

**Cobbinshaw ANGLING
Association Ltd**

Hon Secretary: A W Anderson
9 Thomson Grove
Edinburgh
EH14 5HZ
Tel: 0131-449-2339

Email: cobbinshawanglingassoc@gmail.com

December 2023

2024 Annual General Meeting of Cobbinshaw Angling Association Ltd

Dear Member

The 118th Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at **Deer Park Country Club, Livingston, on Sunday 28 January 2024, at 2:00 pm**. Documents relevant to the meeting are enclosed as referenced in the Order of Business. The Country Club is easily accessed off the M8 motorway at the main Livingston junction.

Attendance at the last AGM was poor with only 57 members attending out of a membership of 348. There are a number of important issues around stocking and subscription matters that need to be decided at this AGM. As a member and part owner of the Association it is important that your views are taken in to account when decisions are made. I hope you will be able to attend this AGM if possible so that decisions made reflect the widest possible views across the Association.

Letters with request for 2024 subscriptions will be sent out as soon as possible after the AGM. Payment cannot be accepted at the AGM for administrative reasons. Any requests for a change in membership category for next season should be made to the Honorary Secretary prior to the AGM. Note that the Week-Day and Week-Day-Day-Only membership categories are closed except for those members that were in those categories at date of closure, therefore it is not possible to downgrade to those categories.

Entry to the meeting is for members of the Association only who will be requested to show identification and sign in.

In Memoriam

The following members / past members have sadly passed away over the year:

ID Clark; G Inglis

Appointment to Board of Directors

The members currently occupying the Office Bearer roles of Chairman (Mr D Moon) and Honorary Secretary (Mr AW Anderson) are prepared to continue in Office subject to any other nominations coming forward from the membership. The office of Treasurer is currently vacant and the duties carried out by the Secretary: a volunteer for this role is required.

The board is also seeking 2 volunteers to fill director vacancies as part of rotation arrangements. This appointments will bring the rotation cycle back to normal [ie 2 per AGM] following a period of co-opting during the pandemic. Any member interested in coming on the board should contact the Secretary or Chair for additional information if required.

Fishery closed dates this winter

Members should note that the fishery will be closed from Friday 16 December 2023 to 3 February 2024 inclusive to facilitate staff holidays and certain maintenance works. Any fishing during these dates will be by specific arrangement with the Fishery Manager. Other closure periods are set out in the Secretary's Report.

Season 2024

The main 2024 season will commence on Saturday 9 March 2024 and close on Sunday 10 November 2024.

Andrew W Anderson
Hon Secretary
On Behalf of the Board of Directors

COBBINSHAW ANGLING ASSOCIATION LTD
118th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
28 JANUARY 2024

Order of Business for 118th AGM

1. Apologies
2. In Memoriam
3. Minutes of Prior Year Annual General Meeting (**Paper 3.1**)
4. Honorary Secretary's Annual Report (**Paper 4.1**)
5. Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31 October 2023 (**Paper 5.1 and Paper 5.2**)
6. Honorary Chairman's Annual Report (**Paper 6.1**)
7. Proposed Stocking Policy 2024 (**Paper 7.1**)
8. Proposed amendments to Articles of Association and associated Regulations (**Paper 8.1**)
9. Election of Office Bearers
 - (A) Chairman: Mr D Moon is willing to stand again.
 - (B) Secretary: Mr A Anderson is willing to stand again.
 - (C) Treasurer: Vacant - duties currently filled by Secretary
10. Appointments to Board of Directors
 - (A) To appoint 2 Members to Director for 3 year term under rotation arrangements.
11. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
 - (A) To appoint an auditor. Mr M Ritchie has agreed to continue as auditor subject to ratification at this meeting.
12. AOB
13. Presentation of Trophies
 - (A) Trophy for the heaviest rainbow of the season: won by Mr J Prentice for a fish of 12 pounds 2 ounces, caught on a damsel pattern.
 - (B) Malcolm Thomson Trophy for the heaviest brown trout of the season: not awarded as no brown trout killed.
 - (C) Cobbinshaw Challenge 2022: the competition was cancelled due to lack of interest.

A W Anderson
Honorary Secretary
December 2023

Minutes of 2023 AGM of Cobbinshaw Angling Association LtdHeld at Deer Park Club on Sunday 29th January 2023**Order of business**

1. As detailed in the Agenda.
2. The Chairman informed the meeting that, assuming everyone had signed in, there were 57 Members present. He thanked Frank Jackson for managing the sign-in.

AGENDA ITEM 1: Apologies

3. M Campbell; J Baird; J Kelly; I Whyte; R Perret; J McCaig; C McIsaac; D Blackwood; M Ritchie; N Brenchley; C Joynes; V Togneri; C Hardie; R Hunter; C McCall; E McGhee; E Morrison

AGENDA ITEM 2: In Memoriam

4. A minute's silence was held in memory of the following Members who the Chairman advised had sadly passed away since the last AGM:
 - P Riley (pm); E Ferguson; D Watson; W Britton; JSR McDonald; R Cockburn; W Humphrey; P Masting; F McCrae

AGENDA ITEM 3: Minutes of 2022 AGM

5. Due to covid restrictions there had been no physical AGM's held over the past 2 years, therefore there were no relevant prior minutes to approve.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Secretary's Annual Report; Paper 4.1

6. The Secretary referred to his annual report that had already been circulated to Members with the AGM papers, and advised that rather than go through it in detail, he would instead like to highlight a few specific points.

How good the facilities are at Cobbinshaw

7. He referred to comments received from a member that board communications tended to focus on issues that needed to be addressed which, though important, put more of an emphasis on negative aspects of membership rather than the positive aspects, and in some cases could lead to unnecessary confrontation. On reflection, the Secretary felt the comment had merit, and he would take steps to give more balance to future communications, with more emphasis on the positive aspects of membership at Cobbinshaw.
8. He commented that the facilities at Cobbinshaw were amongst the best in Scotland, and then went on to summarise some of the key benefits of membership;
 - excellent full time staff who run the fishery on a day-to day basis, maintaining equipment and growing on high quality fish
 - excellent boats and motors - as good as anywhere [and better maintained - and fully equipped with nets and drogues
 - a fantastic pontoon structure that make boat access as easy as possible, which extends the fishing life of members by several years
 - weekly stocking of high quality fish throughout the season at a minimum weight of around 2 pounds, plus 5000 cage fish grown on and stocked at weights between 2.5 pounds and 5 pounds plus
 - and perhaps the biggest benefit being the flexibility of booking;
 - you are not restricted to any set hours over the fishing day
 - you can fish any time during the fishing day that suits you
 - you can fish as many times as you like over the season

- there is an outing kill limit but no limit on the number of fish killed over a season
- you can bring as many guests as you wish
- plus, certain family members fish free when accompanying a member and sharing the kill limit
- and there is winter fishing and high quality pike fishing available

He also emphasised that Cobbinshaw is a private Association and that its members have a direct say in how the fishery is run through meetings like this. Members can also volunteer to come on the board as a director or official, and thereby make a more personal contribution to the Association's development. On this subject, he added that we currently have around 350 members with many differing views on how things should be done, from stocking plans, to boat purchases, to fishing matters and everything in between. But we all share a common objective, which is to make Cobbinshaw as good a fishery as it can be. And to achieve that, we need to understand and accept the rights of others to have different views on how things should be done, and be prepared to compromise for the good of the Association as a whole.

The Secretary concluded by saying that the fishery is not perfect - there still things we can improve on - but we do have one of the best fishery set-ups in Scotland, and that is down to the hard work of many members and staff over the 120 years that Cobbinshaw has been in existence, including many members sitting here today. Without that input from members over the years things would be very different, and probably a lot more expensive, so we owe them all a particular debt of gratitude.

He finished by saying that if the original members of Cobbinshaw were looking down on us now they would be happy with the way the Association and its facilities has grown over the past 120 years: our role now is to be the building blocks for others to help take the Association forward for the next 120 years.

Update on building of new pontoons

9. He updated the meeting on progress with building the new pontoons following serious storm damage in December 2021.
10. Half of the front section was built and replaced prior to the 2022 season commencing but work on replacing the other half of the front section and some of the arterial sections was necessarily delayed until the end of the season. The fishery staff have completed most of the outstanding build work on the front pontoons and will complete the remaining work over the coming 2 weeks. They will also replace / repair some of the arterial pontoons as needed. The Association is indebted to the fishery staff for both their dedication and quality of workmanship throughout this project. Some members have also helped in the build of the new pontoons and we are indebted to them too for their assistance.
11. The Secretary added that the damage to the pontoon structures was significant, and that we were fortunate that it was covered under our insurance policy with NFU.

Mitigating the impact of climate change on our fishing

12. The Secretary reported that mitigating the negative impact of climate change on the quality of our fishing is undoubtably the biggest challenge facing the Association today - as it is for all fisheries.
13. For anyone unfamiliar with climate change issues, he summarised what it is and how it affects our fishing:
 - in short, the world is getting warmer
 - average temperatures are rising slowly but steadily year-on-year, and have been for the past 30 years or more
 - it's playing havoc with our weather patterns, resulting in more extreme conditions - floods, drought, heat and cold - and these are occurring on a more frequent basis than ever before
 - governments around the world acknowledge the problem but can't agree on how to stop it, so we have to grin and bear it until they do
 - so how does it affect our fishing?
 - water temperatures are rising earlier in the season and staying higher for longer
 - water temperatures of around 18c and above are not good for trout because oxygen levels fall, making the trout lethargic and they stop feeding
 - short periods of high water temperatures are tolerable, but it causes stress, can stop them feeding and make them more vulnerable to disease and predation
 - prolonged periods can be fatal, especially at temps of 21c and above
 - rod catches plummet when the water temperature is high - which we have witnessed at Cobbinshaw over recent years
 - shallow waters - like Cobbinshaw - are especially at risk because they heat up quickly and there are no real deeps for the fish to retreat to

