

Guash Fishing Club Annual General Meeting Thursday 12 March 2020

At 2000 hours at the Business Centre, The George Hotel, Stamford

Minutes

1. Apologies: Adrian Trumper, Gordon Alleyne, Frank Butterworth, David Bailey, Barrie Harbott, Tom White, Ian Walker, Dave Forrest, Kevin Mansfield, John Pawlyn, Richard Holman, Paul Kittson & Dave Kittson.
2. Members Present (and signing attendance sheet as such) : Jeremy Ball, Martin Barnett, Kames Birch, Darren Blacksaw, Robin Buck, Peter Daniels, Adrian Forsell, Colin Gordon, Jonathan Thompson, Trevor Walker, David neville, Steve Smith, Richard Spiers
3. Minutes of 2019 AGM and matters arising: noted changes to coarse fishing and addenda to be discussed at item 11. The Minutes were agreed with no changes.
4. Vote of thanks to outgoing committee members: the chair thanked Richard Spiers and Ian Walker
5. New Committee members: James Birch and Jonathan Thompson joined the committee and the attendees agreed nem con.
6. Re Election of Committee members : Trevor Walker, David Neville: agreed nem con.
7. Election of club officers – Chairman Trevor Walker; Treasurer Steve Smith; Secretary Peter Daniels agreed nem con.
8. Treasurer's Report – Steve Smith presented the accounts for 2019 and projections for 2020 and 2021 which are available on request. The Club is financially stable. It was suggested that the Committee should have a clear policy for what reserves we should keep and would discuss either maintaining reserves for 1 year of subscriptions or 1 year of expenditure. To be agreed at the next Committee.
9. Chairman's report TW : Good evening, Gentlemen

It was a relatively quiet start to the 2019 season compared to the previous season. The Guash and Welland fished well throughout the season as the catch returns reflect. Poaching has been less of an issue on the lower Welland, justifying the presence of security patrols during the peak of our fishing season. This will continue for the 2020 season, although a different security company (Churchill) have been engaged to carry out this work. Please ensure that you wear your member's badge or you will be asked to stop and leave the river.

For the first time in many years we have struggled to fill our membership for 2020 but through word of mouth promoting what is an excellent fishing club and an advertising campaign in Trout & Salmon we have managed to achieve full membership. The Committee also decided to significantly reduce the membership subscription to attract new members and encourage current members to stay with the Club.

Habitat improvement has continued on Beat 8 and some work is planned on Beat 9 in the coming week; Robin will give us an update later in the meeting.

Several members of the Committee are working with Rob Mungovan of the WTT on a five year plan for the Guash. Rob has walked all of our beats and summarised what can be done to improve the river. We are currently in the process of prioritising action to be taken beat by beat. The challenge we face is trying to find the funding to do the major work but we will be able to start doing some of the less costly tasks over the close season.

Unfortunately Bert Chambers, our river keeper, decided to hang up his strimmer and dry suit to spend more time with his recently retired wife and do a bit of salmon fishing in Scotland. I would like to wish them all the best and thank him for all the work he has done for the Club in the last few years.

I would also like to thank John Smith for the excellent work he has done in maintaining the Guash; it is not an easy river to look after with the silt and resulting reed growth but I am sure you will join me in applauding John for doing a fantastic job.

I would just like to mention Andy Beale who over the last 2 or 3 years has helped been helping John and will be taking on the work on the lower and upper Welland.

Last year I reported the acquisition of the beat opposite Tolethorpe Mill. Unfortunately, due to protest from the mill owner regarding fishermen invading his privacy and threat of litigation, we had to stop fishing the beat. Following a couple of unfruitful meetings with the owner and further investigations into his claims, we find he has no right to stop us fishing this beat legally or otherwise. I have written to him pointing this out and advising that we will be fishing the beat this season. To date I have received no response. If you do decide to fish this particular beat during the coming season, you may well be approached by the owner of the mill; it goes without saying, be polite in any response to him and above all have proof of membership (badge) and carry your fishing licence. I do suggest that if he or any of his family are in the garden having a barbecue or the like you avoid fishing directly opposite them as a matter of courtesy.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the Club is in a good position financially: we have a full membership and hopefully by now our rivers will have returned to normal levels so that we can carry out our plan for restocking and enjoy the start of the new fishing season.

