



## Member newsletter

November 2024

I hope this newsletter finds you well, I just wanted to get a newsletter to you before Christmas. What a coincidence that I am writing this update as storm Bert does its best to disrupt our lives bringing the second significant flood of the year to the Wye. I happened to be out and about when the first flood of the season was at its peak. Here are a few pictures:



Ross-on-Wye



Weir End

For the eagle-eyed among you, the flood did not put off two keen members at Weir End.



I never got to find out if they were catching as I only had boots on and could not wade out to the salmon hut. I was pleased to see them trying their luck together as my main concern, as ever, was for their safety. Floodwater fishing can offer some great fishing but always remember to consider your safety. I would love to know how they got on, I left impressed at their enthusiasm and for being sensible enough to fish close together to keep an eye out for each other.

It has been a great pleasure to meet so many members since the last newsletter went out. It has been noticeable that many of our more distant members have made the effort to come and enjoy fishing their club's waters. Many have been staying in local accommodation on extended stays. I am delighted to report that the majority enjoyed some great fishing, catching very well indeed.

That neatly brings me on to how well our fisheries have been fishing as autumn established itself. I have heard of some impressive catches, especially barbel, chub and pike. I would describe my own fishing as steady rather than spectacular, but I have been fortunate to catch some nice barbel in the 9lb plus range. I have to tip my hat to our chairman Rob who recently put his waders on to enjoy some float fishing. He had quite a session before retreating to the bank for a cuppa. His reward from twenty casts was twenty chub; what a session.

How have you all been getting on? Please let me know, email [rowac@dowling.xyz](mailto:rowac@dowling.xyz)

### **Members' work parties**

We have not had any organised events but fear not, work continues. The committee employed a contractor to carry out some much-needed work at Benhall. The now infamous "Dynamic Duo" have also been out and about at Weir End and Lower Weir End clearing and establishing a couple of new swims. Many thanks to Lyndon and Steve for their hard work, more on Lyndon later.

We will of course be organising some more member work parties in 2025. As ever, please feel free to do a little maintenance when you are out fishing. As a certain supermarket tells us, every little helps.

### **Club Competitions**

After the success of the first Chub and Barbel Bash event earlier this year, John Cheyne very kindly organised another that took place recently. Here is his report:

"This Autumns Chub & Barbel Bash was held on October 12<sup>th</sup> and a decent turn out of members enjoyed some great fishing across our waters. It was particularly nice to see junior members represented and they did a great job of showing some of the adults how to catch fish! For those of you who haven't attended one of these events, they are basically roving matches, where competitors photograph the fish they catch on an unhooking matt with a fish measure (supplied by the club) in the photo. At the end of the day, the anglers who have caught the biggest Chub and the biggest Barbel, win a prize. However, the main aim of the event is for members to meet, chat, fish together and then have a few drinks in the pub to swap stories and talk tactics. Chub wise we had two anglers in a tie for first place with 52cm fish. Allan Tennant and young Ray Bailey, so the prize was shared between them both. On the barbel front Stephen Williams had the largest fish at 65cm, but youngster Alex Welsh was so close behind in second place that Stephen very generously shared the prize and both members went home with some goodies."





We will be looking to run another of these Chub and Barbel bashes in the new year, so please keep an eye out for the date.

### **Pike event on 21<sup>st</sup> December**

John is also organising the club's first Pike competition following similar rules to the Chub and Barbel event. If you wish to attend, please sign up online here :

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ross-on-wye-angling-club-christmas-pike-social-tickets-1089047854449?aff=oddtcreator>

As I have already mentioned, there have been some really nice pike caught on waters already this year. What better reason do you need to take part?

## Wye legal action

There is much in the news currently about pollution in our waterways. The river Wye pollution issue gets a lot of press coverage. Many of you might be unaware that our club has an ongoing legal case against Natural Resources Wales. It is also difficult to not be aware of the Leigh Day case which they are advertising widely across many channels. We wanted to give you a summary of both from the club's point of view. Our club secretary Peter has written this report to brief you all on the club's position on both these cases.

### "TACKLING POLLUTION IN THE RIVER WYE

#### Our case against Natural Resources Wales

We are all well aware of the major threats to our river from pollution, particularly agricultural run-off, but how many of us know that our Club is driving a legal case to tackle the problem?

Represented by Fish Legal, in June 2020 we submitted a formal notification under Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) (Wales) Regulations to regulator Natural Resources Wales (NRW - see [Natural Resources Wales told to take action over River Wye pollution - Fish Legal](#)).

Fish Legal have used this notification mechanism before to good effect, and the aim of our notification is to force the regulator to investigate polluters (e.g. intensive poultry producers in this case) and come up with solutions to reverse the damage they are causing.

Our case focuses on NRW's regulatory failings, and for NRW to act we need a legal, technical finding of 'environmental damage' – and despite submitting our evidence we are not there yet (see [Natural Resources Wales conclude that there is no environmental damage on the River Wye - Fish Legal](#)).

However, the case continues. Fish Legal took Powys County Council to court over its failure to consider the effects of digestate spreading in the Wye catchment. Since then there has been a moratorium on planning permissions for new intensive poultry units in the Wye catchment in Wales. Most recently, we made a complaint to the interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales – the Welsh Government watchdog and equivalent of the Office for Environmental Protection in England (see [Natural Resources Wales referred to environment watchdog for River Wye pollution failures - Fish Legal](#)) and Fish Legal have also been lobbying the Welsh Government to close the gaps in regulation that are leaving the Wye exposed to continued pollution. The Welsh Government has now recognised the problem and are now reviewing the regulation of all land spreading in Wales as a result. We are feeding into that review (see [Welsh Government Takes A Significant Step To Reduce River Pollution - Fish Legal](#)).