- our situation was exacerbated last year because the water level was dropped by 4 feet to feed the canal and River Almond, both of which were badly affected by drought
 - the cage fish are especially vulnerable because they can't escape to deeper, cooler water
 - there is an increased risk of algal blooms if these conditions persist annually
 - high water temps may also be one of the reasons for the drop in aquatic insect life
14. He briefly explained how other fisheries are tackling this issue;
- some small fisheries close over the high summer months, especially down south; Harelaw in the West of Scotland also closed for a short time
 - some have adjusted their main season dates, including Anglian Water Fisheries such as Rutland and Grapham, starting earlier and finishing later in order to maximise the cooler water temperatures that are best for both the fish and fishing
 - many fisheries have significantly cut back on stocking in high summer or stop it altogether
15. He also pointed out that it is not all doom and gloom. There are things we can do to mitigate the impact of climate change. Some are relatively straightforward with minimum cost but require a change in mindset regarding stocking policies and season timings. Others have costs attached and involve some capital investment:
16. The straightforward things include changing our season dates and stocking plans to maximise those periods when the water temperature is cooler and more favourable for both the fish and fishing. For example we could alter the main season dates by starting earlier and extending it into late November. Currently, our main season and related stocking plan envisages a start around mid to late March and finishing early November, with stocking starting pre-season and ending in early October. If we altered the season dates and adjusted the stocking plan to maximise cooler water temperatures, we could: start earlier in March and finish later at end of November; front load stocking in the spring months; reduce or stop stocking in high summer; resume normal stocking in late summer when the water is cooler; continue stocking through October and stop early November.
17. The board is also investigating installing one or more aerators to help improve oxygenation during high summer. This involves both capital and running costs and enquiries are continuing to establish the pros and cons. A few fisheries in Scotland already use aerators - as does some of the bigger fisheries down south - so there is experience out there that we can hopefully draw on. The Secretary advised that he has a meeting planned in February with the owners of Coldingham Fishery which has used an aerator for many years. He will report back to the board on these enquiries in due course; and if any member has experience of aerators, please get in touch.

Lastly

18. The Secretary concluded by offering a personal thanks to Ian McCusker [Fishery Manager] and Andrew Fry [Assistant Manager] for their sterling work in running the fishery over the past few difficult years, and for their help and support throughout his year as Secretary. He also thanked all board members - serving and retired - for their help and support over the past few years. On behalf of the Board and members, he also thanked those members who volunteered their time and resources to help the Association in a range of activities: their help saved the Association a lot of time and money, and the Membership is extremely grateful.

Questions from the floor

19. **M. Gordon** felt that the estimated number of 600 over wintered fish caught per the Secretary's report was too low, as he felt that he alone had caught some 150 over wintered fish during the season, many in the 2 pound range or less. The Secretary replied that the estimate given was for the number killed. He agreed that the number caught would be higher, for a variety of reasons, but it was extremely difficult if not impossible to quantify the exact number or even an estimate. Estimating the number killed was however feasible given that we know the weights of fish we stock, when they are stocked and their respective numbers. Another relevant aspect was that the vast bulk of fish left in the loch at the end of the season are the bigger cage fish which are more easily monitored in catch returns. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that any estimates are simply that - an estimate; and that the low kill rate further complicated things by increasing the numbers of smaller fish that are potentially left in the loch at the end of the season.
20. **W. Woods** queried the mortality levels reported by the Secretary and the reliability of the catch records which he referred to as statistics that can be interpreted in a number of ways. He quoted comments from a well known angler that rainbows could live 4 or 5 years. The Secretary replied that our catch records are factually accurate - more so than almost anywhere else - so interpreting them is not difficult. He explained that if the fish did live for 4 or 5 years, we would have built up a base stock of somewhere between 8000 and 14000 fish at the start of each season, depending on kill rates, the vast bulk of which would be bigger cage fish from previous seasons: if anyone thinks we have that number and size of fish in the loch at the start of each season they are sadly mistaken, as our catch records clearly illustrate. Some fish do indeed survive and may live for 4 or 5 years - hence the big fish that are

occasionally caught - but the overall survival rate is around the 15% range, which means that approximately 4 out of 5 fish not killed in season will simply die off quickly, and mostly over the winter.

21. **J. Garnett** asked if moving the cages down the loch to deeper water would help protect them from high water temperatures and improve their overall survivability. The Secretary advised that this had been looked at but was ruled out: the current position of the cages was the best balance between deeper water - circa 18 feet - and protection from the westerly prevailing winds. To move them further towards the dam, where there was a bit more deeper water, would expose them to stronger wind and wave and risk damage; and the water towards the causeway shallowed up to 8 to 10 feet which was too shallow.
22. **W. Woods** raised a number of issues about the website not being up to date, particularly the posting of board minutes, and similarly minutes not being lodged in the members cabin. The Secretary replied that minutes of board meetings are approved at the following meeting - normally around 2 months later - and are then only eligible for wider circulation. If there had been any significant delays in posting minutes it was a simple oversight that was soon remedied. He also clarified that hard copies of approved minutes were always left in the cabin after each board meeting: what happened to them afterwards was down to members who may have inadvertently taken them away or misplaced them.
23. **W. Woods** commented on the number of members lost over the past year - approximately 47 - and asked whether the Secretary was writing to ask members why they were leaving. He felt this rate of loss was unsustainable and something had to be done to address it. **M. Gordon** added that two members he knew of had left because of the decision to allow any method fishing. The Secretary replied that some members did give a reason for leaving, often age or health issues or economic. But he did not routinely ask members why they left: he felt that was their decision. He added that, although explicitly not required to do so, he wrote to all members that had not paid to remind them that their subscription was overdue and that their membership would lapse if not paid soon. Most of those so written to do not respond and their membership lapsed. The Chair commented that we now advertise in national magazines each year for new members and hold an open Day, which had been very successful. The Secretary added that since dropping the EF we have recruited over 80 members in 2 years so we must be doing something right. Regarding members leaving because of any method fishing being introduced as a trial, the Secretary referred to comments made earlier regarding the need to respect differing views and accept some compromise for the greater good: their leaving because of allowing any method as a trial was regrettable but their choice.
24. **J. Middleton** advised that Coldingham had used an aerator for many years but found that anglers tended to group around it and thus impede others from fishing in that area. The management had therefore decided to use it overnight rather than during the day to try and stop this behaviour. The Secretary thanked him for his comments and confirmed he would discuss this with the fishery when he visited.
25. **I. Summers** asked if stocking cost is affected by the timing of different stockings over the season. The Secretary advised that we agree a fish price at the start of the season and notwithstanding any major issues, that price applies throughout the year. He added that the cost this year, including transport, was working out at around £2.58 per pound, slightly more than budgeted for.
26. The Chair brought questions to a close and asked for a proposer and seconder to approve the Secretary's report: Proposed E. Fox; Seconded J. Campbell.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Treasurers Annual Report and Accounts; Papers 5.1 and 5.2:

27. The Treasurer presented his report and accounts to the meeting. He did not go over his report in detail and instead summarised as follows:
28. It has been a difficult year - dealing with Brexit, emerging from covid, the Ukraine conflict, then some political ineptitude by government - all of which combined has put us in the worst cost of living crisis for over 30 years or more. Prices have been rising steadily, and that looks likely to be the case over the next year or two.
29. Although we made a profit for the year on the accounts, the underlying position after excluding insurance receipts relating to the pontoon damage, was more or less break even for the year. This is well down on the £15k profit that we plan to make each year in order to fund capital costs, but given the circumstances, not as bad as it could have been. And we still have reasonable reserves.
30. The windy weather throughout the year - climate change again - also had an impact on results by keeping rod numbers, and consequently income, down. When reasonable fishing weather did arrive the water temperature had climbed and stayed high until late August / early September, which in turn adversely affected the fishing which in turn kept rod numbers down. Nevertheless, many hardy souls regularly braved the contrasting conditions, and

without that commitment and loyalty our results would have been worse, so a special thank you to all that fished the loch over the past season.

31. The budgeted accounts for next year anticipate a loss of up to £25k unless we agree to increases in charges at this meeting. But these are exceptional times, and thanks to our healthy reserves, the board unanimously agreed that we should try and cushion the impact of required increases this year by meeting some of the projected loss from our reserves, and thus spread the likelihood of larger increases in charges over more than one year.
32. The unanimous proposal from the board, which is set out in the AGM papers, is a combination of savings of £6k from reduced stocking and a moderate increase in charges of £20 on subscriptions and £1 on the fishing charge. The balance of the loss, estimated at £10k will be met from reserves. The Treasurer, on behalf of the board, strongly recommended acceptance of this package of measures.
33. Lastly, the Treasurer highlighted that the main constraint in keeping increases to a minimum was our income, and specifically our fishing income. The more members we have and the more often members fish, the higher our income, and that would almost certainly reduce the level of increases required in subscription and other charges. He therefore urged members to help recruit new members and to fish the loch as often as they can.

Questions to the Treasurer

34. **R Brough** asked the Treasurer whether any progress had been made in investing spare funds to bring in much needed additional income to the Association. He advised that previously the Association had invested up to £50k in a 2-year fixed term deposit. He also asked whether it was advisable to keep all our funds with the one bank given that only £85k was covered under the government insurance protection plan.
35. The Treasurer informed the meeting that he and Mr Brough had been discussing this matter recently, and that he was continuing to make enquiries on the best options available. He reported that it was proving very difficult to find institutions to invest with, at least ones that offered anything better than the basic savings-type accounts where interest had currently rose to 0.75%. Also, the Association's investment policy required investments to be made with mainstream institutions in order to minimise risk, which was a very sensible approach in our circumstances. He had made enquiries of Allied Irish regarding fixed term deposits or bonds but they were still unwilling to deal with small organisations like ours. There are other specialist bond brokers out there but the fees involved outweigh the financial benefits given the comparatively small amounts that we would be investing. In the current financial climate the board would be limiting any term deposit arrangement to a maximum of 6 months - not 2 years - and that would involve a rolling £10k per month over 6 months or so in order to make sure we had access to funds at short notice if needed. Getting that type of deal is still very difficult, and the interest rate is not much more than what we currently receive in a savings / investment account where we have instant access without penalty. The Secretary advised that he has a meeting planned with NFU to discuss potential investment / saving opportunities [and with Santander] and will report back in due course.
36. On the question of keeping all our funds with the one bank, there was indeed a risk if the bank went under. But Santander is one of the biggest banks in the world and the risk is negligible.
37. **W. Woods** asked how much interest had been received this year. The Treasurer was unable to say off hand but estimated it at around £300. However interest rates had been rising and the monthly income was now running at around £30 to £40 per month. That would increase further as both rates and the amount in the account rose.
38. The Chair brought questions to a close and asked for a proposer and seconder to approve the Treasurer's report: Proposed R. Harvey; Seconded C. Fairgrieve.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Chairman's Report; Paper 6.1

39. The Chairman referred Members to his written report, which he did not repeat in detail. He commented on the relatively poor back end fishing experienced in 2022, which has become a common problem in recent years for reasons we have already discussed - climate change. He also highlighted that board members volunteer their services to help run the Association on behalf of the wider membership, and that being a board member provides an opportunity to make a personal contribution to its future development. He highlighted that there were several vacancies for board appointments and hoped that some members here would consider volunteering.
40. The Chairman formally recorded his thanks to this year's retiring Board Members - for their help and support throughout their time on the Board; and to all the other Board Members for their help and support throughout the year.

