



Cinder Hill Fly Fishing

Chairman's Report AGM 2023

Summary of 2022 Season

Last season saw some real challenges in terms of the weather, with high levels of rainfall early season followed by record high temperatures over the summer months and then more heavy rains in the last part of the season. There were excellent catches early season at both Piplye and Cinder Hill, but as the weather warmed up the fishing inevitably suffered.

The 3 months through July - September saw record breaking UK temperatures with virtually no rain, and this created extreme water temperatures and very low dissolved oxygen levels in our lakes. The aerator was deployed on several occasions, but conditions beat us this time, and with water temperatures exceeding 25 degrees Celsius and dissolved oxygen falling to below 3% we saw inevitable fish deaths, particularly in the middle lake at Cinder Hill.

Stocking recommenced mid September when the water conditions were acceptable. We experienced excellent fishing again at Cinder Hill in early October. Our extension to 18th November by our landlords went some way towards the loss of fishing in the summer. However, following the hot summer we then experienced exceptionally heavy rains into most of November which certainly ruined the last few weeks of the season, particularly at Piplye which was completely out of everyone's control.

Throughout the season Mark Orchin did some analysis of the catch returns collated by Alan Bearchell to determine any trends and build up a picture of how well each venue fished. Catch rates versus stocking at both sites were not as good as last season, being 61% (vs 73%) at Piplye and 66% (vs 77%) at Cinder Hill. However, catches were almost non-existent in the middle and bottom lakes at Piplye during September, October and November despite being stocked. This was similar to last season and is likely to be due to predation by cormorants, which has been highlighted to our Landlord for action.

Stocking

The stocking last season was planned on providing a reasonable head of fish in each lake and replenishing them as they were caught and I believe this was generally successful. Details and analysis of last season will be discussed further under a separate agenda item. To provide some more variety to our members, we plan to stock more Brown Trout, Blues, larger Rainbows, Sparctics and Tigers. The cost of stock has increased quite significantly and is set to rise further due to global events causing trout feed to rise. This was one of the reasons we had to increase membership fees by 5% this year.

Membership and Recruitment

Last season saw us reach our membership limit of 120 members in the Autumn. Successful Taster Days and promotion at the Ardingly shows contributed to our numbers swelling and it was necessary to start a waiting list. This season has seen a strong return of members, but some have not renewed for various reasons and their places have been given to those on the waiting list. As of 10th March we have 107 members. We have chased those that have not yet rejoined but with very little response so their badges will be offered to any newcomers.

Rent

This year is the last of a five year rent agreement with our landlord for all six lakes. We will be negotiating new rents for the next five years this summer. The landlord will undoubtedly want a

significant increase as he didn't get as much as he wanted for the past five year agreement, but we will try and keep it as low as we can to minimise the impact on membership fees.

Fishery maintenance

A total of six work parties were held last season and I would like to thank all those members that helped out. Most of the work parties were at Piplye, digging drainage ditches, clearing bankside vegetation and cutting/raking weed from the lakes. The weed razor was used three times to cut the broad leaf pond weed in the top lake at Piplye. However, neither cutting or raking will prevent the spread of this weed as it spreads through rhizomes in the mud. The Curly Waterweed was very prolific in both the top and middle lakes at Piplye and didn't die off even at the end of the season. The only way of removing the weed is to dredge the lake and this is something the committee are considering.

The state of track at Piplye was discussed with our Landlord and he is hoping to lay chalk onto the track this year to improve it and increase the parking area.

Shows

We attended both the Summer Show at Ardingly and the Autumn Show to represent our sport, both shows were well attended. We provided a full programme of demonstrations, tuition and Have a Go. We had a good number of adults and Juniors wanting to have a go and it was busy most of the time. We introduced over 100 youngsters to fly casting, many of whom were girls which is very encouraging. Overall a good number of people visited our stand and a number of new members were recruited. I would like to thank those members who assisted with erecting, dismantling, and manning the stand over both events.

Macmillan Day

In May we held a charity day for Macmillan Cancer Support at Cinder Hill lakes. Each member attending paid £20.00 for the day which included a barbeque lunch. In total there were 20 members and guests at the event plus volunteers from Macmillan. I would like to thank Laurie Storer for sponsoring the event, Jim Awcock for providing the meat for the BBQ and the many members that donated prizes for the raffle and bought raffle tickets. Despite the rather miserable weather, a total of £705 was raised for Macmillan. Also, some of the larger trout showed on this day and several were caught in the 4 - 5 ½ lb weight. The next Charity day is planned for the 4th June.

Courses and tuition

You may have read in the last newsletter that I am now a Level 2 Coach and therefore we are able to offer courses and tuition to all age groups again. If you know of anyone that wishes to learn or wants some mentoring please get in touch with me via the Cinder Hill email such that I can plan suitable courses.

Season so far

As of yesterday, Piplye saw 60 visits with 135 trout have been caught some of which were sparctics.

Kevin Reeves Chairman

10/03/2023