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Angling Club Support Scheme progress report

As part of our two year partnership contract with Marine Scotland to support Angling Clubs across Scotland we have pleasure in submitting our second progress report detailing all that has been going on and a reminder of the support details on offer to all Angling Clubs based in Scotland.

The scheme was launched back in August 2016 covering a two year period of support as a result of extensive consultation by the Scottish Government. It was recognised that changes to certain river classifications and the introduction of mandatory catch and release may have a potential impact on membership numbers for Angling Clubs.

The scheme provides direct assistance and guidance for clubs with marketing and promotion using the extensive knowledge, understanding and reach of FishPal across the country.

The Support Scheme has continued to gain real momentum with us now having some 80 clubs represented on the FishPal site with many more discussions with other clubs still at an early stage.

Angling Club Support Overview

The number of angling clubs across Scotland is significant and it is recognised there is still more to do to reach out to clubs who have not yet contacted us to explore the areas of help on offer.

In order to better collate angling club information, a number of refinements have been made to the FishPal site to allow clubs to register and start receiving support. Each club once registered is added to the new National Register of Angling Clubs. The sole purpose of this register is to make information on Angling Clubs easily accessible. It assists anglers searching for clubs via region, including club information, contact details, location, website links and helps anglers find and book fishing direct with the club.

To date we have some 80 Angling Clubs represented on our site and all have now been contacted to explain what is available under the scheme, not least to make sure everyone understands that all the help and support on offer is now completely **FREE** (see details below).

This has meant both a cost saving for each club and for those who have also went on to sell tickets or memberships on their club water with increased income too.

Since our last report we have continued to engage with clubs via email, mail, telephone and visits to clubs. Many conversations are still ongoing as individual clubs seek clarity with their own committee as to how to move forward our recommendations. We also have had initial conversations with another 16 clubs who are seeking clarity or more details on all that the scheme has to offer. Many of these calls were ahead of a forthcoming club committee meeting that would allow a fuller discussion at that meeting on agreeing next steps.

Before the support scheme was launched, any new Angling Club wishing to join FishPal would have been charged £200 plus VAT for a beat page on the appropriate river site. We would have also charged 10% commission on any fishing sold for the club too. The new “**free**” to use service that has been on offer since the start of the year is therefore something we hope every Angling Club can benefit from.

As the seasons on many rivers have now come to an end, we are already engaging with clubs to make sure each club is ready for the new season ahead in 2018. This means making sure all the text information is up to date, relevant, and that the contact details are correct.

The need to refresh the club beat pages with new photos and videos is also important as we seek to maximise promoting the club as fully as possible.

The new seasons prices for day tickets and memberships once agreed by the clubs committee all needs to be loaded as soon as is possible, so anglers can decide on booking their fishing or memberships as early as possible for the new season.

If events are planned for the new season then gathering all the relevant information and beginning to plan this into our communications time line helps make sure we are letting anglers know well in advance of the forthcoming event. This means inclusion in our newsletters and social media channels to help maximise the attendance at the event.

Angling Club Support - a reminder for clubs of all that is on offer “FREE”

It is important to recognise the help and support FishPal are offering can be split into three sections:

- **Supporting the club/committee**
- **Supporting and informing anglers and club members**
- **Helping the management and marketing of clubs and rivers**

Supporting the club/committee

Every club has filled out the specially designed registration form either online or by speaking to a member of the FishPal team who has manually completed the form. Once the form has been filled out, FishPal contact the club to find out more about the club and start to personalise just how we might be able to help them.

Each club has been offered the following free facilities to help promote and market their club. This includes photography and content writing tailored to their needs.

