

# Southdown Angling Association

Members of the Angling Trust and Fish Legal

[www.southdownaa.co.uk](http://www.southdownaa.co.uk)

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**Dear Member/Prospective Member,**

We hope you are well and keeping safe in these Covid times.

You are receiving this circular as you are currently a member of the Southdown Angling Association (SAA). Your current membership will expire on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021; please see further information below.

The purpose of this circular is manifold:

- 1. To remind/inform you about some normal restrictions on angling activity – some of our members will have fished for the first time in 2020/2021;**
- 2. To update you on our arrangements with respect to the Covid pandemic;**
- 3. To tell you about our plans for 2021/2022**
- 4. To give you some information about Marle Green; and**
- 5. To give you important details about renewing your membership.**

There are a few other pieces of news/information too.

Our most important message is that if you wish to renew your membership for the 2021/2022 membership year, you should do this sooner rather than later as we are capping our membership numbers. For more information, please read on.

## **Coarse fishing close season**

The annual close season for coarse fishing is 15<sup>th</sup> March to 15<sup>th</sup> June inclusive. This applies to all SAA waters except:

- Marle Green; and
- Curl's Farm

This means that all our other waters (Boreham Street, Ironbridge, Middle Bridge, Pevensey Haven, Chilley Stream and the River Cuckmere) were closed to fishing from midnight on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021. They re-open after midnight on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021. You will need to renew your membership if you want to fish SAA waters on and after 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

The fishing close season is a legally enforceable byelaw for freshwater fishing with a rod and line across England. If you are caught fishing during this period you could face prosecution and be fined up to £50,000 (source <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-rod-fishing-byelaws-for-england-freshwater-fishing-with-a-rod-and-line>).

If you see people fishing illegally, pollution incidents, or dead or distressed fish, call the 24-hour incident hotline: **0800 80 70 60**

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## **Covid-19 restrictions**

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 we have followed the guidance of the Angling Trust (AT), closing waters to angling and re-opening in controlled ways as required. We have seen national lockdowns and more local restrictions with Tiers based on county and district council boundaries. At times, the guidance on restrictions from the AT changed at short notice.

Necessarily, SAA had to introduce additional restrictions to limit fishery use and safeguard anglers & fish welfare. SAA uses its Facebook and Website pages to update members and will continue to do this.

All SAA waters are located in East Sussex and within the statutory boundary of the Wealden District. It is important that you know this so that you understand future advice on recreational fishing. Where you live is also important, as you may not be allowed to or be advised against travelling to fish SAA waters, dependent upon the arrangements as the Covid restrictions are further lifted.

## Angling Trust statement on the resumption of fishing in England from 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021

In late February, the Government set-out a series of planned steps on the easing of lockdown restrictions in England. Tentative dates were given for each planned step that would be subject to review dependent on how well the pandemic was considered to be “under control”.

Step 1 was implemented on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. At this step, some of the current restrictions on outdoor recreational activity were lifted (source <https://anglingtrust.net/covid-19>). In Step 1, the following will apply:

- Fishing will remain permitted as outdoor recreation or exercise for up to 6 people, or in a larger group if everyone present is from the same two households. This is known as the “Rule of 6”;
- In principle, you may fish into or through the night. However, no night fishing is allowed on SAA waters until at least the 16/06/2021;
- The statutory stay at home restriction will be lifted but the guidance will encourage you to minimise travel outside of your local area; and
- Match fishing is permitted under controlled conditions, but no spectators are allowed. However, no competitions will take place on SAA waters until at least 16/06/2021.

As a result of proceeding to Step 1, all current SAA Covid related restrictions are lifted. This means that the limits on members visiting our enclosed waters do not apply save that Members should always follow social distancing measures and avoid close contact with others.

The Year Book for the 2021/2022 membership year includes guidance on what measures need to be adopted at different steps/stages imposed by the Government including any return to a full national lockdown, the “Rule of 1” and the “Rule of 6”. You must follow this guidance.

SAA and SAA members must always follow Government restrictions and guidance from the Angling Trust. You should never go fishing if you are feeling unwell.

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## Cinderford Pond

We have recently been advised that the owner no longer wishes to let the fishing rights to SAA. Although this is disappointing, the days we were allowed to fish has always been restricted and we have been unable to gain vehicular access to the water for about 1 year now.

Hence, fishing at Cinderford Pond is closed to all SAA members with immediate effect.

## Membership Cap

As other local fishing clubs, the demand for membership of SAA during the current membership year was unprecedented to the extent that we had to close our membership. We have welcomed back returning members, lapsed members and anglers that have retaken up fishing after a long absence. We also have many new members that have sampled fishing for the first time. You are all very welcome.

We do need to manage the level of membership numbers for many reasons including:

1. Managing water usage, principally a capacity issue – we have finite resources;
2. Consideration of fish welfare; and
3. Costs for insurance and affiliation fees and the like.

**So, for the new membership year commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021, we will cap the number of memberships available at 500.**

As an existing member, we urge you to rejoin as soon as new memberships are available. If you do not do this, it is possible that there will not be a place for you this membership year. Other local clubs are operating in a similar way.

Please use the enclosed membership form to renew your membership as soon as possible.

## Plans for 2021 - 2022

The principal changes for the forthcoming membership year envisaged are:

- a) SAA will affiliate to the Rother Fisheries Association. This will give access to many additional waters on the River Rother and Royal Military Canal in Kent. See further information below;
- b) Likely additional access to other parts of the Pevensey Haven, subject to agreement; and
- c) Membership subscription rates will be generally unchanged. Exceptionally, the rate for Junior members (aged under 14) will be increased from £2 to £10.

Because of Covid restrictions we were not able to hold an AGM in 2020 and have no immediate plans for one in 2021. The club's finances remain healthy.

