

Animal Welfare Charter Sub-Committee – 1 December 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Animal Welfare Charter Sub-Committee** held on **1 December 2003** when there were present:-

Cllr Mrs M J Webster (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr Mrs S A Harper

Cllr J M Pullen

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J R F Mason.

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health & Community Care
H Meggison	- Environmental Health Assistant
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

Mr Watson, Rochford Angling Club

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs S A Harper declared a personal interest by virtue of being a member of the RSPB and EHPPS and of having made donations to IFAW, REDWINGS, AHT and ACT and of having subscribed to PETA.

Cllr Mrs M J Webster declared a personal interest by virtue of being a member of and either subscribing or donating to RSPB, RSPCA, PDSA, Blue Cross, IFAW, PETA, South East Essex Animal Welfare Organisation, Animal Aid, Hunt Saboteurs Association, League Against Cruel Sports, Cats Protection League, Cat Action Trust, Canine Defence League, National Trust, National Trust Rayleigh Mount Committee, Compassion in World Farming, Essex Wildlife Trust, Council for the Protection of Rural England, Council for the Protection of Rural Essex, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Badger Protection Association, Fox Watch, Sir Francis of Assisi Group, The Cinnamon Trust, Donkey Trust, The Brook Animal Hospital, The Vegetarian Society, The Vegan Society, The Rescuers Wildlife Centre and organisations concerning dancing bears in Pakistan and concerning bears in China.

12 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2003 were approved as a

correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 ANIMAL WELFARE CHARTER

The Chairman welcomed Mr Watson, from Rochford Angling Club, to the meeting.

It was noted that the Rochford Angling Club had bought land opposite Lubbards Farm and had dug its own lake. The Club had, in addition, leased a lake at Lowlands Farm, which had been stocked with carp. The Club has approximately 200 members, the majority of whom are from within the Rochford District. The Club is totally committed to the conservation of fish. The Club has a junior section with approximately 30 members. The juniors are taught to use barb-less hooks and shorter lines. It is unlikely, however, that many youngsters would be members of fishing clubs, as a result of the expense involved in joining a club. The average membership cost of clubs for a season is about £80.00, in addition to any joining fees and expenditure on fishing equipment.

At the Club's lakes anglers regularly catch fish and return them to the water. Anglers are encouraged to carry antiseptic which is used to seal any wounds or ulcers that fish may have before being returned to the water. In the vicinity of the Lubbards lake there are wild fowl, voles, foxes, squirrels and rats. A rat inspector is employed to put down bait for the rats; 8 different types of poison are used on a rotational basis in order that the rats do not become immune to the bait. Particular attention is paid to the safety of other wildlife when this bait is deployed. People are not permitted to feed the ducks at the Club's own lakes.

The Club has responsibility for maintaining the areas around Rochford Reservoir up to 6 feet from the water's edge. There is a particular problem with rats at the Reservoir, as a result of people feeding the ducks. There is a real concern about the danger of Weil's disease to children playing in the vicinity of the Reservoir. In addition, the geese foul the footpath. Every Monday someone goes around the reservoir collecting any lines, etc, which have been left around that could endanger wildlife.

The Club advocates the use of short, low breaking strain lines, as these are considered optimum with respect to the safety of other wildlife. Generally the species of fish determines the kind of line anglers use. The Club only allows the use of single, barb less hooks by anglers on its lakes and advocates the use of patented disgorgers to deal with fish that have swallowed hooks. Members were advised that such disgorgers were effective for barb less hooks. It was further noted that, should a fish swallow a line, it could often get rid of the hook itself if the angler cuts the line.

Responding to an enquiry relating to dead fish, Mr Watson confirmed that the Rochford Angling Club's main priority is to determine the cause of death; once

the cause of death has been established, dead fish are buried at sufficient depth to deter carrion creatures. Members were further advised that the Club only permitted anglers the use of one pound of ground bait on its lakes, as it was considered that anything in excess of this would be detrimental to water quality.

Carp acquired by the Club to stock its lakes are purchased from specialist suppliers and six samples of each species of fish are sent off regularly by the Club to check for disease, etc. A licence is required in order to move fish around the country. There is a concern that, under the new Environmental Agency arrangements, movement of fish is taking place without the issue of proper licences. Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the use of nets, Mr Watson confirmed that fish should not be contained in a net in excess of 4 – 5 hours and that care should be taken in handling fish; anglers usually carry a damp cloth for this purpose. Large fish need to be kept in separate nets from small fish to prevent injury.

Members were advised that the Club considered a period of approximately two months free of all fishing essential in order for fish to breed and recuperate after the fishing season.

The Rochford Angling Club displays notice boards at its lakes reminding people of the various angling regulations. Warning notices are also displayed alerting anglers to the dangers associated with overhead electric cables.

Members were advised that people can fish at Rochford Reservoir and at Stambridge Fisheries without the requirement to belong to a club. There is, unfortunately, no way of checking that people fishing in these areas have the proper rod licences, other than occasional checks by the Environment Agency bailiffs.

Responding to a Member enquiry, Mr Watson confirmed that there had been instances of koi carp being placed by members of the public in Rochford Reservoir and that terrapins had occasionally been deposited in the lake opposite Lubbards Farm. The Environment Agency offers advice and training with respect to fish management.

Members were advised that sea fishing was popular locally. Plaice, flounder, huss, whiting, bass, skate and cod were available in the sea on the East Anglian coast. Game fishing takes place at Wallasea off the sea walls. There are regulations stipulating a minimum weight for fish caught in the sea; any fish caught below this weight should be returned to the sea.

Concluding the debate it was agreed that officers should produce a first draft of the Animal Welfare Charter. A copy of the draft would be sent for comment to all those organisations who had been involved in this process and to the Police Authority.

14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 13 January 2004 commencing at 10.00 am in Committee Room 4, Civic Suite, Rayleigh.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm.

Chairman

Date