

Annual Governance Statement 2020/21: The Angling Trust

Introduction

The Angling Trust is the national governing body for the sport of Angling. It is subject to the Code for Sports Governance (the “Code”) and is committed to the principles of good governance.

The Annual Governance Statement provides the stakeholders, members, supporters and sponsors with an annual report on the governance performance of the Angling Trust.

This Statement is made in accordance with the Code for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (the “Reporting Period”).

Our Mission

Our governance processes support our mission to fight for fish, fishing and the environment, creating opportunities for all within society to experience fishing in a healthy aquatic world. Please see <https://anglingtrust.net/about-us/> for more details.

Governance Structure

The Organisation is a company limited by guarantee. Its governing documents, including the ‘Memorandum and Articles of Association’ are published on its website at <https://anglingtrust.net/about-us/governance-and-policies/governing-documents/>

Board

Role

The Board is collectively responsible for the long-term success of the Angling Trust and is exclusively vested with the power to lead it. George Stephenson, as Chair, is responsible for the leadership of the Board. The Board is the ultimate decision-making body and exercises all of the powers of the organisation other than those specifically allocated to other persons under either legislation or its memorandum and articles of association. It is responsible for setting the strategy of the Angling Trust and providing oversight of executive action but maintains a clear division between its management and oversight role and the executive’s operational role.

Meetings and Key Decisions

The Board meets a minimum of four times a year and also on an ad hoc basis where required. The table below sets out the meetings held in the Reporting Period and summarises the key decisions taken.

Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
Regular meeting	22/05/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When We Fish Again Campaign• Development of the membership proposition<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Marine○ Migratory○ Club/ syndicate affiliation○ Individual○ Wales○ Fish Legal○ Competitions• Strategy Day Proposals• Angler Magazine Proposal• Social Media Reach and Response• Website Development• Draft Accounts 2019/20

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Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club and Individual Membership figures • Strategic Risks • Safeguarding Update • BDO Draft Audit Reports (Finance & Governance) • External Board Effectiveness Review • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operational Resilience
Regular meeting	24/09/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to challenge the EA decision re Hoveton Great Broad via Judicial Review • Fisheries Bill • HPMA's • Take a Friend Fishing Campaign • Competitions • Missing Salmon Alliance • Fishing in Wales Project • AT/ATA Relationship • Membership rates to be frozen in 2020/21 • Strategic Risks • Approval of the Procurement Procedure • Safeguarding Report • Approval of the recommendations of the Nomination Committee • Approval of the recommendations of the Governance Committee, including adoption/ approval of the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AT/FL Nomination Committee ToR ○ AT Board ToR ○ AT/FL Director's Recruitment Process ○ AT Memorandum and Articles (<i>subject to approval at the AGM</i>) ○ AT Subscriber Member Rules (<i>subject to approval at the AGM</i>) ○ AT Remuneration Policy • Board Diversity – Lead Director identified • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report • Angling Participation Advisory Committee Report • Assignment of areas of responsibility to Directors • BDO Final Audit Reports (Finance & Governance) • Safeguarding Update
Strategy Session	24/09/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed discussions to shape the organisation strategy for the period 2021-2026
Company AGM	24/09/2020	Approval of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Statements to 31 March 2020

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Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
Regular meeting (including joint meeting with Fish Legal)	18/11/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Strategy Session to inform the Business Plan for 2021 onwards, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campaigning ○ Competitions ○ Functional Expertise and Support ○ Membership and Marketing ○ Resource to deliver a regional structure • AT Covid guidance • Anglers Against Pollution • Approach to Social Media • Role of Angling Trust Ambassadors • Staff Survey Results • AT relationship with the EA • Esmée Fairbairn Funding • Strategic & Departmental Risk Register review • Audit Completion Letters • Membership Rate – no rise in 2020 • Safeguarding Update • Board Diversity • Fishing in Wales • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report • Get Fishing Website • Angling Participation Advisory Committee Report • Assignment of Board Responsibilities • Corporate Calendar 2021/22
Subscribing Members AGM	28/11/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approvals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial Statements to 31 March 2020 ○ New Co-opted Director • Nomination of new Nominated Directors
Regular meeting (including joint meeting with Fish Legal)	24/02/2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to National Enforcement Manager • Building Bridges Project Overview • CRM Overview • Angling Times Outstanding Contribution • Stakeholder Relationships • Participation • Predation • Commercial Relationships • Staff Engagement • Strategy, Business Plan and Budget 2021/22 • AT/FL Service Level Agreement 2021/22 • Nomination Committee Report • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report • Safeguarding Update • Board Evaluation Proposal • Delegation of Authority • Angling Participation Advisory Committee Report • Nomination Committee Report