- A bespoke page on the FishPal site that can be found via an internet search. For some this was the first time the club had had an on-line presence. For others, a link from the new page back to their club website has been very helpful. This has enabled them to reach a new audience of FishPal customers.
- Detailed description of the clubs water which includes: length of water; pools; types of fishing available; best time to fish; permit types; fishing season; facilities available and much more.
- Up to seven photographs which include: water; facilities; parking; fish caught, etc.
- Location map with zoom in and out facility to find landmarks, beat boundaries, etc.
- Details of membership cost and/or permits for sale which include weekly and season tickets. Clubs have the option to add the FishPal booking facility.
- Five year average for salmon, sea trout and trout catches.
- Catch and release information.
- Weekly fishing report and individual beat/club reports.
- A link to the clubs Facebook page.
- A link to the clubs website.
- Information on how and where to book a day's fishing e.g. club secretary and/or local outlets.
- Club booking conditions.
- Club membership details include: contact; telephone; email address; Issue of permits via email or post.
- The angling club contact (normally the club secretary) receives an email or text message from FishPal each time an angler books and pays for a days fishing. The message sent to them includes the following: name of angler; contact details; number of days booked.
- The angling club have their own bespoke login facilities on FishPal to add fishing availability for different species. They can add permits or remove them off their page as required. Members of the FishPal team are on hand to help them add availability.
- Coaching sessions are available for new clubs on to how use the system.
- Each club can monitor the number of days sold, including checking the number of anglers booked each day. This allows the club to remove tickets and sell them in local outlets. The clubs River Bailiffs will know how many permits have been sold.
- Every time an angler fishes the club water they are offered the opportunity give feedback on their experience which is valuable to clubs seeking to learn from the anglers experience on their water.
- All financial statements are accountant ready.
- When an angler books fishing, we pay the Angling Club at the end of that calendar month via BACS and issue a summary statement to show all the details.
- The angler and Angling Club contact after booking some fishing will receive a confirmation email that includes the local contact details, breakdown of the booking itself which will include any club terms and conditions as required.
- FishPal has created bespoke booking engine changes exclusive to Angling Clubs for various types of memberships offerings. This includes an out of area membership for those living outside club boundaries.
- Creation of personalised multi permit offerings for the club, which can include the following: day; week; season; children; evenings, etc.

Practical look at an Angling Club as a Case Study

Part of the support package can include staff from the FishPal team going out and meeting members of the club and committee members, seeing and listening to the particular challenges that the club faces.

This allows for an Action Plan to be drawn up outlining just what can be done by way of personalised support for the club as part of our ongoing relationship building process.

For some clubs, this can actually mean multiple visits and attending club events throughout the season.

Here is a link to an updated note prepared after an initial visit including other activities we have undertaken, with actions and outcomes captured as a typical [Case Study](#) [Inverness Angling Club](#).

Here is a link to a typical [Case Study](#) of a club who has used multiple ticket options on the site. [Kelvin Angling Club](#)

Supporting and informing anglers and club members

FishPal prides itself on giving anglers the opportunity they need to find information about clubs in Scotland. This FishPal website information is available 24/7 via their desktops, ipads and mobile phones. Anglers can contact the FishPal offices Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and speak with a member of the angling team.

Anglers and members can access:

- Updated information daily/weekly/monthly.
- Latest Catches - updated daily.
- Latest Catches - we know regularly updating catches encourages anglers to go fishing.
- River Levels updated daily.
- Fishing reports - river and individual clubs.
- Latest availability of fishing that can be booked - daily, weekly, season permits etc.
- National Angling Club Register to purchase permits, email the club, visit the club website.
- Permits are emailed instantly upon payment and include statutory river regulations, fishery rules, as well as club regulations.
- Forthcoming club events shared on FishPal's social media pages and in FishPal newsletters e.g: introductory days for anglers new to the club; open days for anglers interested in joining the club; specialist days for sea trout, salmon, grayling and trout.
- Conservation measures applicable to the individual club and the reasons why. Club's can explain why they encourage the angler to support conservation.
- Catch and release information and how it helps with conservation.
- Video support on catch and release; best practice when handling all fish, with an emphasis on salmon and sea trout.
- Angling For All - the opportunity to fish club waters that were once kept for a few members.

- FishPal's network of contacts across the country means that if we are unable to help with a particular enquiry then it is very likely that we will know a contact who can help.

Helping the management and marketing of clubs.

FishPal have been adding new river sites to the system for clubs not represented on existing river sites. Content rich information has been created for the angler which includes: where and when to fish; methods to use during the season; season dates and more. Individual club pages are then linked to the new river sections.