AGENDA ITEM 7: Stocking proposal 2023; Paper 7.1

41. The Chair passed this matter to the Secretary to lead.
42. Secretary referred to the board's stocking proposal and related matters as set out in Paper 7.1, and briefly summarised the rationale behind the proposal.
43. **W. Woods** queried the rationale, specifically the mortality level, and stated that it effectively asked members to pay more for less. The Secretary replied that the stocking density at the reduced kill rate we are now experiencing is much better than it ever was, so members were not losing out in real terms.
44. **C. Fairgrieve** felt that the stocking numbers should remain as previously, which point was supported by **S Fairgrieve**. The Secretary replied that keeping the stocking at 13,200 had financial implications: if it was retained at that level there would be no savings and subscriptions would need to increase by up to £20 to compensate. **C Fairgrieve** commented that he was prepared to pay what was required to maintain as high a quality as possible at Cobbinshaw.
45. **J. Garnett** asked whether the stocking would continue on a weekly basis as before. The Secretary confirmed that would be the case, but stocking numbers in high summer would be dependent on conditions and matched at best to what was being killed by anglers.
46. **S. Fairgrieve** sought clarification on what was being voted on given the different scenarios set out in the Stocking Paper. The Secretary advised that the various scenarios in the Paper were simply examples of how stocking could be done. The proposal put to members by the board was for a reduction in stocking to 12000 plus some changes in timings of stocking, specifically, front loading to spring and reduced stocking in the high summer. If that proposal failed then other options would need to be voted upon.
47. The Chair called for a vote and the board's stocking proposal was approved by 49 to 7.
48. Additionally, the meeting also considered whether to amend the core stocking plan as approved above by including within it a stocking of blues and browns;
 - a stocking of blues was approved by 52 to 3
 - a stocking of browns was rejected by 34 to 4

AGENDA ITEM 8: Proposed changes to Articles and Regulations; Paper 8.1

49. The Chairman handed over to the Secretary to go over the proposed changes.
50. The Secretary referred to the proposed changes set out in Paper 8.1.

Changes to Articles of Association

Proposal: To retain the existing limit of £5000 on single signatory payments / orders by the Treasurer

51. Approved unanimously

Proposed changes to Operating Regulations

Proposal: The EF is retained at £150 until further notice

52. Approved unanimously

Proposal: An increase in annual subscriptions of £20 across all membership categories commencing 2023

53. Approved unanimously

Proposal: An increase of £1 on the 4-hourly fishing charge from 2023

54. Approved unanimously

Proposed changes to Trout Fishing Regulations

Proposal: The meeting ratifies the board's decision to temporarily allow bank fishing in 2020 and 2021

55. Approved unanimously

Proposal: Kill limit increased to 6 fish per outing from 2023

56. Approved by 52 to 5

Proposal: Any method fishing to be allowed in the main loch after the normal season ends

57. Several members wished to comment on this proposal.

58. **J. Garnett** commented that since there was no detrimental affect on fly fishers and most fish left died off, he saw no reason to vote against it. Members had a choice on whether they did it, and it seemed churlish to prevent others doing it just because you do not want to.

59. **M. Gordon** recorded his strong disagreement with the proposal. He argued that Cobbinshaw was a fly fishery and it should remain so. He also felt strongly that all fish should be given the chance to over winter, even if the survival rate was only 1 in 5.

60. **C. Ovens** commented that bait fishing allowed members to use the loch all the year round, especially in circumstances where fly fishing was not really an option: members pay for 12 months so why not make it easier for them to use it for 12 months.

61. **C. Fairgrieve** strongly disagreed with the proposal. He commented that Cobbinshaw is one of the finest fly fisheries in Scotland and that allowing any method fishing undermined its reputation.

62. **W. Woods** recorded his disagreement with the proposal.

63. **S. Fairgrieve** recorded his strong disagreement with the proposal, echoing comments from M. Gordon and S. Fairgrieve.

64. **D. Hutchison** voiced his support for the proposal. It allowed members to use the facilities all year round, provided much needed additional income and had a negligible if any impact on the number of fish that might successfully over wintered. It also meant that members could get the use of fish that would otherwise die off, which seemed a very logical and sensible approach.

65. **J. O'Hara** supported the motion. He felt it was a good thing to allow members to make use of fish that would simply die off.

66. The Chair called for a vote: the motion was **defeated** by 27 to 24

Proposed changes to Pike Fish Regulations

Proposal: To introduce a close season for pike from 15 March to 15 May

67. Approved unanimously

AGENDA ITEM 9: Election of Office Bearers

Election of Chair

68. There were 2 candidates for the Office of Chair;

- Mr D. Moon, incumbent who was willing to stand again
- Mr W. Woods - Proposed by T McGravie; and seconded by G McClellan

69. The members voted thus: D. Moon 38 votes; W. Woods 4 votes.

70. Mr D. Moon was therefore elected as Chair.

Election of Secretary

71. The incumbent Secretary - AW Anderson - was willing to stand again. There being no other volunteers, Mr Anderson was duly re-elected.

Election of Treasurer

72. The Treasurer post is currently vacant and the duties have been carried out by the Secretary. There were no volunteers and the duties will continue to be carried out by the Secretary.

AGENDA ITEM 10: Appointment of Directors

73. The Chair explained that the normal rotational arrangements were now out of synch and there were currently up to 5 vacancies that needed to be filled, some of which would be for shorter terms than the normal 3 years in order to allow us to get back in to the normal rotation next year. If the vacancies could not be filled the board would co-opt as needed.
74. He then called for volunteers and the following members were appointed;

M Makison; I Summer; W Duncan

AGENDA ITEM 11: Appointment of Auditor

75. Mr M. Ritchie was willing to stand again. There being no other volunteers, Mr Ritchie was duly appointed.

AGENDA ITEM 12: AOB

76. **B. Brough** commented that only 57 members out of 350 attended the meeting, which was very disappointing. The Chair agreed, and advised that the board would look at ways of trying to improve attendance.
77. **A. Melrose** asked for an explanation on why he and his group had been called “flatearthers” by a board member, which he felt was derogatory. The Secretary explained that the term ‘flatearther’ is routinely used to describe someone who holds outdated or disproven beliefs. This situation came about because Mr Melrose and his group disagreed with the board’s view on annual fish mortality levels but refused to discuss the matter or share their information on the subject. One of the directors used the term in an email around the board that was inadvertently copied to Mr Melrose. The director concerned subsequently emailed Mr Melrose to apologise. The Chair repeated the apology at the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 13: Presentation of Trophies

78. The Trophy for the heaviest rainbow of the season - a fish of 13lbs 6ozs - was awarded to Mr F. Joynes.
79. The Malcolm Thomson Trophy for the heaviest brown trout was not awarded as there were no recorded catches of brown trout in 2022.
80. The 2022 Cobbinshaw Challenge was won by Mr T Cherrie with a bag limit of 8 fish for 18 pounds 6 ounces (2 killed and 6 returned).

CLOSE

81. The Chairman concluded by thanking Ian Prentice and Jordan Stokoe for acting as tellers, and Members for their attendance.

AW Anderson
Honorary secretary
February 2023.

COBBINSHAW ANGLING ASSOCIATION LTD**SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT****28 JANUARY 2024****Dear Member,**

I hope this annual report summarising our activities for 2023 finds you in good health and gearing up for the new season commencing Saturday 9 March 2024. The weather has dominated our fishing over the past season, and not in a good way, but at least we survived without any major damage and hopefully can look forward to a peaceful festive season.

In the wake of everything else that is going on in the world at the moment COVID seems to have taken a back seat, but it's still out there and is still a life threatening condition especially for the aged and others that are vulnerable. It is therefore important that we all remain vigilant to the risks involved and comply with any guidance that is issued. Basic hygiene and social distancing protocols remain a strong deterrent to the spread of the virus and should still be borne in mind.

Honorary Treasurer vacancy

We are still seeking a suitable volunteer to fill the post of Treasurer. Any member with relevant financial experience who is interested in taking on the role, or requires additional information on what is involved, should contact the current Honorary Chairman to register their interest. This is a key post that carries an Honorarium of circa £5500 per annum. In the absence of a suitable volunteer, the Secretary is carrying out both his and the Treasurer's role.

Director vacancies

The normal rotation arrangements under which two directors retire and replacements are appointed annually have been disrupted because of the cancellation of two AGM's during COVID restrictions. The situation was largely resolved last year by a combination of co-opting and new appointments. One of the co-opted directors is retiring this year and another has resigned, so we are therefore looking for a two volunteers to fill those roles at this AGM. This will get the rotation arrangements back to its normal cycle going forward of two new director appointments annually.

Any member interested in coming on to the Board as a director can contact the Secretary or Chairman for further information on the nature of the role and what is involved, or speak to another member who has recently served on the Board. The role is extremely important to the running of the Association and it provides an opportunity for members to better understand the workings of the Association and make a personal contribution to its future development.

Membership News

Membership totals 318 members, down circa 30 on last year. This includes 3 suspended memberships for health reasons. We admitted 27 new members in 2023. There are no names currently on the waiting list. The table below shows the current membership split across the various categories.