There is no quick fix to addressing the huge proliferation of intensive poultry production in the catchment - the result of failures by the authorities to properly assess the terrible impacts of this industry on the river. But with Ross on Wye Angling Club driving action on the Wye, together with Fish Legal we have made significant progress which should, at least, stop the pollution increasing. Keep an eye on this newsletter for further updates on how the case progresses.

Ross on Wye Angling Club is a member of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal. Fish Legal's work on our important case is funded through membership subscriptions that are effectively pooled so that no one club has to face the cost of taking legal action on its own. Fish Legal is indemnifying us for the cost of instructing scientific experts, barristers and their in-house lawyers (who specialise in environmental damage to fisheries), who have focused on the most

effective legal means of achieving the club's ultimate aim of stopping ongoing pollution of the river. You can support the excellent work of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal by becoming an individual member - see their website for more information

<https://anglingtrust.net/>

Meanwhile in England...

You will probably have seen some of the advertising for a separate case driven by law firm Leigh Day in England. Ross on Wye Angling Club is not involved in the Leigh Day case.

Leigh Day is representing thousands of clients in a legal claim against the polluters of the River Wye, the Usk, the Lugg and their tributaries. The law firm is bringing a private law group action on behalf of local communities against Avara Foods, Freemans of Newent (FNL), and Cargill PLC (the Defendants) for their high intensity poultry rearing operations, which the claim alleges causes environmental damage to the catchment of the Wye. Claimants who have already signed up to join the group claim include wild swimmers, anglers, residents, business owners, kayakers and canoeists, wildlife watchers, dog walkers and more. They allege that they have suffered loss and damage as a result of the polluted river and land due to the high levels of phosphorus, nitrates, odour, noise and insects caused by Avara Foods, Cargill and FNL operations in the region.

Through this case these claimants are asking the UK courts to order these companies to stop their allegedly polluting activities and clean up the damage done to the region (a remedy called injunctive relief). For those who have suffered financial loss (e.g. businesses or property owners) they will also be able to ask the court for financial compensation."

Leigh Day is holding a series of promotional events in the region, including:

- Monday 02 December (18.30 – 20.30) – Rowing Club, Hereford
- Tuesday 03 December (18.30 – 20.30) – The Corn Exchange, Ross-on-Wye
- Wednesday 04 December (7.00 – 21.00) – Radnorshire Bowls, Llandrindo

Leigh Day is also holding weekly legal clinics at their Hereford Office on Wednesday between 12.00 – 15.00 at Broadway House, Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AR.

See [www.leighday.co.uk/our-services/group-claims/river-wye-claim/](http://www.leighday.co.uk/our-services/group-claims/river-wye-claim/)



# RIVER WYE POLLUTION LEGAL ACTION

## Roundtable Events for Local Businesses

If you are a local business impacted by pollution in the Wye, Leigh Day would love to hear from you.

Come and join us at one of our Roundtable Events in the following locations

### Monday 2nd December

Rowing Club, Hereford  
18.30 – 20.30

### Tuesday 3rd December

The Corn Exchange, Ross-on-Wye  
18.30 – 20.30

### Wednesday 4th December

Radnorshire Bowls, Llandrindod  
19.00 – 21.00

If you can't make it but you would still like to speak to us, we are holding weekly legal clinic days at our Hereford Office (Second Floor Office Suite, Broadway House, Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AR) every Wednesday between 12pm - 4pm.

To attend, scan the QR code.



**LEIGH DAY**  
LAWYERS AGAINST INJUSTICE





## **A cautionary tale!**

For all of you who enjoy keeping fish in your garden ponds, please take note. Lyndon has spent a lot of time over the years caring for a good stock of fish in his garden. He has made a lot of effort trying to keep an eye on any weak spots that may allow unwelcome visitors into his garden. All has been well for many years until waking up to this:



His camera trap revealed that somehow, despite his efforts, an otter had visited overnight. He is not sure just how the otter got access to his garden yet but in one night his fish stock was decimated. He would hate this to happen to you so, please have a think about what prevention measures you can take in your garden.

## **Committee news**

As I mentioned last time, the club five-yearly rent review on our club water is due next March. The initial rent increase proposed by the Duchy was an increase of 20%. This was discussed at length at our committee meeting and we all felt that this was unreasonable for a number of reasons. We agreed that the club would respond to the Duchy with a detailed explanation of our objections and the reason behind them. We also made a counter offer in our response. We are delighted to be able to inform you that the Duchy took note and substantially reduced the proposed rent increase. Their revised increase equates to a little under 5% which we have accepted after discussion at the last committee meeting. This is a great outcome; it means that we now know that our yearly rent is fixed for the next five years.

I cannot keep a good man out of this newsletter it would seem. Following the resignation of Julian from the club committee, we are delighted to welcome Lyndon as his replacement. We all wish to thank Julian for his excellent contributions during his tenure. We also look forward to the benefit of Lyndon's wealth of angling experience.

## **Finally...**

Let me know of anything that is on your minds, pictures of your angling adventures would be most welcome. Have a great Christmas, enjoy your angling and keep safe on those slippery banks.

Take care and tight lines

Chris Dowling

Email – [rowac@dowling.xyz](mailto:rowac@dowling.xyz)