We are presently in need of a club Secretary and new Committee Members. If you are interested in serving in any of these roles, please contact the Treasurer. Necessarily, you will need to be computer literate and be prepared to take on tasks to help with the operation of the club.

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## **Affiliation to the Rother Fisheries Association (RFA)**

For 2021/2022 we will be affiliated to the RFA. This will give SAA members access to additional waters on the River Rother and the Royal Military Canal (RMC). These waters provide different challenges and complement traditional SAA waters well.

The 2021/2022 Year Books will have a RFA sticker on the front page that is your authority to fish. The Rules, the RFA Booklet and Water Maps will all appear on our website in due course. You must follow the RFA rules when fishing those waters. Please note also that all RFA waters are subject to the annual close season.

The waters that will be available include:

1. River Rother at Blackwall Bridge and Newenden;
2. Potman's Heath Channel;
3. River Rother at Bodiam Bridge;
4. River Rother at Udiam Bridge, Salehurst Church and Robertsbridge; and
5. Royal Military Canal. Both banks from Appledore Dam to Iden Lock along Military Road.

The lengths of water are given in more detail on the RFA maps.

The Rother at Blackwall is a wide deep river, whereas further upstream at Bodiam and above it is much narrower. Expect boats and non-fishing recreational use particularly at Bodiam during warmer months.

The Royal Military Canal and Potman's is relatively shallow and can be weedy during the Summer months; well worth using a weed cutter before fishing.

It is well worth exploring these new waters.

## **Marle Green**

Given the number of new members that joined last year, we thought it would be useful to give you some background on this water. This has been partly prompted by a few behavioural issues that have occurred that cannot be tolerated and threaten our continued enjoyment of this fantastic venue.

SAA have enjoyed the fishing rights here since 2008. We don't own the land and therefore rent the fishing rights. Initially, the site was owned by Ibstock (a brick manufacturer) and currently by an organisation called Sacred Earth. Sacred Earth's principal aim is to preserve and maintain the land for community use, land-based social enterprises and rural micro industries. They also hold social events, weddings and training seminars.

**We do not have exclusive use of the water; instead we have to work around any planned events run by Sacred Earth. It is this way or no access at all.**

Please note and observe the closure dates for this water that have already been agreed with the landowner:

***Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April to Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April inclusive, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May to Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June inclusive, Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August to Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August inclusive, Friday 13<sup>th</sup>***

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**August to Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August inclusive, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August, Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September to Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October inclusive and Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October to Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October inclusive.**

We have recently reached agreement for the fishing rights with the landowner for the next 3 years that is great news. There were a few instances last year that threatened our continued use of this water:

1. People are littering the banks. Please take your litter home. SAA will be blamed for any litter, regardless of who is responsible;
2. Persons unknown have had a sh\*t on the bank/footpaths. There is absolutely no place for this disgusting anti-social behaviour. If you need to "go", pack up and go home. If it is an absolute emergency the landowner has offered the use of his compost loo on the far side of the lake. If this gets abused, we will lose the fishing rights; and
3. Somebody verbally abused a local resident who rightly complained that their access was blocked by a car either dropping off or picking somebody up at the access gate. This is totally unacceptable. If you are dropping someone off or picking them up, do it in the car park or away from the houses.

It is your behaviour above anything else that will determine whether we can continue to fish at this venue. Please behave in a way you would want other people to behave if you owned the land. If you are found to break any of our rules for this venue, you will be banned for life and all other local clubs will be informed too.

## Survey

In years past, we have undertaken surveys of water usage, member likes & dislikes and requests for improvement etc. We are going to do something similar again later this year. So, if you receive an email from an online survey platform such as "SurveyMonkey" we would be grateful to receive your responses.

## Membership Renewal

If you would like to renew your membership, commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021, please follow any one of the following steps:

*Please note that no Year Books will be issued until we have received your completed membership form(s) and your payment.*

### Method 1: Payment by Internet Banking (preferred)

Check your membership details on the enclosed form(s) and tick the relevant membership category. Note any corrections on the rear of the form(s).

One form for each member please. Additional membership forms can be downloaded from our website.

Send your completed form(s) to:

Southdown Angling Association  
Membership Renewals  
c/o 19A Rise Park Gardens  
Eastbourne  
BN23 7EY

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This year we are sending you a pre-addressed envelope. All you need to do is apply a stamp. If you forget to apply a stamp, we will charge you any excess SAA has to pay.

Use internet banking to pay your remittance directly into the SAA account as follows:

Account Name: **SOUTHDOWN ANGLING ASSOCIATION**

Sort Code: **20-27-94**

Account Number: **63110052**

Payment Reference: **the first six characters of your surname or your full surname if shorter**

## Method 2: Payment by Cheque

Check your membership details on the enclosed form(s) and tick the relevant membership category. Note any corrections on the rear of the form(s).

One form for each member please. Additional membership forms can be downloaded from our website.

Send your completed form(s) and cheque to:

Southdown Angling Association  
Membership Renewals  
c/o 19A Rise Park Gardens  
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BN23 7EY

This year we are sending you a pre-addressed envelope. All you need to do is apply a stamp. If you forget to apply a stamp, we will charge you any excess SAA has to pay.

Please only send cheques made payable to "Southdown Angling Association". Please make sure they are signed and correctly dated. Do not send cash.

## Method 3: Payment by Cash

Check your membership details on the enclosed form(s) and tick the relevant membership category. Note any corrections on the rear of the form(s).

One form for each member please. Additional membership forms can be downloaded from our website.

Renew in person at either Polegate Angling Centre in Eastbourne or Anglers Den in Pevensey Bay.

Payment by cash only; no cheques will be accepted.

We look forward to you joining us again