

SUFFOLK FLY FISHER'S CLUB – AN OVERVIEW 2018

This document has been produced to give a broad overview of the Club only

HISTORY – We have been running for over 50 years. Whilst we can't establish an exact date we know our 6th lease renewal is due this October, so we are celebrating the “half century” with an event on 25th August 2018. We would be pleased to see representatives from Bidwells and Trinity College.

MEMBERSHIP – We currently have just over 90 members. We are mindful that the average age of Members is in the 65+ bracket. A good number of new joiners are those approaching retirement. We are in the process of actively trying to attract Junior and Younger Members. We are starting a Junior Section for under 18s and an Academy Section for 18 to 25 year olds. In broad terms, joining fees will be waived and subs will be considerably less than normal and not paid at all until a level of competence is achieved. We want to get youngsters out in the fresh air - participating in activities.

RECRUITMENT – Our main source of interest comes through our Website. Having over 31,000 hits, it is an invaluable tool. We also have posters in tackle shops. We give free trial/instruction days to anyone thinking about taking up fly fishing. One of our young Committee Members is setting us up on a Social Media site. This is to promote our Club and fly fishing generally and help our drive to encourage Younger Members.

TECHNOLOGY - Our Website is now “phone friendly” and we have promotional videos made “in-house” and a 3rd party review too. For the first time, Subscription Renewals and payments could be completed electronically. 90% of our Members consented on-line to comply with the General Data Returns Regulations. Just a handful of Members don't have email addresses, so we still have to use a few stamps and envelopes.

COMMUNICATIONS – Members receive a “Periodic Update” almost monthly. This contains news and bulletins and (more importantly) tips, advice, instruction and information on fishing and all fishing related activity. Our doors are always open and we encourage questions or comments. The Website can be used too.

COMMITTEE – We have a mix of ages from mid-twenties to an “almost” octogenarian. We only meet when absolutely necessary. Our business is conducted very dynamically. Every issue or item for discussion is dealt with immediately by email and a consensus or decision is reached very quickly. A good mix of experience, ambitions, aspirations, ideas, concerns etc. works well and helps us make properly investigated well-judged decisions.

THE NEW LODGE – We are grateful for the co-operation and co-ordination of Bidwells and Trinity College. All the required consents were granted and we erected the building ourselves. The whole thing was funded by donations from members. It provides a focal point and meeting place for relaxation, instruction and business.

EVENTS – We hold informal events at least 3 times a year which are enjoyed by an ever increasing number of participants. This encourages social interaction and builds team spirit.

FISHING – Is usually very good from Autumn to Late Spring. Most of the food source for our trout is sub-surface, so we mainly use wet flies. Dry flies can be very successful when there is a hatch. The depth of water makes Summer fishing extremely challenging - Water temperatures and a profusion of weed and algae make fishing virtually impossible. Advice on flies / equipment/ techniques etc. is always freely available to members.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT – We aim to provide good fishing access for members and to set aside as many habitats as possible for wildlife. The meadow is a great feature which we cut in late summer and then leave alone for the rest of the year. It's a haven for plants and insects, drawing in birds and animals. Some years provide a spectacular display of wild orchids too (not guaranteed!). Natural meadows are real assets and are under huge pressure elsewhere.

3rd PARTY ORGANISATIONS – We have a good working relationship with Natural England and the Angling Trust. Whilst they have a particular interest in the Cormorant population, they are pleased to see our set-up.

CHALLENGES – **Weed** restricts our fishing opportunities. Cutting and pulling is hard work and not very productive. **Algae** are potentially a very serious threat. Notwithstanding that some contain toxins, a whole colony can die off in 48 hours depleting oxygen creating a catastrophic fish kill. **Trees** are aging and need constant management. **Erosion** through wave action causes major problems on the sea wall and, to a lesser extent, to the soft bank surrounding the lake. **Stages and Platforms** need constant repairs and replacement. **Cormorants** in Loompit Grove have increased in number to a peak of 3000 plus in December 2017. They not only take fish but they cause severe damage to many others. We are granted a licence by Natural England to take very limited Control Measures.

THE FUTURE – We have the wherewithal to face our challenges. We have learned to work with nature to achieve results. The Committee have a common aim to serve our Members and take appropriate and timely action to maintain the integrity of the club and provide the facilities to satisfy their needs without detriment to other members or to the natural environment. We budget to keep subscriptions affordable. Fly fishing should not be an exclusive sport.