

Annual Governance Statement 2024/25: 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 2024 to 31 March 2025 (the "Reporting Period").

Our Vision

Promote, develop and protect 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 usually meets once a quarter and also on an ad hoc basis where required. Meeting timings were slightly revised to better align with reporting requirements in 2024/25, resulting in the board meeting three times in the reporting period, as set out in the table below with a summary of the key decisions taken. During 2025/26 and going forwards the Board will meet at least four times.

Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
Regular meeting	26/06/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions Presentation – Meeting the Gold Standard • Draft Accounts 2023/24 • Ratification of decision to submit applications for FaSS funding • AT Charity Proposal –next steps agreed • CEO report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zander Position ○ Membership update ○ Comms review ○ Policy Update ○ Seals • Operations Report inc Welfare and Safety and Safeguarding • Head of Finance Report • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report • Strategy and Key Updates Meeting Notes June 2024 • AT/FL Social Media Policy – approved • Working with partners to establish a suitable legacy for a deceased colleague • Directors Social Event • UK Bluefin Tuna Association Update • Salmon Sea Trout Advisory Group Update • Legal Cases – Fish Legal continues to take cases that are based on strong legal foundations, not publicity seeking

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Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
Regular meeting inc. Company AGM	16/10/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluefin Tuna Policy presentation • Review of Comms across AT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengths ○ Weaknesses ○ Opportunities ○ Threats ○ Where do we want to be ○ Action points and next steps • Coaching Update • Progress against the Salmon Manifesto • Accounts 2023/2024 – approved • Insurance Renewal • AT Memorandum and Articles of Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Special Resolution signed to adopt the Mem and Arts • CEO report inc. Charity Status update • Operations Report inc. Welfare and Safety and Safeguarding • Head of Finance Report • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ARAC Annual Report to ATB ○ ARAC ToR • Nomination Committee Report • Governance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governance Committee ToR ○ Crisis Management Policy ○ Complaints Procedure ○ Remuneration Policy ○ Annual Governance Statement • Modern Slavery Statement annual review
Subscribing Members AGM	26/11/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the minutes of AT Subscriber Members Meeting 25 Nov 2023 - • Appointment of Nominated Director to the Welfare and Safety Lead role: David Wiltshire • Presentation of Financial Statements to 31st March 2024
Regular meeting (including joint meeting with Fish Legal Committee)	29/01/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO Report • Operations Report inc. Safeguarding • Welfare and HR Report • Angling Trust Business Plan 2025/26 • Fish Legal Business Plan 2025/26 • AT/FL Service Level Agreement 2025/26 • Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Report • Governance Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AT Volunteer Policy ○ Conflicts of Interest Policy ○ AT Code of Conduct ○ Customer Complaints Procedure

Board meeting description	Date	Key Discussions/ Decisions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safeguarding Adults Policy ○ Safeguarding Children Policy ○ Data Protection Policy ○ Data Privacy Policy ○ Information Security Policy ○ Procurement Procedure ○ Sustainability Policy ○ Zero Tolerance Policy ○ Safer Recruitment Policy ● Ratification of decision to accept the Government Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) funding ● Head of Finance Report

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
Jamie Cook	CEO
Mark Summerfield	SID, Co-opted Director
George Graham	Fish Legal Chair & Co-opted Director
Jonathan Callcut	Co-opted Director
Stephen Beverley	Nominated Director
Neville Fickling	Nominated Director
Beverley Clifford	Nominated Director
Brendan Tonks	Nominated Director (resigned 9 Oct 2024)
Karen Woolley	Co-opted (appointed 18 July 2024)
Claire Louise Fuller	Co-opted (appointed 17 Oct 2024)
Michael James Naylor	Co-opted (appointed 17 Oct 2024)
David Wiltshire	Nominated (appointed 26 Nov 2024)

Board Responsibilities

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

- Anti-Doping – Stephen Beverley
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – Chair
- Welfare & Safety (Safeguarding & Child Protection) –Brendan Tonks (to Oct 24), David Wiltshire (from Nov 24)
- SID & Finance – Mark Summerfield

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Board Recruitment

Following the resignations of a number of directors during 2023/24, there was an extensive open recruitment drive to attract new directors in 2024/25. The process was led by the Nominations Committee and resulted in a number of high calibre applications. Following careful consideration of the existing skills and skills gaps of the incumbent Board members, the Nominating Committee conducted interviews and made recommendations to the Board in respect of the co-opted vacancies, resulting in three new appointments.

