

# SHEFFORD & DISTRICT ANGLING ASSOCIATION LTD

## SDAA Ltd NEWSLETTER (5<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2020)

Dear SDAA Ltd member,

Coronavirus (Covid-19) remains a rapidly evolving situation. All SDAA venues will remain closed to members and fishing until further notice as part of the UK government's self isolation rules. At the time of writing, the UK was still experiencing a rapid rise in Coronovirus infections and deaths. Hopefully the efforts of our 'front line' workforce, especially the NHS, will continue to save many lives. There is no vaccine or drug treatment currently available for Coronavirus, the only way to prevent the spread of this virus is for us all to follow the advice on social distancing and hygiene (wash hands, don't touch your face, etc).

### STAY AT HOME, PROTECT THE NHS AND SAVE LIVES!

In line with the guidance given by the Angling Trust we have changed the locks at our lakes so that members cannot gain access with their A10 keys. A few trusted volunteers are paying random visits to our waters to discourage unwanted visitors and predators. These volunteers are following strict instructions regarding self distancing and hygiene. Covert cameras have also been set up to capture any suspicious activity at our fisheries. Any member found on the private land around our fisheries during these closures will automatically face a life ban, whether fishing or not.

Given the current situation it seems very unlikely that the social distancing measures will be relaxed any time soon. Therefore, SDAA fisheries will remain closed to members and fishing for the foreseeable future. Further newsletters will be produced to keep members informed of any changes to the current situation.

The 2020 SDAA Ltd AGM had to be cancelled. Hopefully this newsletter will help inform SDAA members of key events during the 2019/20 season and outline some planned changes. As this newsletter is being posted in a public environment, we cannot go into the same detail as a closed AGM that is restricted to just SDAA members. If you are a SDAA member and have any questions please email the Chairperson Richard Bell ([info@shefforddaa.org.uk](mailto:info@shefforddaa.org.uk)) quoting your full name and membership number in the email. He will endeavour to respond to you ASAP.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The 2020 AGM was due to be held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 but had to be cancelled due to the social distancing measures introduced by the government. The next AGM is scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and this meeting will hopefully vote to accept the minutes of the 2019 AGM and accounts for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years. A summary of the accounts for 2018/19 has been deposited with Companies House (<https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/05430106>).

### UPDATE ON USUAL AGM BUSINESS/REPORTS

As there was only one candidate for any Officer position, voting at the AGM was not required. The officers are Richard Bell (Chairperson and Treasurer), Colin Stitt (Club Secretary), David Baker (Coaching Coordinator and Welfare Officer) and

Nigel Gilbert (Match Secretary). This leaves six officer positions vacant (Vice Chairperson, Membership Secretary, Minute Secretary, Publicity Officer, Fisheries Officer and Head Bailiff). John Leath remains as the Club President.

As the number of nominations for additional members of the committee was less than ten, there was no need for a vote at the AGM and the five nominees were appointed; namely Mick Burley, Rob Laidlaw, Steve Richards, Andrew Riley and Paul Williams.

The new committee would like to thank retiring committee members Phil Belfield, Gary Taylor, James Turvey and Kevin Wilkins for all their efforts on the committee in recent years. We urge anyone interested in joining the committee to contact Richard Bell, Colin Stitt or any other member of the committee ASAP. The committee has the power to co-opt members outside of the AGM.

A key message that would have been given to members at the AGM is the continued lack of volunteers willing to take an active role in the running of the club. SDAA is run on a not for profit basis for the benefit of its members by volunteers, who give up their time for free. As well as the officer and committee vacancies, work parties continue to be relatively poorly attended.

What does this mean for the future of SDAA? With limited volunteer resources available, the committee and officers are having to focus on the core tasks. We are increasingly having to engage contractors to do some of the tasks that traditionally would have been undertaken by volunteers.

Membership numbers for the 2018/19 season were slightly down on the previous season, but these had increased during the current 2019/20 season.

The committee have decided to streamline membership next season to reduce the administrative workload on volunteers. There will be a single night permit covering The Airman, Broom Lake and Willington Lake. The Partner class of membership will no longer be available. A £5 across the board increase in membership subscriptions and a proportionate increase in night permits is required to ensure income keeps pace with increasing rents and contractor costs. Please note that the club's fishing rights are protected by formal agreements (usually set in place for 5 or more years) and we will be legally obliged to pay the annual rents, whether or not we are allowed to resume fishing before 16<sup>th</sup> June.

