North West Water Authority

Dawson House,
Great Sankey,
Warrington.
WA5 3LW

4th December, 1974

To: Members of the South Lancashire Fisheries Advisory Committee (Messrs. R. D. Houghton (Chairman); T. A. F. Barnes; T. A. Blackledge; J. Johnson; R. H. Wiseman; Dr. R. B. Broughton; Professor W. Kershaw; and the Chairman of the Authority (P. J. Liddell); the Vice-Chairman of the Authority (T. Hourigan); and the Chairman of the Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee (J. R. S. Watson) - ex officio).

Dear Sir,

A meeting of the South Lancashire Fisheries Advisory Committee will be held at 2.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, 11TH DECEMBER, 1974, at the offices of the LANCASHIRE RIVER UNIT, WEST CLIFF, PRESTON, for consideration of the following business.

Yours faithfully,

R. E. WOODWARD,

Director of Administration

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last Meeting (previously circulated).
3. Water Bailiffs' Structure.
4. Fisheries within the Ownership of the Authority (schedule previously circulated).
5. "Coarse Fisheries" - Regional Fisheries Officer's Report.
6. Clitheroe Sewage Works - Discharge to River Ribble.
7. Unit Fisheries Officer's Report on Fisheries Activities.
8. Poaching.
9. Any Other Business.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

SOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11TH DECEMBER, 1974

WATER BAILIFFS' STRUCTURE

1. At the meeting of the Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee held on 30th September, 1974, a report was presented on the Water Bailiffs establishment within the Cumberland and Lancashire River Units. Outline proposals for the future organisation of the Bailiffing Staff were submitted.

2. It was resolved that the report should be submitted to the Local Fisheries Advisory Committees for information.

3. The report reads as follows:-

"1. At present there are differing arrangements for the organisation of bailiffs' duties in the Cumberland and Lancashire River Unit areas and there is no establishment for fisheries in the Mersey and Weaver River Unit area. The grading of the various posts in the two northern units is different and considerable difficulties have been experienced in the past in recruitment and retention of staff. The former Cumberland River Authority made certain recommendations for regrading of the bailiffing staff and regarding increasing the total complement. However, because of wage restraint policies, etc., these recommendations could not be adopted before the Regional Authority was formed, though attempts were made, not too successfully, to implement the proposals on additional staff. The Lancashire River Authority expressed the view that the bailiff force should be increased, and these comments have been reinforced by members of the Local Advisory Committees in both the Cumberland and Lancashire areas.

2. With the formation of the Authority it was clearly undesirable, if not impossible, to try to rationalise the bailiffs' pay structures on a piece-meal basis. It was therefore decided to look at the problem with a view to adopting a structure and grading for bailiffs which would be compatible with the requirements of the various areas of the region and which would allow for appropriate flexibility of operations and accommodate any increased complements which might be established in future. After discussions between the Headquarters, and Unit Staff concerned, proposals were put to the Personnel Department for approval, which took into account both the operational requirements of the Authority and the "unsocial" hours worked by bailiffs. While the proposals have now been agreed in broad principle there are a number of items relating to such matters as recognition of qualifications, career advancement, assimilation of grades, etc., which remain to be resolved. Further discussions are taking place and any new information which may be available will be presented to members at the meeting.

3. The proposals envisage divising each River Unit area into districts, each being supervised by a Fisheries Inspector, assisted by a Senior Bailiff. It is not envisaged that the proposals for merging River Units into one Rivers Division would affect the present district proposals, except for marginal boundary changes.

4. A brief summary of the duties of the Fisheries Inspectors and Senior Bailiffs is given below:-

Fisheries Inspector

Liaison between Fisheries Officer and the bailiff force, including overall supervision; reports on activities, incidents, etc., and comments on all offence reports; organisation and supervision of any special anit-poaching activities; organisation of rotas, special activities, time-keeping and general discipline.

Senior Bailiff

Assistance to Fisheries Inspector, as required, including supervision of the district in the absence of the Inspector; organisation and supervision, in conjunction with Inspector, of team duties such as netting, electro-fishing, fry-planting, etc.; contact with other bailiffs in district in regard to special problems, complaints, etc., as may be necessary.

(The Senior Bailiff would be an experienced bailiff and would be allocated an area, on which he would carry out normal bailiff duties, but this would usually be made smaller than that of other bailiffs to enable him to cope with the additional duties involved).

5. The bailiff force would be organised in relation to the individual district requirements, it being clear that the numbers involved would vary widely throughout the region. these requirements are to be reviewed in the near future in order that any appropriate provision may be made in the 1975-76 estimates.

6. The question of provision of housing accommodation has previously been raised by the local committees, as it was considered that this might possibly alleviate the recruitment problem. There is no financial provision for such expenditure within the current financial year and the Authority would no doubt wish to consider the overall policy in this respect before reaching any decision, as it is quite clear that this issue raises many fundamental questions. In the meantime it is anticipated that the new structure will improve the situation regarding the retention and recruitment of staff, but the question of the possible use of any of the Authority's existing accommodation in the relevant areas is being pursued, together with any assistance that the local authorities might be able to offer in this respect."