Membership for year ending 31 October 2023

	Number	Percentage	2022	2121	2020	2019	2018
Ordinary	258	80%	279	283	250	253	257
Weekday	31	11%	38	46	52	66	74
Weekday DO	8	3%	10	9	12	15	19
Honorary	21	6%	21	22	26	27	31
Total	318		348	360	340	361	381

Overall our membership numbers remain healthy despite difficult circumstances, but there is no doubt that the next few years will be challenging. We are continuing to attract new members but the aged profile of our current membership

combined with the wider financial crisis means that we are losing more members than we recruit. However the influx of new members is evidence that we are doing something right and that there is demand for good quality fishing and facilities. The challenge going forward is to try and maintain the quality of what we have and get that message out to the angling community. To that end, the Board plans to continue with its advertising campaign in fishing magazines and running an Open Day. Whilst the Board can take steps to increase our profile and maintain the high quality of our facilities and the fishing, we still need existing members to be pro-active in recruiting new members and I would therefore urge you to help the Association in this regard.

2023 Annual Lunch

The annual dinner has now been replaced by an annual lunch with the inaugural lunch held on Friday 10 November at the Bistro Restaurant, Harburn Golf Club. Thirty members including the fishery staff attended and enjoyed an excellent meal along with a generous portion of good humoured banter. It was an informal affair with no speeches or speakers, but we ran a small raffle which raised £150 for club funds. Many thanks to all who attended, and a special thanks to those that donated a prize for the raffle. We will run a similar event next year so look out for the date.

Communications

Over two-thirds of members have agreed to receive communications by email rather than by mail, thus saving the Association a substantial sum over the year in postage and packaging. I would encourage as many other members to do the same, and advise me accordingly. Not only does it save money, it's also a much faster means of communication as it circumvents any printing or postage delays. However, for those members that have not yet joined the world wide web, be assured that we will continue to use normal mail to keep you informed of key developments affecting the Association.

Lastly, a reminder to advise me of any change of address or email to ensure that you receive all relevant communications on a timely basis, especially the AGM and subscription notifications.

Website and FaceBook

Our website contains a variety of information useful to members, including Latest News, weekly fishing reports and monthly catch summaries. The i.d. and password are both currently "fishing" in lower case, and will continue as such until further notice.

Over time the website will become the main communication route with members, saving both time and money for all concerned. I would therefore encourage members to access the site regularly as a means of keeping up-to-date with fishing and other matters affecting Cobbinshaw.

We also run a FaceBook page which is brilliantly managed by the Assistant Fishery Manager, Andrew Fry who posts photos and daily information on catches and fishing plus other chit chat on things at Cobbinshaw. The FaceBook gets a lot of views from both members and outsiders, and is well worth adding to your favourites as a means of keeping up to date on current fishing conditions and results.

The 2023 Cobbinshaw Challenge - a chance to get to know other members

The 2023 Cobbinshaw Challenge was cancelled due to lack of interest from members, which was very disappointing. Nevertheless, the board feel that this type of friendly competition is a good thing for the Association and plan to continue with it in the hope that more members will take part. It promotes the more sociable side of angling, enabling members to get to know and fish with other members that they would not otherwise see at the loch and share fishing experiences of Cobbinshaw and elsewhere; and it could be the start of new friendships that endure over the longer term.

The 2024 Cobbinshaw Challenge will therefore be fished on **Sunday 2 June 2024**, starting at 9:30 am and finishing at 2pm. The fishing cost will be the standard 4-hour rate of £13 so there is an extra 30 minutes free fishing. Although the event takes place on a Sunday, it is open to Weekday and Weekday Day Only members too. Further details will be available on the Notice Board opposite the Office at the loch and in Newsletters. There will be a barbecue [weather dependent] and snacks after the competition and a small prize for the winner. The Board would encourage as many members as possible take part and support the event.

Open Day 2024

The 2024 Open Day will be held on Sunday 30 June 2024. The purpose of the event is to attract new members to the Association by giving them a chance to see our facilities and try out the fishing for free for 3 hours on a catch and release basis. We need members to help run the event by taking attendees out in the boats for their free fishing [which will be free for members too]. Any volunteers to help run the event should contact the Secretary. All fishing for visitors on the day will commence at 10am at the earliest.

National advertising

The Board has also agreed to continue with a national advertising strategy to attract new members, and will be placing adverts in at least one fishing magazine in early spring 2023. Last year's adverts in Fly Fishing & Fly Tying and Trout & Salmon resulted in several new applications and it is hoped that we will get a similar response this time.

Proposed changes to Articles of Association and subservient Regulations

Information on proposed changes to the existing constitutional framework are set out in **Paper 8.1** attached. In summary, these are;

Articles of Association (two-thirds majority required)

- (a) To retain the current threshold limit of £5000 for payments/orders made solely by the Treasurer.

Operating Regulations (simple majority required)

- (b) A flat rate subscription increase of £24 across all membership categories.
 (c) An increase of £3 on guest fees.

Trout Fishing Regulations (simple majority required)

- (d) Allow any method fishing for trout in the main loch after the normal season ends
 (e) Allow bank fly fishing on the main loch throughout the year.
 (f) Fishing times to be restricted to one hour after sunset or 10pm, which ever is the earlier.

Stocking summary 2023

The stocking proposals agreed at the 2023 AGM - to front load stocking in an attempt to mitigate climate change issues and reduce high summer stockings - were implemented as planned up till mid August, except for the delivery of 400 blues in May which our supplier could not provide [stocking swapped for ordinary rainbows]. In late August the fishery manager noted a problem with the remaining cage fish. An investigation identified a gill fluke parasite in several of the fish which was deemed to be the cause, and the decision was taken on advice to drop all the remaining cage fish - some 2100 - into the water to help reduce ongoing infection rates and give them a better chance to dislodge the parasites through natural behaviour in more open water. A final planned lorry stocking of 600 was delivered on 24 September. Due to the very difficult fishing conditions over the summer and consequent low catches, the board agreed to an additional stocking of 400 fish [blues] on 7 October to try and boost fishing in the latter part of the season.

Regarding the fluke problem, a key point to note is that there has been no ongoing noticeable affect in terms of seeing unusual numbers of dead or distressed fish around the loch. Prompt action in identifying the problem [credit to the FM] and taking action to drop the remaining cages appears to have limited its impact. The source of the infestation remains a mystery, whether brought in via stock fish or birds or already in the loch [it is a common fresh water parasite]. In any event, the prolonged high water temperature combined with the close cage environment presented a perfect breeding ground for the parasite, especially as its life cycle of adult to egg to larva was around a week in those temperatures.

Whilst the quality of fish delivered by our supplier was generally good there were issues with both the condition and size of some fish delivered [early fish were long and lean but met weight criteria; and there was an unusually high number of undersized fish, some as small as 1 pounds 6 ounces or less]. Both these issues were brought to the attention of our supplier at the time by the fishery staff, and a formal complaint was made in writing by the board. We also experienced some delays in certain deliveries and it was also disappointing that our supplier could not deliver a stocking of blues [which we eventually sourced elsewhere for delivery on 7 October].

In total we stocked 12,400 fish - 400 more than planned - comprising 5000 cage fish and 7400 lorry fish. The lorry fish included 400 blues that were stocked late in the season to try and boost catches following a very difficult summer period.

Fishing and catch summary 2023

The fishing this year has effectively been a tale of two halves: fantastic in the early season up to mid / late June but thereafter catches started to fall rapidly despite a high fish density and additional stockings. The culprit was the weather: an exceptional heat wave arrived much earlier than usual in mid June and the water temperature rose quickly and stayed high throughout the summer in to late autumn. The fish certainly did not like the rapid change in temperature or its prolonged nature and quickly went in to a torpid state and stopped feeding; and have not really come back "on" despite cooling water conditions in late September and some new late stockings.

Fisheries across Scotland and throughout the UK have been affected in a similar way to us - some a lot worse - so it is not a local problem. This is climate change in action, with high water temperatures occurring earlier and staying higher for longer. We can only hope that governments get their act together and eventually agree a long term plan that will address climate change issues. Mean time, all we can do is manage the problems it presents as best we can and hope that next year's weather is much kinder, which is what fishing is ultimately all about!

A monthly summary of rod numbers, catch returns and stocking is set out at **Appendix A** attached. In brief: we stocked 12,400 fish; anglers caught a total of 7,692 [PY 11,585], of which 4,133 [PY 5932] were killed and 3,559 [PY 5,653] returned, with a rod average of 2.05 [PY 2.52] fish per angler visit. The overall catch rate for the year, expressed as a percentage of fish stocked, is 62% [PY88%] which is down on last year; and the kill rate, again expressed as a percentage of fish stocked, is 33% [PY45%] which is exceptionally low compared to historic levels of between 70% and 85%.

Although this year's catch and kill rates are exceptionally low they are consistent with recent trends and reflect the continuing impact of climate change [and consequential prolonged high water temperatures during summer] and the reluctance of anglers to kill fish. We are therefore building up a high stocking density that is increasingly difficult to catch in the high summer months, with the vast majority of those fish simply dying off in the loch over the course of the season and over the winter. The die-off amounts to circa 10 tons of fish annually at current stocking numbers / sizes, with a cost to the Association of circa £40,000 plus per year. A recurring die-off at that level is not good for the long term health of the loch, which is a serious concern, and represents poor value for money to members.

