

Minutes from the Joint Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)
Held between the Hydneye Community Angling Club (HCAC) and the
Southdown Angling Association (SAA)
at the Fisherman's Club, Royal Parade, Eastbourne, BN22 7AA
on Thursday 28th July 2022 at 7.30 pm

Chaired by Andy Payne (member of both clubs)

Also present to represent both committees and answer questions from the floor- Peter Finnis (Hydneye), Jonathan Pang (Hydneye and Southdown), Grenville Weston (Southdown).

Andy Payne brought the meeting to order at 7.45 and went through the Notice of EGM in order to remind everyone of the purpose of the meeting. He then explained the order the meeting should take. Questions would be taken from the floor and answered if possible or recorded to allow consideration, moving forward. A vote on both resolutions would then be taken by each membership.

The meeting was reminded that discussion between the respective committees could only commence following approval at this meeting and the individual committees had agreed only to bring the resolutions to this meeting. The committees of both clubs had agreed independently that a merger was largely in the interests of both clubs and the majority of their members at this stage.

Discussion Points from the floor:

Nigel Haggard asked about the lease terms of both clubs. The HCAC have written leases for their waters. Hydneye Lake is on a 10 yr lease with the council and the Pevensy Haven and Wallers Haven venues are both on annual leases. The SAA has more venues of which Curl's Farm has a lease with about 7 yrs left to run. The other waters have various agreements in place of up to 3 yrs, many with a less formal Gentlemen's Agreement in place.

Peter Stradwick asked about the financial status of both clubs. Grenville Weston confirmed that the SAA has a major asset (owned land) and good cash reserves after a buoyant couple of years from increased memberships through Covid. Jonathan Pang also confirmed that the HCAC was also in a healthy state, having inherited a good pot of cash from the old PACES organisation. The Committees had already discussed separately the need to protect the assets of both clubs. Perhaps a legal covenant placed on the land at Middle Bridge would be required. The HCAC as part of its set up, already has a sub-committee working on applying for grants to benefit the finances of the club.

Club membership numbers were requested, the HCAC has about 160 and the SAA about 260.

Richard Bendall asked about the problems the SAA had with forming a management committee. Despite good membership levels the SAA has struggled over the past 20 years or more to form an adequate management committee. Should a merger not be agreed it is a real possibility that the SAA would have to be dissolved!

It was suggested that the clubs publish information throughout the merger discussions held by the merger sub-committee, to enable members of both clubs to be involved. (Draft constitution, rules etc.)

Concern was voiced by Malcolm Fuller over the lack of members attending the meeting. He asked whether proxy voting could be adopted to allow more members to be heard. It was pointed out that this is not always a good idea, since members would then be voting without having the benefit of being involved in the discussions at the meeting. Also if they were that bothered, why were they not at the meeting? The SAA constitution allows for voting to be carried as long as a minimum of 10 members are voting. The HCAC has no minimum.

continued

Minutes of the EGM held on Thursday 28th July 2022 (continued)

Loss of SAA waters over the last few years was brought up as a concern. Would the merger result in further losses?. The merger itself should not result in any more losses than if the clubs were to remain independent. All losses suffered by SAA over the years were either enforced by owners or because SAA had chosen to relinquish the waters due to being under-fished or offering poor value for money. A stronger organisation should in fact be better equipped to search out better waters. Possibly the constitution of the new club could require active new water searches by the management committee!

Several members asked about membership fees and some HCAC members were concerned they would pay significantly more for their fishing in the future. Some of these members suggested they only wanted to fish certain waters and were worried they would be paying for waters they were unlikely to fish. This was discussed at length and is likely to be difficult to meet with every ones expectations, however there was an opportunity to provide a better choice of waters that the majority of both memberships could appreciate and several people were members of both clubs anyway. It was pointed out that as a larger organisation there were several areas where the clubs could save money (insurance, Clubmate fees, admin costs, Angling Trust fees) and that fees did not necessarily have to increase. Also there were many ways in which memberships could be set up and these would have to be explored by the merger committee. It was noted however that, as a minimum, the merged club would need to be financially viable in order to remain sustainable. This will be addressed as part of the merger discussions.

A member asked whether the merger with Southdown would affect the Hydneye lease from the council. It was felt that so long as the new club remained a community based organisation and ran the club similarly to the HCAC, there would be no issues, but this will be explored as part of the merger discussions.

The name of the new club was brought up and discussed briefly. Perhaps this could be a competition for the members! It was felt this was an important issue and this would be a good way to involve members. The type of organisation was also important as it could possibly attract funding if set up in the right way.

Following the above discussions, Andy Payne briefed the meeting of the need to now take a vote on the two resolutions before the members and how this would be undertaken bearing in mind the mix of members in the room from both clubs. As a committee representative of both clubs Jonathan Pang was asked to vote only in the event of a tie.

Results:

Voting for Resolution A

“That the Hydneye Community Angling Club Management Team, in partnership with the Southdown Angling Association Management Team, be authorised to negotiate and jointly produce all necessary details for a proposed merger between HCAC and SAA to create a new single club.”

SAA: YES - 14 votes, NO – Nil votes; HCAC YES - 17 votes, NO – 3 votes

Resolution therefore adopted.

Voting for Resolution B

“To present finalised details for a further EGM, to be scheduled in due course, for the memberships to vote on the recommended proposals for enacting the merger.”

SAA: YES - 14 votes, NO – Nil votes; HCAC YES - 20 votes, NO – 1 vote

Resolution therefore adopted.

There were 15 SAA members present and 26 HCAC members of whom 8 were members of both clubs.

The meeting concluded at 8.28pm.