Twyford brook looking at improvements. Upper Loddon walkabout good. Barton's Mill chalk stream with lots of trout. Opportunities to improve habitat and maybe remove weir. Whitewater looking at weirs to see if any can be removed. Petty's Brook 3 berms and 3 tonnes gravel put in. Getting some money to remove some of the concrete and restore a more natural channel. Emmbrook lost funding but now have got it back. Fully funded. Probably do it in 2027. Twyford weir submitted application to Duncan at WBC. Probably go for baffles.

7. **AOB** – canoeists cutting trees on St Pats. Some large branches removed and not removed from the river so drifts d/s and gets caught on structures.

8. **Date of next meeting** 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025 Trevor Harrup Avon Roach project

**END**