Other aspects of the 2023 catch returns I would draw attention to are:

- (a) The overwintered fish caught have all been in very good condition and include circa 44 fish over 6 pounds, the heaviest being 12 pounds 2 ounces plus two other double figure fish in the 10 pound range.
- (b) We killed 798 fish over 3 pounds [PY 1253] and stocked circa 4000 in that size range, as normal. Of the 798 fish over 3 pounds, circa 462 were definitely overwintered: the majority of the remaining 336 most likely came from this year's stocking, which is not a great return on the numbers stocked but is partly explained by the difficult conditions over the late summer.
- (c) Given the number of fish stocked annually that are in the 3 pound range plus, the return we get is relatively poor, both in season and carried over to future seasons, confirming again that we have very low survival rates.
- (d) The best catches were in the spring months up to late June when the water temperature and food sources were at their optimum. During the 7 weeks ending 10 June 4,631 fish were caught with a rod average of 4.25 fish; catches included a good number of overwintered fish up to 8 pounds plus.
- (e) Buzzers, nymphs and dries were particularly successful in the spring months but catches on all methods fell noticeably from late June when the heatwave hit. Thereafter lures on sunk lines appear to have been the most consistent method, and this remained the case for the rest of the season.
- (f) There were 470 guest rods providing £11,143 of income ie 20% of total fishing income, which is consistent in percentage terms with previous years. Guest income is extremely important to our overall finances.
- (g) Winter fishing over 2022/23 [ie from November and fly only] included: 33 rods providing circa £507 income; 33 fish caught of which 27 were killed, with 2 fish over 4 pounds and 2 fish over 6 pounds. We also took in approx £1852 in pike income over the winter.
- (h) Rod numbers are down by 850 compared to last year. The drop in numbers is exceptional, no doubt caused by the very difficult fishing conditions over the summer, but it also reflects a recurring trend in recent years due to a combination of reducing membership numbers and increasingly difficult fishing conditions over the summer months caused by climate change. In financial terms, the drop this year equates to a minimum loss of income of circa £11,000.

Water Quality Group

As previously notified in Newsletters the board has asked the Water Quality Group to lead an investigation into the various issues affecting the fishing at Cobbinshaw, with a specific emphasis on identifying and tackling climate change issues.

As part of the investigation we commissioned an underwater survey of the loch which made some startling discoveries;

- (a) The loch is not as deep as we thought. There is no deep trench running from the cages to the dam. The deepest area was circa 15 feet, located approx 100 yards off the dam, with average depths of around 10 to 12 feet in the central areas, shallowing to the sides. The loch bed is akin to an oblong saucer - shallower at the sides and deepening in the middle.
- (b) There is a pile of faecal matter below the cages where the depth immediately around the cages ranged from 8 feet to 12 feet depending on the varying location of the cages as they swing in the wind. This means that at least part of the bottom of the cage nets will likely be sitting on faecal matter when the water level is down.

- (c) The water temperature was virtually the same at all depths during the survey - at 16c or 17c - indicating that there is no thermal stratification within the loch and no cooler water for the fish to retreat to. The absence of any cooler water combined with prolonged high temperatures during high summer is likely a main cause of torpidity in the fish [they go off the feed] and consequently low catches.

[NB These measurements were taken in summer when the loch was down by up to 2 feet].

A series of meetings was also held with ex-officials and some long standing members to get their views on how things have changed over the years at Cobbinshaw and what might be needed to address any key issues identified. A summary of these discussions was circulated to participants and posted on the website, and will help inform the work of the WQG.

Stocking proposal 2024

The inevitable and continuing impacts of climate change combined with other factors [current financial constraints and low kill rate] has considerably complicated decisions on stocking policy over the longer term. The Board considers that a broader review of our stocking strategy is needed [which is ongoing] so that our detailed stocking plan fits better with the climatic conditions we will face in the future and the changing needs/practices of anglers; also, any stocking plan has to be affordable. The Board's stocking proposal for 2024 is set out in **Paper 7.1**.

Winter fishing times from 7 November 2023 to 18 March 2024 - and related fishery closures

Members should note the following fishing times over the winter period from 6 November 2023:

- (a) The fishery will be closed on a Friday and Saturday until the start of the new season on 9 March 2024.
- (b) Some boats will be available until mid December 2023 subject to weather and other maintenance works required.
- (c) Bank fishing will be available in both lochs from 6 November to 15 December 2023 and from 4 February 2024 to 29 February 2024.
- (d) The fishery will be closed from 16 December 2023 to 3 February 2023 inclusive to facilitate staff holidays and certain maintenance works.
- (e) The fishery will be closed from 1 March 2023 to prepare for the new season opening on 18 March 2023.
- (f) Any fishing during closure periods must be agreed in advance with the Fishery Manager. Note that there will be no facilities open at the loch during these periods.

2024 Season dates

The main 2024 trout season will commence on Saturday 9 March 2024 and close on Sunday 10 November 2024. A limited number of boats will be kept in the water to allow winter boat fishing in the main loch until mid December 2024. Bank fishing is also available through the winter in both the main and small loch subject to staff availability and required maintenance works.

The pike fishing season dates are set out separately and available from the Fishery Manager. Note that a close season is now in place during spawning.

Fishing awards 2023

Heaviest fish

The heaviest rainbow award goes to Mr I Prentice for a fish of 12 pounds 2 ounces caught on a damsel pattern.

Congratulations to everyone who caught a fish over 5 pounds that went on the board, especially if it was a personal best; and a special mention to those that caught several above that weight. There are also several members who have been catching consistently throughout the year by changing tactics and locations in response to some difficult conditions, which is a lesson to us all. There were no brown trout killed this year.

Estate and maintenance matters

Pontoons that were seriously damaged in the December 2021 storm have now been replaced; repair and replacement work on the remaining damaged pontoons will be carried out over the winter period. The cage structure also needs some repairs that will be carried out over the winter and into spring next year. Additional timber materials to complete the repairs have been delivered.

Maintenance works on roads and other areas identified last year have been deferred pending clarification of finances. These include; gunnel replacements; re-painting of the cabin; new fuse box in shed; road repairs; and installation of sink top boilers.

Boat replacement programme

We currently have up to 2 boats for sale under the approved boat replacement programme. Any one interested in purchasing a boat, or knows of someone who is, should contact the Secretary or Fishery Manager.

Items for sale

We still have several pairs of Wychwood drogue clamps for sale at £5 per pair, very cheap compared to a retail price of around £15. Any member interested should contact the Fishery Manager.

Looking forward

As previously intimated in the latest Newsletter, some new initiatives are planned for next year to improve member facilities and encourage greater member inter actions, including:

- A limited range of drinks and snacks will be available for sale at the loch
- Fly tying classes will be offered covering basic techniques and flies that work at Cobbnishaw [free]
- Casting tuition will be available on request [free]
- Guiding services on the loch will be available [fee arranged directly with the guide]
- A barbecue event will be held to enable members to meet other members they might not ordinarily come across

Thank you to Members who volunteer their time and resources

This report provides an opportunity for the Board of Directors and the fishery staff to formally record their thanks on behalf of the Association to those members that regularly volunteer their time and resources, either free or at minimum cost, to help out with our stocking, building and maintenance activities. Their efforts save the Association several thousand pounds per annum. It would be impolite to name the individuals concerned, but they know who they are, and they should be aware that their support for the Association is very much appreciated by all members, and especially by the Board of Directors.

Thank you to the Fishery Staff

I would like to record my personal thanks, and the Board's thanks on behalf of members, to the Fishery Manager and the Assistant Fishery Manager who have both done a marvellous job in running the fishery over the past year. In particular, their work in replacing damaged pontoons and growing-on high quality fish from the cages, has been excellent. Also, without their prompt intervention the gill fluke problem could have been much worse. Whilst many fishing matters are generally out with our direct control, there is no doubt that the harbour, boats and other facilities at Cobbinshaw are amongst the best in Scotland, and the credit for this is largely down to the initiative and commitment of the fishery staff.

And finally

I will finish this report with the usual pleas: please take care of the nets and drogues; please get advice from the fishery staff if you have problems starting the outboard motors, and please heed it; please understand and apply the basic boat etiquette rules when out on the loch, details of which are on the website or available from the fishery staff; please do not run the boat with the drogue dragging behind; please accurately record your catches, especially any returned fish; please remember that all anglers must provide their own lifejackets and wear them when afloat; please remember to check that your lifejackets are still fully serviceable, especially the firing mechanisms; and lastly, please remember to use barbless hooks when you are fishing catch and release.

All that said, tight lines for the 2024 season in all your fishing endeavours.

A W ANDERSON
Honorary Secretary
On behalf of the Board of Directors
December 2023

CAA Annual Report 2023 - cont'd

APPENDIX A

2023 Monthly catch and stocking analysis

	Rods	Fish Killed	Fish Ret'd	Total Caught	Fish Stocked	Month Rod Ave	% Caught to Stocked (Cumulative)	% Killed to stocked (Cumulative)
March	128	214	68	282	1905	2.20	14.80	11.23
April	473	772	417	1189	2495	2.51	33.43	22.41
May	712	1453	1851	3304	1700	4.64	78.27	39.98
June	611	563	724	1287	1300	2.11	81.92	40.57
July	539	381	294	675	1150	1.25	78.80	39.57
August	575	273	94	367	2850	0.64	62.32	32.07
Sept	354	198	49	247	600	0.70	61.26	32.17
October	311	260	60	320	400	1.03	61.86	33.18
November	47	19	2	21	0	0.45	62.03	33.33
Totals	3750	4133	3559	7692	12400	2.05		
Winter 22/23								
Totals	3750	4133	3559	7692				

2022 Monthly catch and stocking analysis

	No. Rods	Fish Killed	Fish Ret'd	Total	Fish Stocked	Month Rod Ave	% Caught to Stocked (Cumulative)	% Killed to stocked (Cumulative)
March	254	392	198	590	1800	2.32	32.78	20.58
April	531	819	769	1588	2400	2.99	51.86	27.52
May	596	1155	1757	2912	1600	4.89	87.76	38.79
June	751	1060	1283	2343	2100	3.12	94.01	46.30
July	781	794	697	1491	1100	1.91	99.16	49.36
August	654	608	422	1030	2000	1.57	90.49	42.35
Sept	591	655	292	947	1500	1.60	87.21	45.69
October	382	422	221	643	600	1.68	88.12	47.62
November	60	27	14	41	0	0.68	88.44	47.83
Totals	4600	5932	5653	11585	13100	2.52		
Winter 22/23	24	27	6	33				
Totals	4624	5959	5659	11618				

AGM 2024 Paper 5.1COBBINSHAW ANGLING ASSOCIATION LTDHONORARY TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORTJANUARY 2024**Dear Member**

At the last AGM member's approved a proposal by the board to spread increases in subscriptions and charges over 2 years in order to bring our accounts back in to surplus by the end of 2024. This involved budgeting for a loss in 2023 of circa £10k that would be met from reserves, and targeting a surplus of at least the same in 2024. Things have not gone entirely to plan but they could indeed have been worse.

