

## **CFPAS LTD Directors Report for the 2019 -2020 Season**

I am writing this report following the extraordinary events with the country being in lockdown because of the COVID-19 virus and seeing the news that up to 40,000 deaths have so far been recorded due to this virus.

For me it puts things firmly into perspective, particularly not being able to see close friends and family.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes to those who have lost family or friends.

Because of lockdown we have had to postpone our AGM due to the lockdown restrictions. We hope to arrange it later in the year. Should you wish to receive a copy of the Accounts please send a self-addressed large envelope to 27A Villa Road, Impington, Cambridge CB24 9NZ. I can however report that your Club is financially secure going forward.

The 2019/2020 prize list is also published.

My report on behalf of the Directors this year concentrates on the challenges faced in 2019/2020. Who knew at the start of the 2019 Season we would be self isolating!!

### **Block Fen A and B Fisheries**

We have held the lease of these waters for around 30 years enjoyed a mutually respected professional relationship with our Landlord.

There have been many challenges over the years in regard to these remote venues.

In the summer of 2019 swimmers got into difficulties in a lake in the UK. This created concerns in regard to the risk at our lakes and our Landlord was particularly vocal that we should challenge at all times any person entering to swim the lakes. Of course our volunteers do so but when confronted with a group of up to 25 on one occasion at Block Fen B a sensible self protection approach was necessary advising the swimmers to leave and waiting for them to do so. Our Bailiff acted appropriately. One example of many where abuse of the fishery has taken place but dealt with appropriately.

Reports of poaching for food and moving fish were received. Despite regular clear ups of litter, often we found a week later the lakes would be in a mess again. Human excrement, bottles and bait, line the lot. Damage was caused to a fence which had been put in place to enable the property around the lake to develop a nature reserve. (This is a planning requirement on our Landlord and must be met).

All of this during the Summer of 2019. Emails were exchanged requiring CFPAS LTD to act and repair the fence within 24 hours, along with reporting to the police of all incidents.

For a small but dedicated group of volunteers this proved challenging to say the least.

Following the incident of damage to property the Directors received notification of significant changes to our new lease. In short placing liability of damage to adjoining property to be met by the Club irrespective of who caused the damage.

As you would expect the Directors obtained legal advice from Fish Legal who very quickly advised we should not agree to the new Clauses and indeed no insurer if advised would offer insurance for such a wide acceptance of liability. In good faith the legal team and your Directors responded and offered a compromise which has thankfully been accepted by our Landlord.

Our Landlord is obliged to create the Nature Reserve and as such require us to protect it, of which the lakes form part of a future Reserve once quarry work ceases.

A & B pit are quite unique and are different types of fishery, B holding less stock but larger specimen fish and A has more high volume stock but similar in size.

We stopped selling day tickets a few years ago to encourage membership and hopefully stop the abuse on the waters, a marginal improvement was seen for a couple of years but not in 2019.

Early this year the Directors took the decision faced with the potential of losing the lakes to Angling to restrict membership to B lake creating a Gold ticket membership photo ID reference application. We released information on the ticket early in the New Year via our website and Facebook page all tickets were accounted for within a few days. Application remains available and there is a waiting list. The decision to release the information in the way we did was entirely mine as I felt it best that all information went out rather than initially to a few. I know that some who have not got a ticket this year are disappointed but the opportunity exists to go on a waiting list for next Season.

In our notice of our intention we made it clear if there was no improvement of behaviour on A pit we would consider a similar arrangement going forward on that lake. I must emphasize as strongly as possible not to make changes in how we managed things would result in the loss of angling. Let us hope we see an improvement this season in behaviour.

### 2013 River Pollution

In October 2019 Ian Darler, Will Temple, Colin Sparkes and I were called as witness to Huntingdon Court to give evidence in regard to the 2013 River Cam fish kill. Those of you that attended the 2019 AGM in June will know that I reported that Anglian Water at the last minute admitted liability for loss of amenity and awarded CFPAS LTD compensation based on evidence provided by your Club. However Anglian Water did not accept liability for restocking and so the saga went on. CFPAS LTD won the case at Court in October, the Judge particularly scathing towards Anglian Water. However Anglian Water appealed and so it went on. Two other Judges were involved but finally the appeal was thrown out. Anglian Water were found liable and we received a modest amount for restocking.

It was a huge victory for a small organisation and a very important judgement going forward. Anglian Water were hit very hard and our legal costs were virtually all met by Anglian Water.

I cannot thank Fish Legal and my colleagues enough for their diligence and support in court where the opposing barristers was particularly difficult.

This has taken much out of my life since 2013. The comfort I get is that our case will be used, I am certain in case law for other Clubs to be able to challenge and succeed.

This is probably the longest ever report I have written since being President and Director of CFPAS LTD.

I do see significant changes coming due to the nature of things in this world. It is no longer about a few of us getting together once a month over a pint and enjoying a Sunday angling experience. Far more is expected of your volunteers and much falls to a few.

It is very likely that future membership restrictions will be necessary on having such waters as Barnwell Lake, Cottenham and possibly Milton Country Park. It is also likely that smaller membership numbers will result in an increase in costs. However, we will always strive to keep costs of membership economic and affordable.

A final thank you to those volunteers that enabled us to open our fisheries, this took a huge personal effort to benefit all of you.

Graham Tweed  
President & Director - CFPAS

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020