

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE
21 JULY 2021**

Officer: Mike Cox – Outdoor Recreation and Asset Manager

FISHERIES

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee with recent activities, junior development and policing of waters.

Permit sales

The Fisheries river season got under way on 16 June, after hard work to get all the fisheries ready on time. Delays were caused due to prolonged high river levels.

June is normally one of our busiest months for permit sales but we had added four extra months to last year's permits to compensate for lost fishing time due to COVID.

Shrewsbury Town Council Fisheries report that they have busier than ever and have exceeded last year's permit sales.

We are now approaching 1450 season permit members and the day ticket sales are up over 10%.

Improvements

Work has gathered pace at Sydney Avenue with four new platforms being built to replace old, worn or damaged ones. These have now been completed.

Monkmoor Lane needs to dry out in the next few weeks to allow new drains to be installed. This should prevent the surface from breaking up and allow us to alloy a stronger hard stone surface. The local Farmer has helped with the initial works for which we are grateful. It is anticipated the repairs to the lane should be completed this summer. In addition, two new platforms will be installed on the Monkmoor fishery to take the total to 18 fishing platforms.

Mousecroft Pool is to have three new platforms installed within the next three weeks which can be used by anglers with disabilities. There will also be improvements to the access lane, car park and footpaths. Once this work has been completed five new platforms will be installed on the Emstrey Fishery. This will improve access to all in the location close to the car park at the farm.

Oxon Pool is to have another part of the footpath finished with stone to complete another small section. The membership for this specialist pool is nearly full with 67 new members.

Junior Development

The work to launch the Junior Academy is in full swing with 10 individuals currently training as angling coaches. This has been organised through the Angling Trust with the support of the Environment Agency who funded 50% of the cost. The other half will be funded as part of an Angling Trust Grant of £2000 that was secured to help set up the Academy.

One of the 10 people being trained is our new academy team leader, Ian James, who will assist Andy Jones with the launch and supervision of the coaches during the junior coaching events.

A new section dedicated to this is currently being developed and will be added to the Fisheries web site. This will include an event time slot for individual youngsters to take part in coaching sessions with their parents and guardians. The entries will not be able to be seen by the public on the website. This gives added data protection and allows the numbers to be controlled and ensures correct allocation of coaches.

An education section for youngsters will be accessible online to educate about protecting our wildlife and the environment around us. The Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Angling Trust will be helping with this section.

Another important addition will be the support of Shrewsbury Town Fisheries for schools. The Severdale Academy has just received some support to allow SEN pupils to engage in fishing and the green spaces on our fisheries. They operate in their own protective bubble within the fisheries academy and they have been supplied with equipment to enable them to do this. They have already attended one fishing trip and it was loved by the children, with a lot of excitement for the next one.

Bailiffs

The Shrewsbury Town Fisheries now have 12 water keepers (bailiffs) who now operate on our fisheries. They each have their own areas of responsibility which includes general maintenance duties. They operate to the Angling Trust's guide to bailiffs that was formulated by the Environment Agency.

Andy Jones has arranged for Wildlife and Countryside Police Officer Nock to do joint patrols to further educate the water keepers on best practice, how to assist the police in the future and correct procedures with respect to protecting our fisheries and its practices. This will be on a rota basis.

In September we shall be looking to become involved with the Voluntary Bailiff Service of the Angling Trust. This will provide a wide range of additional education and workshops by the EA enforcement team for the further improvement of our Water Keepers (bailiffs).

Finally, through various sources, the Shrewsbury Town Fisheries have been identified as a blue print for other angling organisations to follow. This is very positive news for the Shrewsbury Town Fisheries.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.