Annual membership prices for 2020/21 will be £80 for Full, £60 for Concessionary and £25 for Junior. Night permits will be £60 for Full and Concessionary members and £25 for Juniors. New membership books have been ordered and we have asked the printers to use 'NHS blue' for the outer cover. It is hard to guess when we will be in a position to sell the new membership books and night permits.

The following rule changes have been agreed by the committee and will take effect at the start of the 2020/21 season:

- Membership classes will reflect changes in the UK State Pension age.
- All weapons are banned (not just guns). Common sense will need to be applied to angler's knives.
- Use of a 3<sup>rd</sup> rod at Broom Lake by night permit holders will be brought in line with the other lakes.
- Fishing the pegs opposite the car park at The Airman will be banned.
- The 'day only peg' designations at Broom Lake will no longer apply.

## SPECIMEN FISH TROPHIES 2019/20



*Bream Cup: Kevin Wilkins  
8lb 3oz from Willington Lake*



*Catfish Trophy: George Fairey  
70lb 0oz from The Airman*



*Pike Cup: Luke Allen (Junior)  
19lb 0oz from The Airman*



*Tench Cup: Sandie Cornell  
7lb 13oz from Broom Lake*

As the 2020 AGM was cancelled the Committee voted to award the Tookey Trophy for the best specimen fish to George Fairey for his 70lb Airman catfish.

## MATCH TROPHIES 2019/20

Award	Winner	Weight
24 Hour Series Champion	James Turvey	
Pike Series Champion	Kevin Wilkins	
Pike Series Heaviest Fish	Kevin Wilkins	12-13

## CENTENARY CUP 2019/20

As the 2020 AGM was cancelled the Committee voted to award the Centenary Cup to James Turvey. Over the years James has made many important and varied contributions as a Committee member, Fisheries Officer and work party stalwart.

## FISHERIES UPDATES

Contractors have now completed the rebuilding of all 20 pegs at The Airman using oak boards within a scaffold pole frame. Swims 13-20 were rebuild in 2019 to the same design used for the first twelve in 2018, with ramps now replacing steps. All

the swims at Broom Lake were rebuilt in 2019 using a Nicospan membrane and scaffold poles to retain the bank, and topped with an oak board. All new swims are 3m wide. Further swim work will be required as the backfill material settles.

Despite flooding across the UK regularly featuring on the news, this area has suffered a drought with 3 years of below average rainfall until last autumn. This adversely impacted local groundwater levels with a dramatic impact on water levels at The Airman and Stanford Pit, as well as the headwaters of the Ivel and other local rivers that run off the North Hertfordshire chalk. A relatively wet winter has helped groundwater levels recover, but locally they are still below normal.

**The Airman** - routine maintenance work was carried out to maintain access. Several unstable trees were dealt with by a tree surgeon. Water levels remain 3 feet below normal. Further work will be required on the new swims.

**Broom Lake** - Andy Riley carried out much of the routine maintenance work. Grass seed was applied to all the areas disturbed during the swim rebuilding. A tree surgeon was employed to remove unstable trees. The track around the lake was closed when it became waterlogged. The track rapidly dried out during March and should reopen when fishing resumes. Track repairs will be delayed to later. Priority will be given to adding further backfill material to the new swims.

**Willington Lake** - Tree surgeons have again opened up the swims and dealt with some potentially dangerous trees/branches hanging over the track.

**Stanford Pit** - The lake dried out completely in 2019. A group of dedicated publicity shy volunteers have continued to work on the trees around the edge of the lake. Water levels have recovered during recent months. However, restocking will only be considered if water levels are maintained through to the autumn.

**Crucian Ark** - The club has initiated a conservation project to breed genetically pure crucians that can be transferred to other lakes. 750 genetically pure crucians were stocked by the EA in July 2018 and a further 300 in December 2019. This is a long term project that depends upon the crucians successfully breeding.

**Ivel & Flit** - We had been planning to undertake habit improvement work along the Stanford Canal based on advice from the EA fisheries experts. However, these plans have been shelved. During 2019 the EA operations team made the Stanford Canal featureless through extensive tree work and dragging out reed beds, which was completely the opposite of advice we had received for habitat improvements.

The current inability to hold volunteer work parties will have an impact on many waters. The committee will aim to open the club's fisheries to members as quickly as possible when social distancing measures come to an end, and it is deemed safe for fishing to resume. Therefore, when waters eventually reopen you will find paths and swims more overgrown than in previous years. Hopefully this will encourage you to attend volunteer work parties when they recommence.

It is often difficult to assess how well our waters are fishing as many anglers are reluctant to report their catches through News from the Bank. We have 30 VS Fisheries C4 carp on order for next winter and a decision on where they will be stocked will be taken later in the year.