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Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Committee Report, including adoption/ approval of the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AT Customer Charter ○ AT/FL Environmental Policy ○ AT Problem Resolution Policy – Volunteers ○ AT/FL Whistleblowing Policy ○ AT/FL Document Control Procedure ○ AT/FL TOIL policy ○ AT/FL/ACA Code of Conduct for Directors ○ Angling Participation Advisory Committee Terms of Reference ○ Governance Committee Terms of Reference ○ Competitions Committee Terms of Reference

Composition

The Board is made up of a maximum of 12 board members and comprises the Chair, Senior Independent Director, plus four Independent co-opted directors, elected by the Angling Trust Board and four Nominated Directors who are nominated by the membership. The Chief Executive Officer is the only employee of the organisation serving on the Board in an ex-officio capacity. All appointments to the Board are made on merit in line with the skills required by the Board.

The following persons served as Board members during the Reporting Period:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role description</u>
George Stephenson	Chair
Jamie Cook	CEO
Mark Summerfield	SID, Co-opted Director
George Graham	Fish Legal Chair & Co-opted Director
Sarah Collins	Co-opted Director
Pete Emery	Co-opted Director
Jonathan Callcut	Co-opted Director
Tim Macpherson	Nominated Director to June 2020. Co-opted Director from July 2021
Peter Neale	Nominated Director
Stephen Beverley	Nominated Director
John Ellis	Nominated Director (appointed 28 November 2020)
Neville Fickling	Nominated Director (appointed 28 November 2020)

Board Responsibilities

The following areas of responsibility have been allocated to specific Board members:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – George Stephenson
- Governance - Peter Neale
- Safeguarding & Child Protection – Sarah Collins
- SID & Finance – Mark Summerfield

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Board Recruitment

Two Non-executive Board members were recruited during 2020/21. An extensive recruitment exercise attracted a significant number of candidates to apply for the two Nominated Director vacancies. The Nomination Committee reviewed the applications and subsequently all ten candidates were put forward for election by the membership. The successful candidates were announced at the AGM.

Board Evaluation

An external Board Evaluation was commissioned and took place during April and May 2020, with the final report being presented to the Board in June 2020. The conclusion of the evaluation was that the Board is functioning well. A limited number of recommendations for improvement were made and actions are being progressed.

Remuneration

The non-executive directors are not remunerated for their services. Their time is offered freely on a voluntary basis. Reasonable travel expenses are reimbursed when supported by appropriate receipts.

Committees reporting to the Board

The Board has established the following Committees, which report directly to the Board. Each Committee has clear Terms of Reference which identify its responsibilities and any powers delegated to it by the Board.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

Composition: ARAC comprises a mix of independent members of the Angling Trust Board and Fish Legal Committee, agreed by both bodies. At least one member of ARAC shall have recent and relevant financial experience and with competence in accounting and/or auditing. It is not necessary that the Senior Independent Director of Angling Trust be a member of ARAC. ARAC may from time to time co-opt other Board or FL Committee members to assist it in fulfilling its remit. The Chief Executive Officer of Angling Trust and Fish Legal shall attend ARAC meetings ex officio at the request of ARAC.

Role: Oversight of:

- Financial Reporting
- Internal Controls and Risk Management Systems
- Compliance, Whistleblowing and Fraud
- Internal Audit
- External Audit
- Commercial Activity

Delegated Powers: ARAC is an advisory oversight Committee and does not have executive powers. It has the power to make recommendations to the Board either in favour or against expenditure or other commitment by the organisation, by majority decision to assist the Board.

