

# SLANEY RIVER TRUST

Registered Charity No. (RCN) 20063214 CHY 17141

13 March 2025

Dear Members,

As we all look forward to the start of the new angling season next Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March, it is my pleasure once again to invite you to our AGM on Friday 21 March at Redmonds', Bunclody at 7.30 pm.

On the back of two very disappointing years for salmon fishing on the River Slaney, we are ever hopeful for some improvement for the season ahead. In-river environmental conditions have improved with increased summer rainfall in more recent summers. This we hope will reflect in a recovery in returning numbers. We understand recent salmon parr density surveys by Inland Fisheries Ireland indicate excellent recruitment in the Slaney system despite the poor returns of adult salmon. This highlights the resilience of this wonderful species, however there are risks from a reduced genetic base in the River Slaney salmon stock from insufficient spawning numbers. It is as ever, essential that we do all in our power to help protect this irreplaceable resource.

We have been fortunate to receive the support of The Rivers Trust Organisation to fund a twelve-month, part-time contract for the position of Project Manager. We have very recently appointed Dr. Ross Finlay to the Project Manager position and we are looking forward to the opportunities Ross's enthusiasm for the role will bring. Ross's knowledge and expertise through his background in fisheries science will be of great benefit for us at a time when we greatly need to increase our activity. We anticipate that the additional capacity through Ross's role will allow us to maintain a greater focus on the general health of the Slaney system as an ecosystem. This is particularly timely as there is currently a lot of activity in relation to formulation of sustainable agricultural and industrial policy such as the "Farming for water Slaney project". We need to make a strong input to any projects that will affect environmental policy affecting the catchment.

As detailed at last year's AGM we had the disappointment of the Clohamon tail race screen planning application lapse. Despite 7 years of consultation and a signed consent letter from Hogg Enterprises to support the application, we had one objection and that was from Doreen Hogg. Several meetings with the Hogg's, IFI and SRT followed but we were unable to convince her to withdraw the objection and the application then lapsed. This coincided with the creation of the Inland Fisheries Ireland National Barrier Programme. We agreed with IFI that they would lead on the negotiation of a solution for fish passage at Clohamon given the significant resources allocated to the programme. We had committed to provide every assistance we could to ensure progress and we have offered all technical data and reports which are significant given our thorough endeavours and hard work over recent years.

Continued

**Registered Office: Ballinabranna, Milford, R93WK06 Co. Carlow.**

**Trustees: P Boaden, R Burgess, B Connolly, D Dobbs (Treasurer & Deputy Chairman), R Harvey, K Murphy, S Orr, S Rubalcava, D Ryan (Secretary), K Whelan, C White (Chairman)**

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We understand from IFI, the programme teams have only recently been appointed and momentum only seems to be beginning. A few of our committee members along with other interested parties met with programme staff at Clohamon in recent weeks. We learned that the planning phase of the project is required to be completed in 2027. Through our efforts in the past two years, the passage problem at Clohamon has been selected among four priority projects for the National Barrier Programme. On that basis and considering the survey and planning tasks already completed by Slaney River Trust, we expected the programme team would indicate a fast-track approach to completion of this phase. From our discussions however, we were advised that they expect the planning phase to take considerable time. I am sure all members will be disappointed to say the least given that there is no progress yet to show since funding was made available last year. We need to do all that we can to press for progress on the project and we will discuss our strategy in detail at the AGM. Your views on this and other important issues will be valuable.

Thank you for your continued support of the Slaney River Trust. I look forward to seeing many of you on the 21st for your valuable input in our continued struggle. Importantly, please continue to support the SRT by joining in 2025 (see attachment on how to pay/join). By joining you will be covered under our Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance cover, details of which can be found on our website. You will also be emailed a password for the River Cam. Please also note the annual Slaney River Trust and Slaney Rodfishers accounts have been prepared and are available to view on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Colin White

Chairman

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