

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24: The Angling Trust



Introduction

The Angling Trust is the national governing body for the sport of Angling in England. It is subject to the Sport England '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 good governance commitment and performance of the Angling Trust.

This Statement is made in accordance with the Code for the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 (the "Reporting Period").

Our Vision

Protect, promote and develop angling for all.

Mission

To fight for fish, fishing and the environment, championing the joy of angling and all its benefits from grassroots to elite levels.

Principle Activities

- **Lobbying/Campaigning:** on behalf of members and the angling community to protect and improve fish stocks and the right to fish for them;
- **Angling and Environmental Projects:** working with the Environment Agency and others to carry out projects to improve angling and the water environment;
- **Membership and fundraising:** providing membership benefits to a wide range of categories of membership and raising funds for the Angling Trust and Fish Legal;
- **Promoting and developing angling:** working with Sport England, the Environment Agency and others to increase the diversity and number of participants in angling, the frequency of participation and the standards of safeguarding and coaching;
- **Competitions:** providing a wide range of Angling Trust regional and national competitions in England for all angling disciplines and supporting England's national teams to win medals;
- **Support Fish Legal:** collaborate closely with Fish Legal in accordance with a Service Level Agreement and other governance documents to enable it to take legal action to protect the water environment and the interests of its members.

Values

- **PASSION** – we place anglers and angling at the heart of everything we do.
- We **LISTEN** to our colleagues, members, stakeholders and the wider angling community.
- We **RESPECT** each other and ensure angling is inclusive and open to all.
- We are **ACCOUNTABLE**, transparent and strive to deliver the best for angling and the environment.
- We **COLLABORATE**, learn and grow together.

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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. The 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	24/05/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries Enforcement Support Services (FESS) Presentation<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Future of Participation - Key considerations and next steps• EDI Policy/ Transgender Position approved subject to continuous review• CEO Report<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EA NASS3 contract tender• App development• Bluefin Tuna• CFO Report<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of Xero accounting system• Operations Report (inc Welfare and Safety)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launch of Catchwise (Substance) project• Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report• Nomination Committee Report<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Search for a new AT Chair• FL and AT to hold virtual AGMs in 2023 and use external electoral services in 2023• Honours List• Cormorant campaign plan
Company AGM/ regular meeting (including joint meeting with Fish Legal)	26/09/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nomination Committee recommendations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Appointment of ATB Chair○ Nominated Director Applications• EA NASS3 Tender

Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender Position Statement Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appointment of an external moderator to review survey results • Accounts and Audit Report 2022/23 • Finance Report • Operational Resilience Report • Catchwise (Substance) Report • Water Quality Monitoring Network Presentation • CEO Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quasi International Competition ○ Trade associate memberships ○ Missing Salmon Alliance funding • Operations Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Insurance renewal ○ Safeguarding • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report
Additional meeting	26/10/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EA NASS3 Tender
Subscribing Members AGM	25/11/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the minutes of the AGM 26 November 2022 • Presentation of Financial Statements to 31 March 2023 • Appointment of Nominated Directors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Re-election of Neville Fickling ○ Election of Beverley Clifford ○ Election of Brendan Tonks as Welfare and Safety Lead Director
Regular meeting	12/12/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esmée Fairbairn Funding • Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy, including Transgender and Non-binary position statement • AT Code of Conduct • Grievance Disciplinary and Appeals – Members Policy • Volunteer Policy • CEO Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pollack ○ Bluefin Tuna ○ Salmon ○ Predation • Operations Report, including Welfare and Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inclusion of SMART objectives ○ CPSU Annual Review • Head of Finance Report • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual report on discharge of ARAC responsibilities

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Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports from Advisory Groups • Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 • Anti-doping Update • Sea Angling Manifesto
Regular meeting (including joint meeting with Fish Legal Committee)	05/03/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Competitions ○ Salcombe Estuary Netting Ban ○ Angling Participation Advisory Group • AT Business Plan and Budget 2024/25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Membership targets ○ Reel Education Programme • AT/FL Service Level Agreement 2024/25 • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report • Report from the Governance Committee • EA NASS3 Contract Award • AT Charity Proposal • Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) • Operations Report, including Welfare and Safety • Head of Finance Report • Board Terms of Reference