The Welfare and Safety Lead director resigned from their nominated position in October, creating a vacancy which was filled by election at the AGM. Due to the specific skills required for this role, the Nomination Committee made recommendations to the Board over which candidates were put forward to the membership.

Board Evaluation

The Board Effectiveness action plan has been monitored by the Governance Committee and an external consultant was appointed to conduct the next external board evaluation in 2025.

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 claimed and 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 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 2024

10 June 2024 (year-end analysis)

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30 Sept 2024
20 Jan 2025

The following persons served on ARAC during the reporting period:

Mark Summerfield (ARAC Chair, Angling Trust SID)
Stephen Beverley (Angling Trust NED)
Tim Goode (Fish Legal Committee Member)
Charles Nichols (Fish Legal Committee Member)
Jamie Lamb (Fish Legal Committee Member)
Claire Fuller (Angling Trust NED – from 17 October 2025)

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

Jamie Cook (Angling Trust & Fish Legal CEO) – in attendance
Paul Gant (Angling Trust & Fish Legal Head of Finance) – in attendance
Stuart Sharp (Angling Trust & Fish Legal Head of Delivery) – in attendance

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:

11 June 2024
20 September 2024
28 October 2024

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

Eric Prescott (AT Chair)
George Graham (Fish Legal Chair and AT Director)
Beverley Clifford (AT Director)
Philip Chamberlain (Fish Legal Committee member)

Jamie Cook (AT & FL CEO) – in attendance

Governance Committee

Composition: Two AT Non-Executive Directors, two Fish Legal Committee members, AT & FL Head of Finance, AT Head of Delivery, 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:

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17 July 2024
10 January 2025

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

Eric Prescott (AT Chair)
George Graham (Fish Legal Chair and AT Director)
Mike Greenwood (FL Committee Member)
Karen Woolley (AT Director – from 18 July 2024)
Paul Gant (AT & FL Head of Finance)
Stuart Sharp (AT Head of Delivery)
Karen Watkinson (AT & FL Governance Manager)

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 work to agreed terms of reference.

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 2024 to March 2025 was agreed at the Angling Trust Board meeting 5 March 2024.

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.

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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. The risk register is 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	16 October 2024

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 16 Oct 2024.

The proxy voters and those present in the meeting, approved the minutes of the 2023 Subscriber Members AGM and Q&A session took place. Members were invited to vote on the election of a Nominated Director to the role of Welfare and Safety Lead Director. Electoral Services were provided by Mi-Voice and voting was managed independently.

Meeting description	Date
Subscriber member meeting	26 November 2024

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.

A Staff Survey is conducted annually and the results are compared to the results of prior year surveys to look for trends and identify any areas of concern. The Staff Day continues to be an annual event and was held in September 2024, providing an opportunity for staff to get together in person. A further virtual staff meeting was held in May 2025, to present the 2024/25 Business Plan and demonstrate how all departments will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives.

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Governance Framework

The organisation is committed to the Code for Sports Governance and having first 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.

Confirmation of ongoing compliance

Compliance with the revised Code was achieved in March 2023, with the exception of requirements 2.1 – 2.3 (which were subject to a separate process), confirmation of compliance with 2.1 – 2.3 was received from Sport England in November 2024.

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 anonymised 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 and 2 (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 3 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 8 September 2025 and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board.