Chairman's end of year report Highlights.

Dear members,

Welcome to all our new members and hello to you old friends.

Although this year 2020 has been difficult with the Covid outbreak, which meant reduced fishing time for all, LFFA has had more than one success story.

The dispute at Gisburn, regarding our parking rites is still ongoing, however thanks to the work of our new committee member Ian Dandy, car parking spaces have been negotiated for us at Gisburn Park Hospital, which is only a short walk on a bridal path down to the river (see the new map on our website).

Our second success was the response to the membership offer. To date we have managed to enrol 22 new members. This has put us in a very sound financial position and if it wasn't for settling the lease for Dean Clough we would have had a surplus. I think that the confusion and anxiety brought about by the Covid pandemic has encouraged fishermen to renew their sport and thankfully join LFFA.

I understand that Stocks Reservoir Fishing has now changed hands and I believe that there will be no changes to our existing agreement thus result in a seamless continuity for our fishermen.

On an historical note from our new member Keith Harwood. The Ribble Valley, during the 19th Century, was the key area responsible for the first propagation and method of transportation of brown trout and salmon to be sent to many parts of the world. Mr Robert Ramsbottom of Clitheroe was the person who perfected the transportation methods. He was a local fishing tackle maker and a pisciculturalist. Robert and his son William started breeding brown trout and salmon in the Ribble Catchment area especially at Knowlmere and then shipped them as far away as America, New Zealand, Australia and possibly South Africa making our area the centre of the universe for propagation of trout and salmon. The descendants of the trout still thrive today especially in Tasmania.

As a young man, I remember our rivers were full of Water Crowfoot or Ranunculus Fluitans which you all know is a very important habitat for small fish and invertebrate's. Recently I walked over our beats and discovered NONE. In fact I then went from Cow Bridge near Settle to Samlesbury and most of the River Hodder above Slaidburn to its foot with the Ribble. Geoff Whitehead and I decided that a good project would be to re-introduce Water Crowfoot into the head waters of our rivers. Having eventually found a source locally, we planted some in the Hodder above and below Newton Bridge to see if we can make it regenerate. The problem has been that if plants get washed away downstream, they cannot possibly return to their source. Let's see if this works next season, and hopefully we could extend the project.

<u>Mossthwaite conservation project.</u>

Last year we gave financial support and volunteered to assist with planting trees to help Ribble Rivers Trust (RRT) with their conservation project below Knowlmere.

This consisted of fencing approximately 800 meters of bank and planting 600 trees. However, the winter floods last February damage some of the planting but this has now been reinstated. Look for the information board next to the footbridge.

Next year our intentions are to have a social gathering for all members and for anyone interested in joining. This will take place in early summer and we may have a fishing competition. Check our website for information.

Further improvements to our river banks and fishing at Gisburn and Newton are currently being discussed and planned for implementation during 2021. Volunteers from our membership may be required, further details will be published later when Corvid restrictions etc. allow.

Although we have had a good intake of new members this year, I feel it would be beneficial for the future of LFFA if we could get as many youngsters involved so as to secure future fishing generations. All ideas as to how we could achieve this would be welcome.

Finally, the annual general meeting this year will be deferred until Corvid legislation allows a full meeting to be safely undertaken.

Some of you may wish to table questions and requests for discussion at the next AGM meeting .If this is the case then call me anytime on my landline, mobile or email.

Please remember to pay your subscriptions, which remain the same, as last year, by the 17th December 2020.

All the best for the New Year and tight lines to you all.

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