2023 Financial Accounts

The 2023 accounts show a loss for the year of circa £10k, which is on target with what was forecast last year. The accounts have been audited by Mr M Ritchie and given a clean opinion.

Due to a number of unforeseen events, especially the impact of unprecedented hot weather in mid June, we achieved the targeted loss of £10k more by luck than design. In particular fishing income fell by almost £17k compared to forecast for 2023 and by circa £11k compared to actual in 2022, but we also made significant savings in maintenance and other areas and increased bank interest, which combined more or less made up for the shortfall in income. We also incurred no capital spend during 2023 which helped protect our bank balance. Given current economic circumstances it is unlikely that we could rely on similar fortune in 2024.

Explanations of key variances compared to 2022 are summarised below;

- Membership income is down circa £2.3k due to a combination of reduced membership numbers and fewer new members joining, despite increases in subscriptions.
- Boat and guest income is down by almost £11k despite an increase in charges. The fall is due mainly to reduced rod numbers caused by poor fishing conditions and catches over the summer and into autumn.
- Fish costs were broadly the same as last year despite a reduction in the number stocked.
- Feed costs rose by almost 30% following an almost similar rise the previous year [and is expected to rise by up to 20% in 2024].
- Salary costs rose by circa 5% [and will rise by 4% in 2024].
- Maintenance and equipment fell by £2k due mainly to less timber purchases [covered largely by insurance last year]. Timber costs in 2024 will exceed £6k due to repairs required on pontoons and cages.
- General expenses included: advertising; new drogues; van expenses; QuickBook fees; stationery; postage; first aid training; and cleaning supplies etc. Costs fell by circa £2k due to general cost savings over the year.
- Utilities and fuel remain exceptionally high for reasons well known.
- There was no capital expenditure or major maintenance works in-year as part of general cost saving measures. These cannot be deferred again so costs will rise in these areas in 2024.

The underlying financial position of the Association remains relatively healthy with a bank balance of £153k (PY£157k) as at 31 October 2023. The working capital requirements of the Association over the winter amount to circa £55k leaving a free balance of circa £13k, plus the capital reserve of £85k. We have a solid base on which to build for the future so it is important we do not unnecessarily use our reserves simply to meet losses and effectively provide subsidised fishing for our current membership. The Association has been in existence for almost 120 years and a priority of the Board is to make sure that it continues well in to the future.

2024 Forecast Accounts and proposed increases in charges

The forecast financial results for 2024 indicate a potential loss of £25k, the same as in 2023. The plan last year was to stagger required subscription and other increases needed to get our books back in profit over 2023 and 2024. The forecast loss in 2024 is due mainly to continuing uncertainties over membership and fishing income. The situation going forward therefore remains extremely challenging on all fronts: a declining membership; a smaller pool of anglers from which to recruit new members; a cost of living crisis including continued inflation and rising costs generally, but especially in regard to fish and fish feed; and managing climate change risks. There are things we can do to mitigate negative impacts but they come at a cost and require a change in mindset about how the fishery needs to respond to meet these challenges.

The board will continue to do all it can to maintain income levels and keep costs down. Members also have an important role to play in maintaining income levels by helping to recruit new members and fishing the loch more often if possible, both of which would help keep increases in subscriptions and other charges to a minimum: this is your club, in which you are a part-owner, so please support it as much as you can. Moreover we all need to understand and accept that both the loch and the fishing world has changed dramatically over the past 10 years or so: if we are going to survive our operations and rules need to adapt to these changing circumstances.

The need for change brings me on to the subject of allowing any method fishing on the main loch over the winter period. This was put to the last AGM and defeated by only 3 votes. Nevertheless the board feels that this is one of the few areas where we have a chance to increase our income and should be considered again, hence its inclusion in the proposals to be voted on again this year. The arguments in favour as set out in **Paper 7.1** are overwhelming, with no downside. Allowing any method fishing will not solve our financial needs on its own but it is a start, and it will hopefully broaden the appeal of Cobbinshaw to new members. In short, we need to maximise all the income potential we have in order to maintain our current scale of operations and keep the cost to members down.

Another option to explore in order to increase income is to allow bait fishing [with no C&R] from boat and bank for a short period during the high summer months when there is little or no fish being caught by fly [we won't be stocking then]. This has been done successfully by other established fly fisheries as a means of turning over torpid stock and boosting income when rod numbers are otherwise very low. This is also a sensitive issue but needs consideration given current financial circumstances and wider constraints. Such an arrangement would be introduced at short notice on a temporary basis and be subject to ongoing review. Any other suggestions from members on how we could increase income or reduce costs is very welcome, so please do not hesitate in raising them, either at the AGM or directly with the board.

When it comes to voting on sensitive issues such as allowing any method fishing, members need to understand that the Association is a broad kirk with as many different views on how things should be run as we have members. These differing views cover all aspects of our operations, such as: the number, type and size of fish we should stock; whether to keep the cage operation; the type of boats and motors we purchase; and of course the detailed stocking plan. It is normal for people to have different views on these things but the practical reality is that we cannot please everyone all of the time, so there has to be compromise, which means setting aside personal views and supporting measures that are in the interests of the Association as a whole.

The core challenge facing the Association is essentially one of affordability: we need to cut our cloth to match our income streams, both now and going forward. The decision on how we do that is ultimately up to members. Whatever is decided will require an increase in fees and charges, but the question is by how much? Our options in this regard are straightforward: if we maintain our operations at current levels without improving income, then significant increases in fees and charges will be needed; alternatively, we could cut back on the scale of activities - specifically stocking as this is the only area where meaningful savings are achievable - in which case the scale of required rises would be less but not avoided.

In order to quantify how much fees and charges need to be increased to avoid a loss in 2024, it is important to know how much can be generated from increases in the various specific income sources, as illustrated below;

The effects of increasing specific income sources are;

- Each £5 rise in subscriptions generates only circa £1400 in extra income.
- A £1 rise in the four-hourly fishing charge will generate circa £4500 in extra income
- A rise of 50p in the hourly rate could generate circa £900 in extra income

Examples of the scale of increases in subscriptions and charges needed to avoid a £25,000 loss are;

- A single rise of circa £90 in subscriptions across all categories would likely break even [a rise of £125 would be needed to give a profit of £10k]
- An increase in subscriptions of circa £70 plus an increase in fishing charges of £1 and 50p respectively, would likely break even
- A rise of circa £60 in subscriptions plus an increase in fishing charges of £2 would likely break even

Increases in subscriptions and charges are never popular but are necessary in order to keep the Association viable and maintain the quality of facilities and fishing that we currently enjoy. As explained above, the scale of increases required can be reduced by maximising other income sources and agreeing to savings in stocking. However the amount of potential savings from stocking this year is reduced by the additional cost of measures needed to mitigate climate change and parasite risks affecting the cage fish which requires them to be stocked in to the loch earlier. In order to achieve meaningful savings we therefore need to cut stocking by a significant amount, as set out in the **Stocking Proposal at Paper 7.1**

As with last year, the Board recognises that the current financial situation facing members is exceptional. In these circumstances it has unanimously agreed to recommend that the Association should apply part of our reserves to reduce the scale of increases needed at this time. However this is not a sustainable approach and 2024 is the last year that we could reasonably do this without jeopardising the longer term future of the Association. Members are asked to consider these matters carefully and be prepared for some hard decisions in 2025.

After much deliberation the Board proposes the following package of measures to meet the forecast loss of £25,000 in 2024:

- A reduction of 1000 lorry fish - saving £4000
- An increase of £3 in the 4-hourly guest rate - generating £1500
- No increase in member fishing charges
- A flat rate increase of £24 in subscriptions - generating £8400
- Allowing winter bait fishing - generating £1000
- Balance of loss £10,000 to be met from reserves

The scale of increases in subscriptions could be reduced to £14 if stocking was further reduced to 10,000 fish [see Stocking Proposal at Paper 7.1]. A reduction to that level would not have a major impact on overall stocking density [still high at 40 fish to the acre] given current kill rates and reduced high summer stocking.

The proposed increase of £3 in the initial guest rate - bringing the four-hourly charge to £26 - re-instates the differential between it and member rates which has deteriorated over time due to many years of common flat rate rises. The charge remains very competitive compared to commercial fisheries, especially as we offer a 6 fish kill limit and no restrictions on bigger fish being killed.

Members should also note that it is extremely difficult if not impossible to accurately predict income levels and cost increases that will occur next year and beyond. The actual results for 2024 may therefore be better or worse than forecast. Any additional loss in 2024 will be met from reserves and any surplus will be taken in to account in determining the scale of rises that might be needed in 2025.

Budgeting for an operating loss is not normal but these are exceptional circumstances. Also, this is a managed approach that the Association can afford due to its built up reserves. But there are limits as to how often and how much such support can be applied. For example, budgeting to break even means we are again falling short of our target of a £15k annual surplus to meet future capital costs. If the financial situation remains weak next year then rises in charges and/or cost savings similar to those made this year may be required. Members can however reduce the scale of any future increases in charges by making more use of the facilities.

Summary

The Association is going through a major transitional phase, probably the greatest challenge it has ever experienced, with a falling core membership, major changes in angler attitudes and expectations, and managing climate change impacts. There is no quick fix or silver bullet that will resolve these: they are a recurring trend going forward that we have to manage. There are things we can do to mitigate negative impacts but they come at a cost and require a change in mindset about how the fishery is run. The next couple of years will therefore be challenging for the Association but are by no means insurmountable - we just have to pool together and tackle them as a team.

Cobbinshaw prides itself on providing quality fishing and facilities to its members and the Board will do all it can to keep costs and fees etc to an affordable level; but there are limits as to how far that can go without compromising quality. The increases and savings proposed for 2023 are recommended to members as a means of keeping potential losses to a minimum and spreading increases in charges over more than one year. But some tough decisions may still be needed down the line to maintain the right balance between quality and affordability. Nevertheless, the Board is committed to maintaining Cobbinshaw as a premier fishery for its members.

AW Anderson
Honorary Treasurer
December 2023

AGM 2024 Paper 5.2**COBBINSHAW ANGLING ASSOCIATION LTD****ABBREVIATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS****Year ended 31 October 2023**

These accounts have been abbreviated to key information in order to reduce printing and other costs and to make them more easily understood by members. The full set of accounts is available on the website.

