



# West Wilts Fly Fishers Guild

Meeting Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 7.30pm at Leigh Park Hotel, B on A

## Present:

Malcolm Bond, Roger Henderson, John De Cesare, Kathy DeCesare, Gerry Barnes, Colin Burbedge, Robert Eadie, David Edwards, Tim Pullen, David Edwards, Maurice Dyer, Kevin Barber, Andrew Donaldson, Gordon Morse, Ron Jones, David Little, Neil Soni, Bryan Hussey, Ray Buckley-Humphries, Richard Arney.

Guests - Jonathan Woolfrey, Quentin Lillis, Anthony Baker and Dee Baker & son Stanley Baker

## Part 1

### Guest Speaker – Andy Mears of Wessex Water, Topic – ‘The Somerset Frome’

At our request Andy focused his presentation on issues we had asked him to address affecting The River Frome including the release of untreated sewage, sewage treatment works on The Frome, Combined Sewage Overflows and the level of water abstraction affecting The Frome.

Andy gave a very thorough presentation and answered the many questions raised by members.

He has made his PowerPoint slides (20 in total) available to Guild members – please contact Roger if you would like a copy emailed.

## Part 2

### 1) Apologies:

Jon Jonik, Richard Cripps, Robin Sewell, Simon Steele, Jonathan Owens, Andy Greatwood, Peter Marshall-Bailey, Russell Bond, David Griffiths.

Malcolm welcomed guests and prospective new members.

### 2) Minutes of March Guild meeting and matters arising.

Accepted without amendment. No matters arising.

### 3) 2023 programme updates inc:

#### i) Chew Boat Day Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April

Malcolm read out Jon's email of 2<sup>nd</sup> April sent to participants with arrangements for the day. 14 members are taking part.

#### ii) Social fishing day on Bushyleaze Lake, Lechlade, GL7 3QQ, in May

No-one has come forward to organise the day. If any member is willing to do this, please contact Jon or Roger.

#### iii) Coarse fishing week on The Frome with intro session Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July

Malcolm as the organiser gave an outline of the week. Kevin Barber has offered to provide tuition and guidance to any members who would like help with coarse fishing techniques. Malcolm asked members to let him know if there are particular coarse skills they would like to learn. Malcolm will email members closer to the date.

### 4) River Frome update –

#### i) Result of enquiry to the Environment Agency re: The River Frome

In February the Committee submitted five queries about The Frome (some long-running) to the Environment Agency as Freedom of Information requests. The very detailed reply from the EA will hopefully be included in the next edition of our News Roundup and on our website.

Roger gave a very brief outline of the concerns raised and the EAs replies.

Formally registering our concerns will mean they are logged by the EA. which could trigger action in the future. In **red** below are actions being taken by the EA as a direct result of the queries we raised.

**WWFFG Question 1.**

The EA takes water samples e.g., at Tellisford Packhorse bridge - What does the water sample analysis tell us about The Somerset Frome.

**EA response:**

A large range of complex chemicals are measured at Tellisford for a national program, The water samples are generally good but failing for Phosphate. A major issue is Sediment, as you noted with Wilts Fly Fishers. It is linked to Phosphate and is linked to channel modification.

Biological quality elements: Fish and invertebrates are classified as High both these are indicators of water quality. However aquatic plants are classed as Moderate. Plants are indicators of the presence of excess nutrients, an excess of plant nutrients leads to a process called eutrophication, growth in algae that can colour the river and cause drops in dissolved oxygen killing other river organisms.

**WWFFG Question 2.**

An impact report on the hydro power station at Tellisford was last done in 2013. Is a follow-up study planned to assess the environmental impact over the past 10 years?

**EA response:**

We are looking at the current ecological condition of the catchment upstream of Frome in 2023/24. **We will also look to review the previous report at Tellisford and consider the inclusion for further investigations in 2024/25.**

**WWFFG Question 3.**

We have been informed by people living south of Frome, that the river is “virtually dead” immediately downstream of a new housing development.

**EA response:**

**The site is showing some extremely poor results. I shall raise this with the monitoring team and Wessex water.**

**WWFFG Question 4.**

CSOs (Combined Sewage Outlets), we are told, are still ‘gushing’ untreated sewage into the Somerset Frome. Is the EA monitoring the effect on the water quality?

**EA response:**

The Environment agency does monitor CSO’s especially poor performing ones. This happens when specific issues have been highlighted such as excessive spill rates or complaints of gross pollution.

The Frequently spilling CSO’s are listed through negotiation by the EA with Wessex Water and they do monitor these, but these will not be all the CSOs on the Frome. The catchup of the sewerage infrastructure often lags behind house building.

**WWFFG Question 5**

The Somerset Frome has a grey/milky tinge - it never runs as crystal clear as it did when West Wilts Fly Fishers first fished it. Is the cause of this known?

**EA response:**

The upper River Frome is predominantly a heavy clay soils catchment with a flashy fast draining nature. As such I believe small entrained colloidal clay particles do contribute to cause a greyish tinge and reduced visual clarity. These clay particles don’t settle out as they are too small and are kept afloat (entrained) by interaction of electrical charges within the water column.

We have thanked the EA for the detail in their reply.

i) **Beaver in Wiltshire & Somerset - report by Natural England**

Roger gave the main findings of a detailed report published in March this year.

A total of 13 lodges and four burrows were recorded. All but one of the 20 dams recorded were found in the Somerset Frome sub-catchment (i.e. south of the town of Frome). Natural England estimate that there are 50 mature beaver in the area. A more detailed summary of the report in the Guild’s next News Round-up.

**5) New membership applications**

Membership applications by Jonathan Woolfrey and Quentin Lillis were both approved unanimously by the meeting.

**6) AOB**

No AOB items raised

**Meeting ended 10.00pm**

**Next meeting – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May at Mill Farm Fishery, Worton, Nr Devizes, SN10 5UW**

Social fishing afternoon into the evening with filleting & possibly hot-smoking demonstrations.

NB - Details to be finalised and circulated.

For those unfamiliar with Mill Farm Fishery visit [www.millfarmtroutlakes.co.uk](http://www.millfarmtroutlakes.co.uk)