- We have been working with SEPA to add river levels where possible. These have been added to the new site pages and are updated daily.
- Angling Clubs can now add and remove permits, monitor the number of days sold; access the number of anglers booked each day via an easy to read chart.
- Latest catches/releases can now be added instantly by the Angling Club, using the following options:
 1. Each club has a unique code which it uses to send a text message to add that days catches.
 2. The club can email daily or weekly catches to the FishPal office which a member of staff will then add manually to their page on the site.
 3. The club can log-in to their personal FishPal page to add catches for that day, week, month.
 4. Contact the FishPal offices Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and speak to a member of the Angling Club team who will manually add catches on to the club's page.
- When an angler books a days fishing they are sent the club's terms and conditions. Information on catches can be made within 48 hours of fishing either via phone, email or customer feedback form. Enabling the club to share good news via social media and in doing selling selling more permits.
- Promotion of Catch and Release as a sustainable method using information on best practice via a series of short films. Please see details below about "The Gift"
- Leaflet designed and available in print and pdf form to compliment the catch and release film.
- Angling For All - advice pages created for the following: New to fishing; children; disabled, corporate.
- Financial statements are accountant ready and stored in the club's own login site.
- When a permit is sold the club is paid by BACS at the end of that month. This helps clubs with cash flow to pay leases etc. Clubs now have the assistance of helping with the collection of Annual/Seasonal/Quarterly membership using FishPal's booking engine.
- Blog post and social media sharing. Information about the water, including why anglers should fish it and what the club can offer the visiting angler.
- All FishPal blogs have a link through to the Angling Clubs national register.
- Access to coverage in Trout & Salmon magazine within the fishing reports section. Club water recommendations in a "A Fishery To Try This Month".
- Social media help and support.
- Marketing plan and best practice advice for each club.

- Advertising across the FishPal site promoting angling clubs in Scotland, including publicity within every FishPal newsletter promoting clubs.
- FishPal newsletters have been sharing club information, news and events, along with recommendations where to fish and permit prices.
- Angling Clubs can send bulk emails to their membership using the FishPal system.

Communications

Angling Club Newsletters

To keep all registered clubs apprised of all that's going on across Scotland, we have now sent out two Angling Club specific newsletters which have been well received. Here is a link to the latest newsletter so you can see just what was all included.

<http://fishpal.com/SCOTLAND/AnglingClubs/NewsUpdates/2017-06-30/index.html>

Magazine inclusion

One of the key support tools we offer is the chance to be featured in the Trout & Salmon magazine within their reports page, called a "Beat to try this month". Since January we have promoted 18 clubs.

We have been working with the editor of Trout & Salmon magazine to arrange for further in depth features of clubs to be included within future editions.

The Gift Series Video

The "Gift" Series of short films highlighting best practice for catch and release have been really well received and have gone on to be shown at various events across the country. The films were commissioned in partnership with the Atlantic Salmon Trust and the Angling Trust and are all about raising the awareness of how best to catch and release a salmon.

FishPal sourced a well established production company with experience in producing films for the fishing sector on national television. Planning started in September and filming commenced during October 2016.

Three short films were produced in a dynamic and memorable way which explain good practice from hooking and playing a wild salmon, to the handling and release after capture by rod and line.

Context: The film illustrates the importance of industry best practice when catching and releasing a wild salmon. Dr Ken Whelan from the Atlantic Salmon Trust shares best practice from recent research. Support the careful return of salmon by giving the gift of eggs, healthy wild salmon, depositing their eggs in the river catchment. Promote salmon fishing for all.

Film 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqPFyohnMGk>

Film 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnanaQyC6oQ>

Film 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucE4KgHzsPM&feature=share>

Target Audience: Anglers who go salmon fishing.

User: The series of films received a positive response from all who have watched it. They have been shared on FishPal and the Atlantic Salmon Trust Youtube pages. The Angling Trust's National Regions Manager used the films as part of a series of angling regional forum events. Angling Clubs have requested links to the film to share with their members. The film has been shared on social media, including national fishing magazines along with a full page FishPal full page advert in the Trout & Salmon magazine and FishPal newsletters.

Feedback and Analysis

Clubs on the site can now track and monitor their feedback response online. They can see where their customers are coming from, e.g. local, national and internationally, along with seasonal trends of permits and type of species.

Anglers completing the customer feedback form after fishing can report the number of fish/species caught, along with their experience of the day. Any negative feedback FishPal's Angling Club team contact the club and discuss ways to help and improve customer care, maintenance etc.

