

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION AND LEISURE
Wednesday 31st March 2021**

Officer: Mike Cox – Outdoor Recreation and Asset Manager

FISHERIES

Purpose of Report

To update the Council the work of Shrewsbury Town Fisheries

UPDATE

The last twelve months have proved to be challenging with respect to Covid-19. The Fisheries have had to follow the Government Guidance to the letter by closing the fishing and opening as lifting of lockdown restrictions have allowed. This was vitally important for the health and wellbeing of anglers and in particular members who live in Shrewsbury.

Despite the interruptions the Shrewsbury Town Fisheries have flourished as a sport and membership has grown massively to 1200 members to date. In July Oxon Pool opened after a period of development and an additional website and permit booking system to add control. This has proved to be successful and is now generating income with 47 new members to date.

Works, improvements and fishery maintenance have continued where it has been safe to do so. The Bailiff team has grown to 13 personnel who work well together to protect and maintain the fisheries. They have excellent working relationships with the Countryside Police Unit and the Environment Agency Enforcement/Fisheries Team.

Pollution of the Severn and its tributaries has also been a cause for concern for the Fisheries Co-ordinator and the Bailiffs. By working with Peter Lambert of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, the Severn Fisheries Group for the whole of the Severn, Action for Rivers and many other key individuals the need to stop this pollution is vitally important to our wildlife and fish habitats. With Salmon and coarse fish in serious decline everything must be done to reverse this trend and quickly. The dumping of sewage in Shrewsbury in the Severn and the Reabrook is significant. The Severn is a key focal point of Shrewsbury and may look well above the surface, but is quite poorly below surface.

Attention is brought to the current EA consultation on protecting salmon in the river and the extension to existing byelaws should be supported.

Future Plans:

1. Application to the Angling Trust Fishery Improvement Fund for 5 new platforms on the Emstrey Fishery to improve access for OAP and Disabled anglers in close distance to the existing parking area. This includes preliminary bank clearance and overgrowth work on what were former peg positions. The Grant is for £4000 of which our contribution is £2500 and 260 hours of voluntary work, that are added as a cost value towards the grant calculation, by our bailiff team. Total cost of project determined as £8000. 50% matched funding.

2. Application to the Environment Agency for 3 new disabled fishing platforms of high quality and purpose built. These are for the Mousecroft fishery to allow safe and easy access for fishing for disabled anglers and the prospect of use by SEN Schools in the future. These will also be essential for the up and coming Junior Academy. Also within this grant are two more river platforms for the Monkmoor fishery. This will take the number of new fishing platforms at Monkmoor to sixteen in number. The Grant is for £5,500 and is 100% funded by the EA.
3. Application to the Angling Trust "Get Fishing Fund" for a grant of £5000 to fund the setting up, operation and supply of equipment for the New Junior Academy this Summer. The Angling Trust will help us with the initial launch and provide approved coaches to help with youngsters or parents to "Get Fishing". They will fund bursaries for full recognised coaching qualifications and DBS registration for any of personnel also. All 13 Bailiffs on the fisheries want to go forward for full coaching training, qualification and registration. A recognised qualification is achieved by all who succeed.

This summer we will start with two promoted events for youngsters with the Angling Trust limited to 12 juniors at each of these events. This is limited this year as it has to be systematically controlled with respect to Covid-19. A new website section will be added to the existing site with an event booking system for applicants. It is intended that Young Shrewsbury through Adam Purnell will get involved as another part of the Academy so that coaches can help Adam with manpower and funding. I have two Tackle and Bait companies willing to sponsor the academy with product for use and supply.

4. Application for protection fencing for Oxon Pool Specialist to Angling Trust Predation Fund. This ideally needs to be submitted by 15th April. The fund is matched funding of up to £5000. At the moment Oxon Pool is surrounded by fencing that has not been maintained apart from some work on fencing to the entrances that we have recently replaced with new. The pool itself has over 60 large carp as well as large numbers of other fish species. The large carp to replace if stolen or attacked by predation would cost thousands to replace. Otter predation and poaching are the biggest risks.
5. The County Ground Fishing Platforms were completed last year. That last platform will commemorate the late Mr Barry Archer for his services to the fisheries. Incorporated in the plan was to replace four fishing platforms on Sydney Avenue of which were severely flood damaged. One was completed before the river came up; the others will be completed in time for the start of the river season on June 16th.
6. Mousecroft Pool Lane and Footpaths work continue this year with a face lift for the lane with a new stoned surface. The current lane gets very muddy and needs some care and attention. Additional footpaths from the car park to the newly installed path around the pool will be created as well as a kissing gate to the new path. These areas are very muddy and slippery when wet.
7. Mousecroft Pool Fish Stocking. To keep the pool productive and also for the benefit of the Junior Academy for youngsters to catch fish, it is planned to stock a small number of additional fish to revive the fish stocks. We need to carefully maintain the fish stock balance of the fishery. The fish will be stocked by the end of March.

8. Mousecroft Pool Fishing Pegs. The bailiff team will be installing a number of new fishing pegs to replace old ones. These will be done in house with materials supplied as part of a Grant last year of £2500 work of timber and nails. The fishing area on the far left end of the pool will be raised as it now covers in water due to the increased water level after our leak repairs last year to the pool.
9. Radbrook Pool Invasive Weed and Paths. Last year it was hoped to remove the invasive weed that has been irresponsibly put into the pool and spread. The Parrot weed has to be treated by a licensed contractor to eradicate it. Due to Covid-19 we could not do this last year. Hopefully this year we shall be able to complete this task. We have started to bark the paths and aim to complete this by May.
10. Oxon Pool Path Completion. We aim to complete the last small section of pathway near the car park with stone.
11. Reabrook Signs. 15 of the New Fishery Reabrook signs are to be installed in various locations on posts.
12. Monkmoor Fishery Lane. The lane has large potholes and deep tractor damage on the bottom half of the lane. Solutions are being considered hopefully working with the local farmer.
13. Doctors Field and Belvidere Woods Signage. To install boundary identity signs for these two locations.
14. Shrewsbury Weir Salmon Sign. To install a new sign detailing the new Salmon Protection Bylaw to support the Environment Agency.
15. Quarry and County Ground Fisheries Platform Inspection. All platforms to be inspected for damage and safety once the river levels have subsided to a level suitable for the inspection. Repairs carried out where required.
16. Shrewsbury River Classic 3 Day Festival. The Festival competition this year has been planned for 5th,6th and 7th October for a limited number of 54 competitors due to Covid-19. Last year's festival and all except two open matches were totally cancelled due to Covid-19. Hopefully we will be in a better place this year for all competitions to resume.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report is noted
2. That the Fishing Co-ordinator & Bailiffs be thanked for their work
3. That the Council supports the EA consultation on extension of Salmon Byelaws