I am sorry to say that Richard Spiers, our Secretary and former Chairman has decided to leave the Committee and Club as he is moving away from the Stamford area. Richard will be sadly missed in both capacities. Over the years Richard has done some fantastic work, fighting our corner with the various authorities and raising funds for river improvement. Managing our membership, catch returns and website are just a few of the examples of the work he has done with great dedication. Replacing Richard has proved a very difficult task but we have 3 Committee members – Peter, Robin and Adrian – who have volunteered to take over these duties.

As a token of thanks from the Club I would like to present Richard with a small gift to show our appreciation for all the work he has done and wish him and his wife all the best for their new life in Edinburgh.

Finally I would like to invite Richard to become an honorary member of the Club so that if he is ever visiting this area he can cast a line on his beloved Guash or Welland.

10. Retiring Secretary's Report : Thanks to everyone who paid on time by BACS this year. . Last year 10 members resigned mainly as they did not have the time to fish. We have 105 paying members after putting an advert in T&S. This was very successful and brought in about 6 x its cost in new member fees. As the advert is running until May and we pre paid, we will take any new members generated

between now and then and return to normal size membership next year if we are overrun with members. However as 20% of the club did not fish there should be no overcrowding this year. There is no waiting list now. As you will know we have cut the cost of membership this year, and kept the joining fee at its current level and this does not appear to have deterred the new members from joining. There have been no changes to the waters we fish this year and Trevor has explained how we are managing the hoped for extension to beat 8. The catch return data detail was then presented and copies of the slides are available from the secretary. Early in the year a number of small rainbows were caught in the Guash 2 weirs upstream and well above the fish farm. There were also 16 grayling from the Guash, better than I have ever seen. Despite not stocking it, the Upper section above the ford at Harringworth produce many more fish than the lower section despite a heavy stock in the lower section. Reed spraying was carried out on the Whole of the lower welland for common club rush and depending of effectiveness and regrowth this will be repeated in 2020 and/or 2021. Website: Jonathan Thompson is taking over the website on my retirement. I have used it purely as an information and contact source but if you have any grand ideas for it in the future please let the committee know.

After 12 years in the club I am now heading north and wish you all the very best for seasons to come and hope you can continue the excellent stewardship of the Guash that the club has been involved in during my time. I shall stay on in the Welland rivers trust as finance controller so will be around from time to time and will be in touch with the various projects the club is involved in. So tight lines to you all.

11. Rule change proposals :

Current bait fishing rules on the Welland: River Welland (below Hudds Mill to bottom of Lower Welland) Bait fishing for coarse fish and pike during the trout close season up to 16th March . No keep nets are permitted and, except where specifically fishing for pike with large spoons or dead baits. Barbless hooks must be used.-

Proposed changes in red, deletions are struck through. ~~River Welland below Hudds Mill to bottom of~~ **Upper and** Lower Welland. Bait fishing for coarse fish and pike during the trout close season up to and including 14th March. No keep nets are permitted. **No large spoons or dead baits**, except where specifically fishing for pike. ~~large spoons or dead baits~~. Barbless hooks must be used **at all times**.-**Acceptable baits for coarse fishing are: maggots, corn, bread, worms, cheese. No ground baiting is allowed. The changes presented were agreed unanimously.**

12. Guash habitat improvement update on 2019 and plans for 2020- RB presented the current and future changes to beat 8 and beat 9. Working party for opening up beat 9 will take place next week weather permitting.
13. AOB
 - a. Fishing day will be June 6th 2021 and Jeremy Ball will arrange this and club will be notified.
 - b. A straw poll showed that many of those attending wished to take part in work parties but these should be arranged for weekends as well as week days.
14. The meeting closed at 2050 hours.