DIRECTORS REPORT

The directors present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 October 2023.

INCORPORATION OF THE COMPANY

The company was incorporated on 1 June 2017. It is a Company limited by guarantee with each member liable to the extent of one pound sterling.

COMPANY ACTIVITIES

Cobbinshaw Angling Association Ltd is a not-for-profit organisation providing angling facilities for its members on Cobbinshaw Reservoir, by West Calder, West Lothian. All income is subscribed by members of the Company. The Company's Articles do not permit any distribution of funds to members.

DIRECTORS

The directors who served the company during the year were as follows:

Mr David Moon - Chair
Mr Andrew Anderson - Honorary Secretary and Treasurer
Mr Frank Jackson
Mr Ian Prentice [Term expired January 2023]
Mr John Glynn
Mr Richard Rudkin [Term expired January 2023]
Mr Jordan Stokoe
Mr David Hutchison
Mr W Duncan
Mr M Makison
Mr I Summers

SMALL COMPANY PROVISIONS

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

This report was approved by the board of directors on 3 December 2023 and signed on behalf of the board by:

Andrew W Anderson
Director, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer
3 December 2023

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Financial Examination

Year ended 31 October 2023

Examination Certificate

I have examined the Accounts of Cobbinshaw Angling Association Ltd for the year ending 31 October 2023 and have found them to be fairly stated and in accordance with the books and records of the Association.

M Ritchie [Cobbinshaw Member]

Financial Examiner

Date: 16 November 2023

INCOME	Year End 31 Oct 23 £	Year End 31 Oct 22 £
Membership income		
Subscriptions	94,462	95,906
Entrance fees	4,259	4,695
Donations	1,802	2,197
Total	100,523	102,798
Fishing income		
Member boat income	44,995	53,893
Member guest income	11,143	13,221
Pike fishing	1,987	216
Total	58,125	67,330
Other income		
Grants	0	0
Miscellaneous	1,931	13,977
Total	1,931	13,977
Total Income	160,579	184,105
 EXPENDITURE		
Stocking costs		
Cost of fish	48,130	48,714
Feed costs	9,426	7,245
Total	57,556	55,959
Staff costs		
Salaries	56,835	54,128
Employers NI and pension costs	2,200	2,587
Directors honoraria	12,848	12,236
Total	71,883	68,951
Other charges		
Rent, rates and insurance	19,014	18,884
Utilities: heat / light / water / phone	3,801	3,348
Outboard motor expenses	3,489	3,920
Maintenance and equipment	3,069	5,070
Petty cash expenses at loch	1,291	800
Cottage expenses	525	432
General expenses	3,566	5,517
Depreciation	6,860	6,860
EF Rebates	0	100
Total	41,615	44,931
Total Expenditure	<u>171,054</u>	<u>169,841</u>
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR PERIOD	<u>-10,475</u>	<u>14,264</u>

COBBINSHAW ANGLING ASSOCIATION LTD
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Balance Sheet

31 October 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
Fixed assets:		
Tangible assets	<u>197,997</u>	<u>204,857</u>
Current assets:		
Debtors and prepayments	0	0
Cash at bank and in hand	153,577	157,192
Less: Creditors within one year	0	0
Net current assets	<u>153,577</u>	<u>157,192</u>
Net assets	<u>351,574</u>	<u>362,049</u>
 Capital and reserves		
General Fund	155,933	166,408
Revaluation Reserve	110,641	110,641
Levy on Members	0	0
Capital Reserve	85,000	85,000
	<u>351,574</u>	<u>362,049</u>

Directors responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2015).

COBBINSHAW ANGLING ASSOCIATION LTD
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Notes to the Financial Statements - Cont'd
Year ended 31 October 2023

8 Tangible fixed assets

	Cottage and Land	Work Shop	Motor vehicle	Outboard motors	Boats	Cabin	Gates and ladders	Pontoons	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cost									
<u>At 31/10/2022</u>	<u>140000</u>	<u>25557</u>	<u>6641</u>	<u>20346</u>	<u>100261</u>	<u>23407</u>	<u>3480</u>	<u>13553</u>	<u>333245</u>
Revaluation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Additions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>At 31/10/2023</u>	<u>140000</u>	<u>25557</u>	<u>6641</u>	<u>20346</u>	<u>100261</u>	<u>23407</u>	<u>3480</u>	<u>13553</u>	<u>333245</u>
Depreciation									
<u>At 31/10/2022</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>25557</u>	<u>6641</u>	<u>17346</u>	<u>68899</u>	<u>8220</u>	<u>1062</u>	<u>663</u>	<u>128388</u>
Disposals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charge for year	0	0	0	1500	2996	1170	531	663	<u>6860</u>
<u>At 31/10/2023</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>25557</u>	<u>6641</u>	<u>18846</u>	<u>71895</u>	<u>9390</u>	<u>1593</u>	<u>1326</u>	<u>135248</u>
<u>NBV @ 31/10/23</u>	<u>140000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1500</u>	<u>28366</u>	<u>14017</u>	<u>1887</u>	<u>12227</u>	<u>197997</u>
<u>NBV @ 31/10/22</u>	<u>140000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3000</u>	<u>31362</u>	<u>15187</u>	<u>2418</u>	<u>12890</u>	<u>204857</u>

2024 AGM Paper 6.1COBBINSHAW ANGLING ASSOCIATION LTDCHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT28 JANUARY 2024

Dear Member,

Most members will be glad 2023 season is behind us, although some members did have sporadic success on the days when conditions were favourable.

The season got off to a reasonably good start but following the heatwave in June sport seemed to decline in general and this continued until final weeks of the season. We encountered some challenging events during the course of the season with net fish having to be released earlier than anticipated due to gill fluke infection, this was identified thankfully at an early stage by Fishery Management and avoided a major fish loss.

I think its fair to say the weather played a major part in much lower rod numbers and subsequently catches with horrible conditions during evening fishing period, a long period of low pressure and water temperature above normal but not critically so. Weather patterns are definitely changing which we recognise as a Board and will bring forward proposals in order to mitigate as much as possible.

We have also carried out depth survey work around the Loch during the year and this has highlighted potential areas of concern. The Loch is not nearly as deep as we believed by some margin.

It has been very pleasing to note member engagement in the various sub committees that we have instigated to investigate water quality and diminishing insect life around the Loch. These groups will inform the Board in order we can be best prepared for events that may arise in the coming years. We appreciate and thank Ken and Douglas for their assistance, knowledge and expertise in these matters.

2023 has been a challenge financially with much reduced rod numbers and ever-increasing costs. An approved planned deficit in operational turnover was met from reserves which remains concerning. Members should be aware that the financial projections and budgets are based on both annual fees and estimated boat hire fees, rod numbers throughout the year in order to maintain the first class facilities we currently provide. 2024 is likely to be equally challenging going forward.

In conclusion I would like to thank all members, staff, Board and office bearers for their selfless dedication to the Association and their determination to ensure we can continue to provide the quality we have come to expect.

David Moon
Chairperson
CAA Ltd
December 2023

STOCKING PROPOSAL 2024

The background to this year's stocking considerations is the fact that we are facing a likely loss of £25k in 2024 unless we increase charges or make savings or a combination of these. Stocking is the only area where meaningful savings can be made so some hard decisions on stocking need to be addressed. The choice facing members is straightforward: if we don't achieve reasonable savings on stocking then subscriptions and other charges will need to be further increased to make up the shortfall.

However, as explained last year, stocking is a complex area where several inter-related issues need to be taken into account when deciding the number, size, and timing of fish to be stocked. Particular issues to note include managing the impacts of climate change [prolonged high water temperatures causing torpidity in the fish resulting in very low catches] and low kill rates [resulting in abnormally high stocking densities and very high annual mortality levels].

The situation is further complicated by two new factors coming to light this year. Firstly, the underwater survey carried out in the summer identified that the loch is much shallower than we thought, especially around the cages, and that there is a considerable build up of faecal matter below the cages which poses a serious risk to the health of the cage fish if disturbed [and loch fish]; the survey also identified that the summer water temperature is more or less the same at all depths, meaning that there is no thermal stratification occurring. And secondly, we suffered a gill fluke infestation that necessitated the early release of 2100 cage fish. We will never know how the parasite arrived - whether already in the loch [it's a common freshwater parasite] or brought in from stock delivered by our supplier - but we do know that prolonged high water temperatures provided exceptionally favourable breeding conditions within the cage environment that it no doubt took advantage of.

To address the issues affecting the safe operation of the cages [high water temperatures, faecal matter, parasite risk] we are investigating a plan to move the cages on a five-year rotation around the existing site beginning 2025, the earliest this can be done. For 2024 the cages will therefore remain where they are, which is not ideal and carries some risk. To mitigate that risk the board is implementing a combination of essential measures next year: reducing the depth of the cage nets to provide some free water between them and the faecal matter; installing aeration systems; reducing the number of fish in the cages to 4000 in line with the reduced water volume in the nets, and; stocking the majority of cage fish into the loch before high summer to minimise parasite and high water temperature risks. Without these measures in place we could not safely operate the cages in 2024. Once we move the cages to another location we will review these measures in light of experience.

The board wishes to make clear that there is no immediate plan to do away with the cages, but members should be aware that their future viability is in question given current risks, operating uncertainties and costs of replacement.

To put fish costs in context: the estimated delivered cost of standard rainbows for 2024 will be around £2.80 per pound; feed costs are estimated at £9,000 for 4000 fish with early release and £11,000 for 5000 fish held over the summer as previously.

Stocking proposal 2024

The estimated stocking cost of £63,000 included in the forecast accounts on which we are seeking to make savings is based on the following: a total of 12,000 fish per 2023; a change in the split between cages and lorry ie split 4000 and 8000 respectively; holding the cage fish over the summer, with resulting feed costs of circa £9,000. This is essentially a continuation of the 2023 stocking plan. The change in numbers between cages and lorry result in an overall increase in costs which will off-set some of the savings from reduced overall stocking numbers.