Social Media and events

We have continued to share and like posts from Angling Clubs on FishPal social media using our growing customer base and even helped set up new club pages for Angling Clubs.

With a growing social media following on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Blogs and Youtube we have been able to share club messages across a wide reach to a large number of people.

FishPal have attended and organised Angling Club events and helped share best practices of other events that we are aware of.

National Sea Trout Event - June 2017

One such event that we helped to organise back in the summer was a National Sea Trout Event specifically for Angling Clubs to take part in. We contacted all the clubs and explained the concept which was to help introduce potential new members to the club on a specific night and fish for sea trout and get to experience the clubs facilities, meeting the members first hand.

Many clubs chose to get involved offering free fishing for those who attended and many other clubs decided to wait till next year to give sufficient time to organise a similar night on behalf of their club.

The night was well attended and some great reports of some good catches and importantly, anglers wanting to find out more about just how to join the club.

The evening was reported on in both our own newsletters and also featured in Trout and Salmon magazine.

Inverness Angling Club Salmon Festival - September 2017

During this year's Salmon Festival Inverness Angling Club organised an international spey casting tournament to celebrate the angling clubs centenary. Speycaster's from across the globe competed during the two day event on the club's water at Bught Park in Inverness.

Before, during and after the event, FishPal supported the clubs through it's newsletters and social media channels.

FishPal was represented by Anne Woodcock who hosted a ladies fishing day on day one, promoting female fishing and the clubs accessibility for all. During the day she spoke with a father and son party who had travel from Glasgow to fish the club water and purchased their permit on the FishPal site. They said that everyone at Inverness Angling Club are friendly and welcoming. The club water was the first place they caught their first salmon.

FishPal gave two prizes towards the clubs fund-raising raffle and helped sell raffle tickets on day two.

Report writing and FishPal Newsletters

One of the key ways we can help Angling Clubs with important messages they want to get out is via our river reports and FishPal newsletters that we send out each month. Including an article on an Angling club in one of our newsletters can make a real difference for the club. We currently have 4 different newsletters that articles can be included in namely, FishScotland, FishDee, FishPal and FishTweed.

Newsletter distribution has reached over 20,000 anglers and does make a real difference when sending news out about Angling Clubs.

Priorities for the next 6 months

With us now building strong relationships with clubs across the country, we are seeing clubs really start to benefit from our support. We will of course continue to have dialogue with each registered angling club in order to continue our personalised support, we can offer and have the club fully represented on the FishPal site.

For some clubs, getting on to the site and being able to sell day tickets or memberships has been really beneficial and for other clubs, simply having a way of helping any potential angler find the right local contact to speak too about how they can fish the clubs water has been enough. Being able to personalise what we can do has been the key here.

Those clubs that have not as yet either registered or indeed contacted us will become the focus of our efforts too, as we seek to make sure that clubs across the country are aware of the “**free**” support package on offer.

Further visits to clubs are also planned over the forthcoming months and further help in the planning of club days to support individual clubs will be a feature of our support.

As the fishing seasons come to an end on rivers across the country, the time is right now to get all the information on the clubs pages up to date and to ensure that any available fishing for sale, is added to their site page so anglers can start to book fishing and take out memberships for next year.

New Site Development Launch

We are also close to launching a brand new look and feel to the FishPal site which will have a direct benefit for all the Angling Clubs currently on the site as we are redeveloping each of the beat pages they have, to include many more features including better maps, more photos and videos, better descriptions of pools and an ability to personalise any other links to club site pages to help drive traffic to the Clubs own site pages.

The new site roll out will begin at the end of 2017 and take till early next year to deliver on our Phase 1 of the project with further phases planned to add more features and benefits which again will benefit Angling Clubs.

Summary

Our dealings with angling clubs continue to gather momentum with progress made with clubs across the country. The journey continues over the next few months, as we build on the relationships made thus far and work on engaging with those clubs that have yet to contact us.

If any Angling Club reading this report would like to discuss how we can help, then please do get in touch with our Office Manager Tom Carter on 01573 470612.

One final, very important point to remind all clubs is the support on offer for clubs is now completely **free of charge** for the period of our two year partnership.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any of the above.

Kind regards,

Mark Cockburn
Chief Executive