Meetings in the Reporting Period:

12 May 2020
7 September 2020
9 November 2020
8 February 2021

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The following persons served on ARAC during the reporting period:

Mark Summerfield (ARAC Chair)
Peter Neale
Stephen Beverley
Mike Heylin (Fish Legal Committee Member –until November 2020)
Tim Goode (Fish Legal Committee Member)
Charles Nichols (Fish Legal Committee Member)
Simon Bourne (Fish Legal Committee Member - joined ARAC joined February 2021)

Nominations Committee

Composition: Chair, CEO, three Non-Executive Directors

Role: Leads process for Board appointments

Delegated Powers: Lead process for Board appointments on behalf of Board

Meetings in the Reporting Period:

6 July 2020
26 January 2021

The following persons served on the Nominations Committee during the reporting period:

George Stephenson (AT Chair and Fish Legal Committee member)
George Graham (Fish Legal Chair and AT Director)
Sarah Collins (AT Director)
Philip Chamberlain (Fish Legal Committee member)

Governance Committee

Composition: AT Chair, AT & FL CEO or COO, two AT Non-Executive Directors, two Fish Legal Committee members, AT & FL Governance Manager

Role: To keep under review the constitutional and other governance documents, including written policies and procedures, and Terms of Reference to ensure the efficient and effective governance of the Angling Trust Ltd, Fish Legal and ACA Trustee Co Ltd

Meetings in the Reporting Period:

7 July 2020
20 January 2021

The following persons served on the Governance Committee during the reporting period:

George Stephenson (AT Chair and Fish Legal Committee member)
George Graham (Fish Legal Chair and AT Director)
Peter Neale (AT Director)
Jamie Cook (AT & FL CEO)
Roland Caley (AT & FL COO)
Karen Watkinson (AT & FL Governance Manager)

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Angling Participation Advisory Committee (APAC)

Composition: Four appointed persons with appropriate expertise, including AT Head of Participation

Role: To ensure the Angling Trust (AT) fulfils the requirements of its funded contracts with the Environment Agency (EA) and Sport England (SE) as set out in the current AT Business Plan and to explore the potential for expanding the scope and scale of work to increase participation in angling.

Meetings in the Reporting Period:

26 May 2020
21 July 2020
27 October 2020
16 February 2021

The following persons served on APAC during the reporting period:

Sarah Collins - Chair (AT Director)
Tim Macpherson (AT Director)
Keith Arthur (Volunteer)
Clive Copeland (AT Head of Participation)
Peter Emery (AT Director)

Strategy

The Board sets the strategy of the organisation. The Strategic and Business Plan for the period April 2020 to March 2021 was agreed at the Angling Trust Board meeting 19 February 2020. Further detailed discussions to agree the longer-term (2021-26) Strategy have taken place throughout the reporting period, particularly in the meeting 24 September 2020.

The Board continually monitors progress against strategy and the agreed Strategic Objectives, which for the reporting period were:

- Support and represent the interests of the membership and the wider angling community;
- Protect and restore freshwater and marine stocks and the environments on which they depend;
- Increase participation in angling and reverse the decline in rod licence sales
- Grow membership and fundraising income in all categories;
- To grow financial reserves to six months operating costs;
- Continue the unification of angling and fisheries organisations in the UK
- Deliver an improved angling experience by working in partnership with the Environment Agency

Risk Management

The organisation has effective processes in place to track and report on existing and emerging risks which could affect the Organisation's ability to meet its Strategic Objectives and/or cause damage to the organisation or its stakeholders. The objective is to support better decision making and management of risk through a comprehensive understanding of risks and their likely impact. This is fully detailed in the Risk Management Policy.

The Chief Executive is supported by the Senior Management Team to identify, review, monitor and report risks to ARAC and the Board.

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During 2020/21 a review of the Departmental Risk Registers was initiated by ARAC. It is anticipated that this work will result in a better understanding of the risks of not delivering the strategy, together with enhanced communication on the board of strategic progress and therefore improved risk management.

Annual General Meeting

The members of the Angling Trust meet a minimum of once per year. The Company exercises the powers vested in it by the Articles of Association and pursuant to legislation. It is not able to override the powers of the Board but has reasonable rights to consultation and constructive challenge.

