

SLANEY RODFISHERS ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF AGM AND CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dear Member,

It gives me great pleasure to formally invite you to our AGM on Friday, 24th February at 7.00 pm in Redmondø, Bunclody. All are welcome to attend, both members and non- members alike and we hope to see a full house as we have many important decisions to make on the night of the meeting.

Over the past year SRT has continued to press for a resolution to the Clohamon situation but for 2016 our main focus turned to finding a solution to the number of both salmon and sea trout trapped in the Tail Race. The view of the Trust is very clear in this regard and at meetings and in correspondence with IFI we pressed for an urgent engineering solution , which would block completely the upstream movement of all migratory fish, while allowing for the safe, downstream migration of all fish species. Our arguments and pleas for action were un-successful and by mid-summer the Tail Race held very substantial numbers of both salmon and sea trout. An electrical fishing operation in August removed some 200 salmon and over 2000 sea trout. Shortly after this operation fish were again seen trapped in the Tail Race. It is obvious that this totally unacceptable situation, which poses a major threat to fish stocks in the river, must be solved without any further delay. Even as I write this letter early spring salmon may again be entering this channel.

Having canvassed our members we've had very generous offers of financial support to pay for an engineering study to assess what is required by way of a blocking mechanism, in or at the mouth of the Tail Race. We've relayed this to IFI and await discussions with them on the logistics of how such a survey might be progressed. We need to be assured by IFI that any solution found will not be blocked by any legal action in the future and that they, the County Council and NPWS will work with us, as full partners, in finding a solution to this very serious and detrimental issue.

As you will have seen from the website, the members of the Trust were shocked by the decision to close the River Slaney to angling in 2017 and we organised a major campaign in the hope of reversing this decision. A deputation from the Trust met with the Minister Seán Kyne in mid-December, when we had an opportunity to argue our case for the Slaney remaining open. We are most grateful to local TDø: John Paul Phelan, James Browne and to Minister Paul Keogh who facilitated this important meeting. You will shortly find on the SRT website our letter to the Minister confirming aspects of the discussions from that meeting. You will also find a recent reply from the Department of Communications Climate Action and the Environment, which provides very detailed information on why the decision was taken and the rationale behind the closure. The Board is seriously concerned regarding several aspects of this letter and look forward to a full and open debate on its content at the AGM.

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On a more positive note the Trust again organised a very successful visit to the upper Slaney for friends of the Trust and their families, to see salmon spawning. This was a great occasion and it was a pleasure to see the enthusiasm and interest shown by those who attended the event. Our thanks to The Defence Forces for hosting and assisting with this visit.

As you will see from the Agenda for the Annual Meeting we have quite a number of vital items to discuss and I'm sure airing these issues will lead to a robust and very productive debate. To ensure that we have an orderly and productive meeting could I ask you to present your comments, suggestions or concerns in a clear and succinct manner, and to allow adequate time for all questions to be teased out and fully debated. Please note that the 2016 accounts are now available on our website, www.slaneyrivertrust.ie, together with a number of important letters regarding the closure of the river and the issues regarding the Tail Race at Clohamon.

The membership of the Trust / Slaney Rodfishers is at an all-time low. All of the work carried out by your Board is on a voluntary basis and if you wish for the Trust to continue with our important work at this critical time, please be sure to join.

The subscription amount for 2017 is €40. As in previous years, it includes Public and Personal Accident insurance cover. Payment can be made by posting a cheque to Thomas Mernagh, Ballybawn Lane, Rathnure, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford made payable to **Slaney Rodfishers Association**, via our PayPal facility or at the AGM.

Looking forward to meeting you on the night of the AGM,

Ken Whelan
Chairman
Slaney River Trust
4th February 2017