Composition

The Board is made up of a maximum of 12 board members and comprises the Chair, Senior Independent Director, plus five other 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>
Eric Prescott	Chair (appointed by the Board 26 September 2023)
Jamie Cook	CEO
Mark Summerfield	SID, Co-opted Director
George Graham	Fish Legal Chair & Co-opted Director
Sarah Collins	Co-opted Director (resigned 25 September 2023)
Pete Emery	Co-opted Director (resigned 9 September 2023)
Jonathan Callcut	Co-opted Director
Tim Macpherson	Co-opted Director (to 30 June 2023)

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Peter Neale	Nominated Director, Co-opted 30 June 2023 (resigned 25 March 2024)
Stephen Beverley	Nominated Director (served as Interim Chair until 26 September 2023)
John Ellis	Nominated Director (resigned 23 October 2023)
Neville Fickling	Nominated Director (re-elected 25 November 2023)
Beverley Clifford	Nominated Director (elected 25 November 2023)
Brendan Tonks	Nominated Director (elected 25 November 2023)

Board Responsibilities

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

- Anti-Doping – Stephen Beverley
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – Chair
- Governance – Peter Neale
- Safeguarding & Child Protection – Sarah Collins/ Brendan Tonks
- SID & Finance – Mark Summerfield
- Welfare & Safety – Sarah Collins/ Brendan Tonks

Board Recruitment

The search for a new Chair resulted in the appointment of Eric Prescott, 26 September 2023, at which point Stephen Beverley stood down as Interim Chair, having been appointed by the Board, following the unexpected resignation of the previous Chair in January 2023.

There were a number of changes to the Board during 2023/24, with Tim Macpherson reaching the end of his third tenure and Peter Neale, previously in Nominated Director role, being Co-opted into the vacancy created in June 2023. Four directors resigned during the period, and at the AGM one Nominated Director was re-elected and two new Nominated Directors were elected.

Careful consideration was given by the Nomination Committee to understand what skills are needed to enhance the board with recruitment to the co-opted vacancies.

Board Evaluation

The Board Effectiveness action plan has been monitored by the Governance Committee and planning has commenced for the next external board evaluation.

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. The Chief Executive is remunerated by way of salary.

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

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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:

15 May 2023
12 September 2023
22 November 2023
19 February 2024

The following persons served on ARAC during the reporting period:

Mark Summerfield (ARAC Chair, Angling Trust SID)
Peter Neale (Angling Trust NED)
Stephen Beverley (Angling Trust NED)
Tim Goode (Fish Legal Committee Member)
Charles Nichols (Fish Legal Committee Member)
Jamie Lamb (Fish Legal Committee Member)

Eric Prescott (Angling Trust Chair – from September 2023) – open invitation
George Graham (Fish Legal Chair) – open invitation

Jamie Cook (Angling Trust & Fish Legal CEO) – in attendance
Anna Neal (Angling Trust & Fish Legal Chief Finance Officer – until May 2023) – in attendance
Alka Patel (Angling Trust & Fish Legal Interim Head of Finance – from May 2023 to October 2023) – in attendance
Paul Gant (Angling Trust & Fish Legal Head of Finance – from November 2023) – in attendance

[Nominations Committee](#)

Composition: Chair, CEO, two 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:

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11 April 2023
15 May 2023
14 August 2023
15 September 2023
7 March 2024
28 March 2024

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

Stephen Beverley (AT Interim Chair –until September 2023)
George Graham (Fish Legal Chair and AT Director)
Sarah Collins (AT Director – until September 2023)
Philip Chamberlain (Fish Legal Committee member)
Jamie Cook (AT &FL CEO – co-opted for AT Chair appointment process)
Mark Summerfield (AT SID – until September 2023 for AT Chair appointment process 2023)

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:

19 April 2023
12 February 2024

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

Stephen Beverley (AT Interim Chair – until September 2023)
Eric Prescott (AT Chair – from September 2023)
George Graham (Fish Legal Chair and AT Director)
Peter Neale (AT Director)
J Mark Phillips (FL Committee Member – until November 2023)
Mike Greenwood (FL Committee Member – from November 2023)
Jamie Cook (AT & FL CEO)
Anna Neal (AT & FL CFO – until May 2023)
Paul Gant (AT &FL Head of Finance – from November 2023)
Stuart Sharp (AT Head of Delivery)
Karen Watkinson (AT & FL Governance Manager)

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Advisory Groups

In addition to the Committees of the Board, there are a number of Advisory Groups which provide operational support to the CEO and Senior Management Team. The Advisory Groups are chaired by non-executive directors of the Board and each works to an agreed terms of reference. The Advisory Groups are:

- Angling Participation Advisory Committee
- Competitions Advisory Group
- Freshwater Advisory Group
- Marine Advisory Group
- Salmon and Sea Trout Advisory Group
- Staff Engagement Group

Strategy

The Board sets the strategy of the organisation. The Angling Trust Strategic Plan 2023-28 “Fishing for Good” was published in May 2023. The Business Plan, which aligns to the strategy, for the period April 2023 to March 2024 was agreed at the Angling Trust Board meeting 23 February 2023.