In the Reporting Period the Company met as follows:

Company Meeting Description	Date
Company Annual General Meeting	24 September 2020

Subscribing Member meeting

Subscriber members meet at least once each year, in accordance with the Angling Trust Rules of Subscriber Membership. Last year's Subscriber Meeting took place on 28 November 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually and in compliance with the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020. Due to the difficulties of holding a live vote during a webinar, subscribing members were asked to cast their votes for the Nominated Directors ahead of the meeting and the results were announced during the meeting. John Ellis and Neville Fickling were elected to be Nominated Directors of the Angling Trust. Jonathan Callcut was also welcomed as a co-opted director appointed in March 2020. A Q&A session took place, with both pre-submitted and live questions being answered.

Jamie Cook introduced a series of presentations providing an overview of the work undertaken by the Angling Trust in 2020.

Meeting description	Date
Subscriber member meeting	28 November 2020

CEO/Executive Team

The CEO is responsible for the operational implementation of the strategy and manages the senior management team.

Staff Survey

The Board acknowledges its duties to employees both under the Companies Act and the Code.

It conducted a Staff Survey in the Reporting Period. 43 members of staff participated in the survey. The results of the survey were reported to the Board. A smaller Well-being Survey of staff was also conducted and a Staff Engagement Group (SEG) has been formed from volunteers who expressed a willingness to be more involved in staff engagement. SEG has been monitoring the action plan derived from the Staff Survey findings and working with the Senior Management Team to identify ways to improve communications within the organisation.

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Governance Framework

The organisation is committed to the Code for Sports Governance and having achieved compliance with the Code in 2017 has put in place an ongoing governance development programme to ensure that it continues to develop its governance practices and procedures. The recommendations from the audit of governance arrangements in October 2019 (final report received June 2020) have been implemented and reported to the Governance Committee.

Confirmation of ongoing compliance

The organisation has communicated openly with Sport England throughout the Reporting Period, and the Board has the view that the Angling Trust has maintained its status of compliant with the Code for Sports Governance.

Diversity

The Angling Trust is fully committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and to creating a diverse environment. We work with our members and partners to enable angling to be an accessible and inclusive sport that provides opportunities for enjoyment and achievement for all.

The Angling Trust has undertaken the following activity in the Reporting Period to increase diversity:

- Continued the Building Bridges initiative to educate migrant anglers on the legalities of angling in England.
- Provided funding from the Sport England Tackling Inequalities fund to 22 community angling organisations, supporting people from disabled, lower socio economic and ethnically diverse communities to remain active through angling, during the Covid pandemic.
- Continued to support delivery programmes engaging children and young people in angling participation, as part of the Lot 1 NASS contract delivery, throughout the Covid pandemic.
- Achieved a Level 2 rating for Child Protection and Safeguarding from the Child Protection in Sport Unit.
- Commissioned Insight on the barriers to Women in angling, and on the opportunities to increase female participation.
- BAME interventions are currently in development.

We continue to aspire to a position where a minimum of 30% of Board members are from each gender whilst working towards gender parity. During the Reporting Period we had two vacancies, both for Nominated Director positions, who are elected by our membership. We worked with Perrett Laver and advertised widely, including via Women on Boards, successfully attracting an excellent female candidate. However, she did not secure the membership vote and therefore was not elected. Therefore, we are not currently achieving our targeted diversity on the Board but we are committed to continuing efforts to achieve the target and will continue to carry out targeted advertising and work with Perrett Laver again to support our next round of Director recruitment.

All staff have been mandated to undertake the following training in the reporting period: Unconscious Bias; Equality & Diversity; Bullying Harassment & Discrimination. We are committed to increasing the diversity of staff, volunteers (including Board and committee members), participants and coaches and will carry out initiatives to encourage more women, people with disabilities and people from black and ethnic minorities to become more actively involved in all aspects of our activities.

Approved by the Board on 18 May 2021 and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board.

G L Stephenson

G L Stephenson (May 26, 2021 12:55 GMT+1)

George Stephenson, Chair