The Board's stocking proposal for 2024 is summarised below and reflects measures to mitigate risks affecting the cage fish: it is costed at £59,000, providing a saving of £4,000:

- (a) An overall reduction of 1000 in the number stocked, from 12,000 to 11,000 [4000 cage fish and 7000 lorry fish]
- (b) Stocking will be concentrated to early and late season when the water temperature and fishing conditions are optimal
- (c) 4000 cage fish will be stocked early March with 3200 released by mid June; the remaining 800 will be held over until autumn to provide larger stock fish [the risks are considered acceptable]
- (d) Some of the fish stocked in to cages will be a bigger size [up to 1.5 pounds] to make sure they meet size standards when eventually stocked in to the loch
- (e) The season will start a week earlier than normal on 9 March 2024
- (f) Stocking will again be reduced over the high summer months when water temperatures are high and catches are low

- (g) The reduction in stocking over the high summer months will largely accommodate the overall reduction of 1000 in total number stocked
- (h) Additional stockings will be considered if conditions are favourable during the high summer and into autumn; this offers flexibility without undue risk or costs.
- (i) We will retain the principle of weekly/regular stocking as this is considered essential to maintaining catches across the membership.

Apart from the need to make savings, other key issues taken in to account by the board when recommending this year's 2024 stocking plan included:

- (a) Reducing stocking by 1000 to 11,000 fish in total still gives a very healthy overall stocking density of almost 46 fish per acre, which is considerably higher than comparable fisheries.
- (b) To mitigate climate change issues, we are targeting stocking during periods of cooler water [spring and autumn] to maximise the best fishing conditions, with reduced or nil stocking over high summer. This means that the underlying impact of an overall reduction in stocking is negligible because fish stocked in the high summer effectively go off the feed anyway and catches are very low ie no point stocking in high summer if the fish are effectively uncatchable.
- (c) Even with a further reduction of 1000 fish, the low kill rate means that the stocking density during the main season is greater than it has ever been in the past, so anglers have more fish to target than ever before and therefore cannot argue that they are getting less for more.
- (d) The low kill rate and consequent high stock density puts unprecedented pressure on food supplies in the loch that may partly explain the dramatic reduction in aquatic fly life over recent years. Stocking less will hopefully improve fly life, or at least not worsen it.
- (e) The low kill rate results in some 10 tons of fish dying off in the loch annually [value circa £40,000 plus], which cannot be good for the long term health of the loch and is poor value for money. Reducing stock numbers will benefit all of these issues.

A detailed stocking plan will be prepared once the overall position has been decided by members. For the moment, we have ordered 11,000 fish from our suppliers; any extra fish will be ordered after the AGM, or later if needed as extra stockings.

If members reject the board's proposal, the following options are suggested:

- (a) Remain with the stocking plan included in the forecast accounts ie 12,000 fish split 4000 cage fish and 8000 lorry fish, and holding the cage fish over the summer as previously. This carries significant risks, as we experienced in 2023, and is not recommended. The cost is circa £63k with no savings. This option would require additional increases in subscriptions and other charges.
- (b) Reducing overall stocking to 11,500 fish at a total cost of £60,500, giving a saving of £2,500. Although providing some savings this option would require increases in subscriptions and other charges over and above those proposed in the Treasurer's Report [equivalent to an extra £10 on subscriptions].
- (c) Reducing overall stocking to 10,000 fish at a total cost of £52,636 giving a saving of £10,364. This option would significantly reduce subscription increases to circa £14.

Summary

To conclude, the Board's proposal to members is to reduce stocking to 11,000 fish as set out above, providing a saving of £4,000 in stocking costs that will help reduce the scale of increases needed in subscriptions and other charges. However the Board will take instruction from the meeting on the stocking plan for 2024.

Following the AGM, a detailed stocking plan will be agreed between the Honorary Secretary, Fishery Manager and our suppliers which will be posted on the website before the 2024 season commences. For the moment, we have ordered 11,000 fish from our suppliers to ensure continuity of supply; if required this will be amended in line with decisions at the AGM, although there is no guarantee that we can get additional fish of a required size at short notice.

AW Anderson
Hon Secretary
On behalf of the Board of Directors
December 2023

AGM 2024: PROPOSED CHANGES TO ARTICLES AND REGULATIONS

The following motions have been proposed unanimously by the Board and require to be voted upon at this AGM. They have been given continuity alpha references and are highlighted below in italics and underlined, with additional explanatory information as appropriate.

Proposed changes to the Articles of Association (Special Resolutions requiring a two thirds majority vote)

- (a) *The previously agreed threshold amount of £5000 above which all accounts and cheques must be signed by two Office Bearers will remain in force.*

The threshold amount above which two signatories are required to make payments or order goods, requires to be confirmed annually by members in accordance with paragraph 79 of the Articles of Association. The Board is not proposing any changes to the current limit of £5000 which has been in place for many years, therefore the meeting is asked to agree the above motion

Proposed changes to Operating Regulations (requires simple majority at AGM)

- (b) *An increase in annual subscriptions and other charges as set out below, effective from 2024 season*

The backdrop to assessing whether and how much to increase subscriptions and/or fishing charges is set out in the Treasurer's Report at **Paper 5.1** which forecasts a likely loss in 2024 of £25k. The Paper also explains the scale of rises that would be needed to avoid such a loss and suggests alternative ways in which the scale of rises needed could be reduced through cost savings from stocking [Paper 7.1], maximising other income sources and use of reserves.

The package of proposals to meet a forecast loss of £25k in 2024 is summarised below;

- A reduction in stocking of 1000 fish - saving £4000
- An increase of £3 in the 4-hourly guest rate - generating £1500
- No increase in member fishing charges
- A flat rate increase of £30 in subscriptions - generating £8400
- Allowing winter bait fishing - generating £1000
- Balance of loss £10,000 to be met from reserves

The meeting will already have voted on the stocking proposal at **Paper 7.1** for 2024 by the time these motions are considered. If the Board's proposal to reduce stocking costs by £4k has been rejected, then the above proposals to increase subscriptions and charges will need to be revised.

We cannot continue to use reserves to fund losses beyond 2024. The Association needs to live within its means, and that requires some hard decisions now on stocking policy and fee levels etc. Delaying these decision will only defer the problem to a later date and result in more significant increases at that time, which would potentially threaten the future of the Association.

Assuming the reduction in stocking costs has been approved, the meeting is therefore asked to vote on the above motions.

Proposed changes to Fishing Regulations (requires simple majority at AGM)

- (c) *With the exception of March, October and November [for which the latest fishing time is 5pm] the latest fishing time in the evening will be 30 minutes after sunset until capped at 10pm.*

The current rules require staff to start at 8am and allows fishing to 1 hour after sunset, which means a finishing time close to 11:30pm in the height of summer and finally closing up nearer midnight, leaving staff only 8 hours or less before starting their next shift.

This change is needed to allow staff to have a reasonable rest period between shifts during the high summer period. The change will also bring working hours largely in to line with legislation set out in the Working Time Directive [which is a legal requirement].

The affect on fishing will be negligible as the time constraint will only impact over a 6 to 8 week period during high summer; also evening fishing is less popular nowadays and of those that do only a few fish on beyond 10pm when that is an option.

The meeting is asked to vote on the above motion.

- (d) For purposes of clarification, trawling is defined as fishing directly out of the back of the boat, either drifting or under power. It does not include side casting and allowing flies to swing around the rear of the boat whilst actively retrieving in the normal way. Note that this definition is a local one and may not fall within the definition used in international and similar competitions run externally.***

This is not a change to current rules but a clarification of the definition of trawling to avoid confusion with different types of casting and fishing techniques that are now in common use.

The meeting is asked to vote on the above motion.

- (e) Fly fishing from the bank will be allowed in the main loch throughout the year in accordance with the established Trout Fishing Regulations***

This is about maximising income sources and increasing membership. Allowing bank fishing would extend the scope of activities at Cobbinshaw and thereby make membership a more attractive proposition for some. Many other fisheries have combined boat and bank fishing with no issues.

The meeting is asked to vote on the above motion.

- (f) Any method fishing for trout will be allowed in the main loch after the normal season ends in compliance with related rules prepared by the Board.***

The Board approved this measure in seasons 2020 and 2021 under delegated powers. A proposal to allow it permanently was put to the vote at the last AGM and defeated by 3 votes.

The rationale for allowing bait fishing is in the board's view, overwhelming: it allows members to make use of fish that will otherwise die off annually in the loch - currently in excess of 10 tons; it provides additional income to the Association which is badly needed; it allows members to make more use of the facilities; it makes membership a more attractive all-round proposition for existing and prospective new members; and it increases the kill rate. Several fisheries allow it / have allowed it [including Harelaw Fishery this year in September] as a means of clearing out stock [that would otherwise die off] and generating income over the winter. Indeed, there is an increasing hard core number of anglers looking to fish over the winter when bait fishing is the main option.

The arguments against are mainly principled: against any form of bait fishing in a fly fishery; or they believe the fish all survive and bait fishers are 'stealing' next year's over wintered stock. Neither of these arguments hold water. Bait fishing as proposed would only be available in the winter after the main season, so it would not affect fly fishing in the main season. As regards high survival rates, that is a fallacy: we have definitive evidence that most - but not all - fish die off and can prove it to anyone that wants to sit down and discuss the numbers. As regards stealing next year's overwintered stock: yes, some of the fish caught on bait might be one of the few that could survive over-winter, but the numbers of such fish would be inherently low compared to the fish caught that would not survive.

The board's proposed rules for bait fishing would limit catches to the established kill limit with no catch and release and a limit on size killed.

Members need to look at this issue objectively from the perspective of what's good for the Association as a whole going forward. Members should not be considering it on the basis of 'if I don't want to do it no-one else

can'. Bait fishing will not affect the fly fishing season but will provide income to the Association and encourage new memberships. The board acknowledges that this is a sensitive issue for some but in truth it is an add-on to our existing activities that applies out with our main fishing season and does not adversely affect our underlying ethos as a fly fishery.

In our current circumstances of very low kill rate, high annual mortality and the need to maximise all income sources, the board feels that this issue needs to be re-considered by members at this AGM.

The meeting is asked to vote on the above motion.

The above 6 motions - *(a) to f)* - concludes the items to be voted on at the 2024 AGM.

AW Anderson
Honorary Secretary
On behalf of the Board of Directors
December 2023