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

- Profiling “angling for good” – increasing recognition across multiple audience segments and ensuring that we promote fishing as a fun and beneficial activity.
- Protecting the legal right to fish – combatting challenges to access, protecting anglers rights and challenge recreational and commercial over-exploitation of fish and the environment.
- Establishing access agreements – creating new, accessible opportunities for people to enjoy fishing within their communities.
- Providing inspiration for all – establishing role models and pathways to participation through coaches, volunteers and community leaders both locally and nationally.
- Increasing diversity, reach and promotion of angling – across participation, habitat improvement, competitions and environmental volunteering.
- Promoting the proven benefits of angling to mental health and wellbeing to the public.
- Fighting for fish, fishing and the environment – delivering successful campaigns to combat pollution, predation, over abstraction and unsustainable exploitation.
- Supporting efforts to combat illegal or damaging fishing activities.
- Delivering the “Gold standard” in competitions, creating opportunities for all from grass roots to elite participation.
- Developing pathways to international success across all disciplines.
- Ensuring good governance and Safeguarding – implementing a sport wide diversity, inclusion and equality strategy.
- Listening, learning and acting – embedding advisory group structures, welcoming input and feedback from across all core pillars of activity.

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.

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The Chief Executive is supported by the Senior Management Team to identify, review, monitor and report risks to ARAC and the Board. The risk register is now used as a management tool in the monthly progress meetings with department heads.

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	26 September 2023

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 25 November 2023. After a disappointing number of attendees at the 2022 AGM, the meeting returned to the virtual format utilised during Covid.

There were three nominated vacancies on the Board in 2023/24, and an external provider was used to ensure the smooth running of the on-line voting process.

The proxy voters and those present in the meeting, approved the minutes of the 2022 Subscriber Members AGM and Q&A session took place, with both pre-submitted and live questions being answered.

Meeting description	Date
Subscriber member meeting	25 November 2023

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.

The annual Staff Survey was conducted in January 2024. The results will be compared to the results of the 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019 staff surveys. The Staff Engagement Group (SEG) will continue to work with the Senior Management Team to look at ways to improve communications within the organisation. A successful Staff Day was held in September 2023 and provided an opportunity for staff to get together in person. A further virtual staff meeting was held in March 2024, to present the 2024/25 Business Plan and demonstrate how all departments will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives.

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.

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Confirmation of ongoing compliance

Sport England confirmed ongoing compliance with the revised Code in March 2023, with the exception of requirements 2.1 – 2.3, which are being managed separately through the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan process.

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:

- Updated our EDI Strategy document and launched a revised Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, which was peer reviewed by Sport England’s external consultants.
- Undertook a community consultation using independent consultants in respect of the participation of transgender anglers in competition events.
- Developed our recruitment campaigns and materials further with a view to reaching a broad spectrum of potential applicants. We continue to include a statement to the effect that we encourage under-represented groups to apply for vacancies included in adverts and Job Descriptions
- Introduced blind sifting in some recruitment campaigns to test the process, before we roll it out across all recruitment.
- Continued our Building Bridges initiative to educate migrant anglers on the legalities of angling in England.
- Continue our “Reel Education” programme that delivers engagement with Key Stage 1 (primary) school children.
- Continue our “We Fish as One” programme that ensures our delivery programmes reach a broad range of audiences across society.
- Using Sport England Together Fund, to build on the success of the Sport England Tackling Inequalities fund to community angling organisations, supporting people from disabled, lower socio economic and ethnically diverse communities to remain active through angling.
- Continued to support delivery programmes engaging children and young people in angling participation, as part of the EA funded NASS 2 contract delivery.
- Achieved a ‘met’ rating for Child Protection and Safeguarding from the Child Protection in Sport Unit.

We have continued our commitment to mandating all undertake the following training: Unconscious Bias; Equality & Diversity; Bullying Harassment & Discrimination; Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk. 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 16 October 2024 and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board.

Eric Prescott, Chair