

# Annual General Meeting 2016

## Minutes

**18:00, Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October**

**Marriott Forest of Arden, Maxstoke Lane, Meriden, CV7 7HR**

In Attendance for Fish Legal:

George Stevenson – Committee Member  
Mark Lloyd – Chief Executive  
Dick Vincent – Chair and Committee Member  
David Moore – Committee Member  
Georgina Miller – Company Secretary

In attendance – FL Member Clubs:

Long Eaton Victoria	David Kent
Trident Fishing Club	David Kent
Soldiers and Sailors Fishing Club	David Kent
Invicta (Cams) FC	David Moore
Warrington Anglers	William Malpass
England Fly Fishers Assn	David Moore
Tring Anglers	Dick Pilkington

In attendance – Other member organisations:

Get Hooked on Fishing	Sarah Collins
Thames Forum and CRT	John Ellis

In attendance – Individual Members:

Dick Vincent	Mark Lloyd	George Stephenson
David Kent	Sarah Collins	George Graham
David Moore	Chris Mills	Brian Owen
John Ellis	Tim McPherson	Guy Mawle
Dick Pilkington	Mark Owen	

Apologies:

Roland Caley

Proxies:

- - 480 Individual and club proxies had been received.

### **1. Welcome from the Chairman:**

Richard Vincent (DV) Welcomed and thanked the members for attending the Fish Legal AGM 2016. As there were more than 5 members present and the required number under the FL Rules is 5 to be quorate, DV declared that the meeting was quorate.

DV introduced himself and the other members of the FL Committee. He extended his condolences to RC the new Treasurer who was unable to attend due to a family bereavement. DV went on to introduce the other members of the FL team who were present

## **2) Chairman's Address**

**DV addressed the meeting and the contents of his address is reproduced below:**

*Before moving on to the other formal parts of today's agenda, I would like to say a few introductory words about our activities from the Chair's perspective.*

*Our mission remains unchanged-to protect the water environment, to fight for your fishing rights and to seek compensation for any damage to these.*

*Over the four years since taking on the role as your Chair I have been particularly focussed on working with the team to maintain very high standards of service to members, on clarifying and building our relationship with the Angling Trust and on growing the fighting fund that enables our small association to take on some of the biggest companies in the country, and win.*

*I trust that these continue to meet your wishes for FL. As we'll hear in more detail from Mark, we continue to build momentum and achieve some notable successes against these goals.*

*After several years of substantial surpluses, 2015/16 was a poor year financially for Fish Legal, although this was, in large part, as previously planned and anticipated. A large part of the increased expenditure was in fulfilling the commitment reported on over the last two years to utilise a large element of the exceptional surplus in 2013/14 on enhancing our capability to deliver services to members. Income was however well down on the previous year, which had included receipt of a substantial legacy and higher than average cost recoveries from legal cases, which were much below average in 2015/16. This is partly due to the timing of cases being settled or won, and partly due to changes in the court rules regarding cost recovery, which is a longer-term issue. However, the good news is that income from membership subscriptions increased although this was offset by increased costs due to recruiting further staff in the legal and finance teams and some one-off employment costs. Office costs were substantially higher than normal due to the acquisition of new software for case management and new broadband services to enable the team to access files remotely.*

*I am also delighted to be able to report that during the past year our legal team continued their excellent work winning and settling numerous legal cases, and handling more advice matters for you our members than ever before. However, the highlight of the year was our historic, landmark legal victory to force water companies to be subject to the Environmental Information Regulations. This effectively defined water companies, and other utilities, as public authorities and means that anglers (and the general public) now have the right to demand to know details of pollution and abstraction resulting from these companies' activities. Our plucky legal team have been fighting this case for over 6 years and took it to the European Courts and eventually to the High Court, where they beat three water companies and the Secretary of State.*

*Our tenacious team continue to be supported, as ever, by the Legal Advisory Committee, that group of very senior legal litigation and environmental professionals who, out of their passion for our mission at Fish Legal, give an incredible amount of their very valuable time for free to provide top quality advice and guidance to our team on behalf of you our members and really helps give us the edge at the sharp end. Their commitment and guidance is hugely appreciated. Thank You on behalf of all members*

*Your Committee has met on a number of occasions over the past year to oversee the activities of the organisation, receiving formal reports from the legal team and the executive on each occasion. We received a formal presentation by Investec, the investment managers to the fighting fund, on the performance and status of the fund, which looks in good shape-despite the recent market turbulence-as a result of performance from the investments and from a number of new legacies. Throughout the year your Committee has also provided ad hoc support and guidance to the Executive as well as keeping in touch with the legal team and providing support to them as necessary.*

