

Fishing – boss urges anglers to have their say on the future

Angling Scotland has reached a key decision point according to board member Gus Brindle. In its current format as an umbrella structure with no independent income stream, he claims it is simply not financially sustainable as a business.

He admitted that COVID-19 had stalled progress of the organisation, an umbrella organisation made up of officials from Scottish coarse, game and sea fishing governing bodies.

The inability of the individual boards to effectively consult with members and to run annual meetings to put forward proposals for the next steps has hampered progress.

Brindle (pictured) added: “Therefore, collectively as the sport of angling in Scotland, we need to decide on the future direction. I would strongly urge anyone who cares about the future of our sport to take time to get involved and have your say.”

If anyone would like any more information, or if any clubs would like to arrange a virtual conference to speak to their members, Brindle would be happy to arrange one.

Fife-based Brindle is also chairman of the Scottish Federation for Coarse Angling (SFCA), a post he has held for 14 years, and he said that identifying a successor needs to be resolved as a matter of urgency. The SFCA annual general meeting has also been pencilled in for Thursday, March 26.

The organisation has 1,363 individual members which includes 103 juniors. This is a 27 per cent increase in adult membership on last year however 500 people who joined in 2019

did not re-join in 2020 and there are another 834 who joined in 2017 and 2018 who have not re-joined since.

Anyone who joins between January 1, 2021 and March 31, 2021 will receive a membership running to March 31, 2022.

Brindle said: "If you are one of these individuals (who did not re-join), I would encourage you to let us know if there is something that we are doing, not doing, or if there is something that we are not providing, which has contributed to your decision not to re-join. Only by knowing what is wrong can we hope to address it.

"I would like to ask all members of the SFCA continue to help us to promote membership of the SFCA by encouraging all of the anglers they know to join.

"Being able to demonstrate a large, active and engaged membership plays a huge role in ensuring that we are able to keep coarse angling and coarse angling interests high on the agenda of Angling Scotland, sportscotland and Scottish Government.

"In addition to FREE fishing across the Lowland Canal network, all SFCA individual members again receive free public liability insurance cover for all of their fishing activities whether engaged in SFCA events or fishing on their own anywhere in the world."

There has been a pleasing increase in junior memberships – which are free – despite not running a development programme in 2020.

Brindle said: "This may have something to do with parents looking for activities for children to do during lockdown but, hopefully, 2021 will see our development activity return in earnest and we can get more youngsters out on the bank learning to fish."

COVID-19, he said, resulted in the cancellation of all international and all federation national fixtures but the gap has allowed officials time to reflect on the match structure and it is hoped to run a virtual meeting with all stakeholders to look at the way ahead and try to fix the format and calendar for 2021/22.

He added: "If the COVID situation permits, will run a series of selection events and a Scottish Lure Championships and look to field our first Scottish Lure Team in a Home International in 2022."