*So, on all our Members' behalf, I'd like to thank the members of the FL Committee, Mark Lloyd, and all those who have served Fish Legal over the past year for their great efforts and success.*

*I will mention in this regard David Moore, who after a number of years' service on both the Fish Legal Committee as well as the Angling Trust Board, is standing down from the FL Committee as he takes up other leadership roles in the world of angling. I would like to say a special thank you to David for his tremendous contribution over the past years. We are in the process to find a successor to David and will update you all in due course.*

*I am delighted that all other members of the Committee have indicated their willingness to continue to serve and a motion to reappoint them will be made later in this meeting.*

*For my final thanks, I'd also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the value of the ongoing relationship we have with AT. Although you will recall that a couple of years back you approved some necessary changes to the FL Rules as regards the FL/AT structural relationships to ensure we meet the independence requirements of the legal authorities, our collaboration with AT over the past year has continued to flourish to mutual benefit. Over the past 7 years FL has grown from one and a half solicitors and a legal secretary to a team of four solicitors, a legal executive, and a legal secretary. This success is entirely due to the support of a growing membership. However as I mentioned earlier, the demand for FL's services from members is continuing to grow relentlessly and was at a record level over this past year. The team is already working a full stretch so without more funds we simply cannot deal with your growing demand. In addition, as I also mentioned last year, the cost recovery regime has now changed fundamentally such that the level of cost recovery potential for FL is majorly reduced. As you are aware, cost recovery has been a significant source of funds for FL in prior years, and we need to plan on much less from that source in future, which means we need to find the funds from other sources.*

*So please continue to be generous, and please get your club members, or the rods who fish your waters to join us or buy raffle tickets, or make a donation to our cause. We need more individuals to support us and AT if we are to avoid the need to increase club and fishery subscriptions markedly in future.*

*Please continue to support us. Please continue to spread the word. As you will hear from Mark in the next section of the meeting, the challenges to protect what we love are great. But with your support we can preserve what we have treasured since our childhood for subsequent generations.*

**3) Approval of minutes of prior year's AGM-**Members received draft minutes as part of the notice of this meeting and a copy of these are tabled before the meeting here for approval today.

There were no questions raised with regards to the minutes Dick Vincent presented the minutes which were seconded by George Stephenson, these were carried unanimously by a show of hands and the results of postal voting.

#### **4) Election of Officers**

The following members of the FL Committee and the Treasurer have indicated their willingness to continue in office. They are as set out in the notice of meeting: Dick Vincent, Jim Glasspool, Tim Goode, Mike Heylin OBE,

William Howarth, Mark Lloyd, Andrew Nathan, George Stephenson, and Andrew Wallace. It was agreed by those present that the election of officers could be dealt with en bloc.

Also I would like to thank Tim Goode for serving as our Treasurer over the past year. Now that Roland Caley, a very senior and experienced accountant, has joined the AT/FL team as head of finance and business, he is taking over the Treasurer role from Tim. I should therefore like to thank Tim on all our behalf for his work in that role over the past year and seek your approval for Roland to be formally appointed as Treasurer for the coming year. This motion was proposed by Dick Vincent and seconded by David Moore; The election of officers was carried unanimously.

#### **5) Adoption of audited accounts**

The annual accounts of Fish Legal for the year ended 31 March 2016 together with the auditor's report thereon have been laid before the meeting.

There were no questions raised on the accounts. Proposed by George Stephenson seconded by David Kent The adoption of the accounts was carried unanimously.

#### **6) Appointment of auditors**

DV thanked the current auditors Bostock White for the service they have provided over the past year.

As part of normal good governance procedures your Committee has carried out a review of its external audit service providers and after a competitive tender process is recommending the appointment of Adkin Sinclair as auditors for the coming year.

DV emphasised that there were no matters with regard to the prior service provision of Bostock White that your Committee wish to bring to your attention in connection with this recommendation. DV would like, on behalf the members and on behalf of the FL Committee, to thank Bostock White for their services to FL over the past years.

DV asked the assembled members to vote on the appointment of Adkin Sinclair this was seconded by David Kent. The motion was carried unanimously.

#### **7) AOB**

There were no items of business raised

#### **8) Conclusion**

That concludes this meeting. Thank you for your attendance and participation.

Meeting closed at 18:50