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

SOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11TH DECEMBER, 1974

FISHERIES WITHIN THE OWNERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY

1. A schedule of fisheries within the ownership of the Authority was received by the Regional Fisheries Committee on 30th September, 1974, when it was resolved that the schedule be referred to the Local Fisheries Advisory Committees for information and comments.

2. Copies of the Schedule have been circulated to all members of the five Local Fisheries Advisory Committees and members are particularly requested to bring to the attention of the meeting any omissions or inaccuracies therein.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

SOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11TH DECEMBER, 1974

COMMENTS ON ASSOCIATION OF RIVER AUTHORITIES' REPORT - "COARSE FISHERIES"

In accordance with the Minutes of the last meeting the Regional Fisheries Officer presents the following comments on the Report entitled "Coarse Fisheries".

1. Chapter 2 - Introduction

A number of points are emphasised in this chapter which, in total, amount to a statement to the effect that, in the past, there have been too many areas in which coarse fisheries have not received the attention and the expenditure to which their importance to a large section of the angling community and their revenue-raising capacity, might reasonably have entitled them. In addition, attention is rightly drawn to the need to train water bailiffs in aspects of their work other than purely enforcement duties, and the importance of close links between an Authority and the Angling Consultatives in its area. Such links can help to keep the Authority informed about the needs of anglers in its area, so that effort and expenditure may be applied to develop fisheries in ways best calculated to meet these needs.

2. Chapter 3 - A Brief History of the Legislation Affecting Coarse Fisheries and Angling in England and Wales

Much of the legislation relating to coarse fish which has been enacted during the last 100 years has been aimed at providing protection for them in various ways. This trend was started by the Freshwater Fisheries Act (The Mundella Act) of 1878 which introduced, among other provisions, a statutory close season for the first time. Pressures on coarse fish stocks at that time were, although in a different way, comparable with those on salmon today, and there was real concern among anglers in Sheffield, where Mundella was an M.P., for their survival. Since that time, however, anglers have developed an awareness of the need to conserve fish stocks, resulting in the almost universal practice of anglers returning coarse fish catches to the water. As a result, it is now not unusual to find, particularly on enclosed waters, that problems arise from over, rather than from under-population, so that thebenefit of this practice to conservation may sometimes be questionable.

The restrictions on the importation of coarse fish, and the more stringent health certification procedures, which will come into force on 1st April, 1975, are in line with the views of a number of Fisheries Officers of former River Authorities as a safeguard against the introduction of transmissible disease.

A clause in the original Water Bill aimed at extinguishing, under certain conditions, the Common Law right of a riparian owner to take action to prevent the deterioration or destruction of his fishery as a result of pollution. However, strong representations by a number of angling organisations resulted in this clause being omitted from the final wording of the Act.

3. Chapter 4 - Factors Affecting the Distribution of Coarse Fish

It is axiomatic that, given water of good quality and a suitable environment, coarse fish suited to that environment should thrive and reproduce naturally, so as to ensure a population which should never, in the absence of some disaster, require artificial augmentation by stocking. The repeated stocking of a water (other than an enclosed water) is unlikely to result in any significant increase in the number of fish in the water, nor in the size of anglers' catches. Any particular water can carry so many fish and no more, and those which are introduced are likely to move away rather than to produce any improvement in the quality of the fishing. This is a point which is all too seldom appreciated by many anglers, and large amounts of their money must have gone, literally, "down the river" in the form of introduced fish which did no good to anyone.

Control of weed is an aspect of fishery management which is increasing in importance due, in part, to the extensive development of weed in many rivers resulting from eutrophication due to sewage effluent and to fertiliser run-off from agricultural land. Manual or mechanical cutting must remain the safest method of control from the fisheries point of view, but these are also the most laborious and expensive methods, and the scale of the problem is compelling continuous development of chemical herbicides. Certain of these which have been approved by M.A.F.F. for use in water - and particularly some of the recent "granular slow-release" formulations - have a useful application to fisheries where water is not taken for public supply. Care in their application is essential, and their use is normally prohibited without the prior consent of the Water Quality Officer of the Authority concerned.

Extensive research in this field is carried out by the Weed Research Organisation at Kidlington, Oxford.

4. Chapter 5 - The Assessment of Coarse Fish Populations

As with other species of fish, this is a particular problem on large bodies of water, whether lakes or rivers, where the capture of fish in sufficient numbers to make possible any of the usual techniques for assessment of population is impossible. Contrary to the view expressed in the Report, angling results are considered to be among the least reliable indicators of total pupulation, depending, as they do, on the skill of the individual and on the willingness of fish to take the bait offered to them.

Experimental work has been done in North America on assessment of populations in lakes by the use of echo-sounding equipment. These methods involve complex problems, and are open to errors due to the movement of fish.

This problem is undoubtedly one of the most difficult facing workers in the field of population assessment, and is one which is not peculiar to coarse fish waters.

5. Chapter 6 - The Improvement of Existing Fisheries

The main points to be considred are well set out in paragraph 6.8, one of the most important being that dealt with in the preceding chapter. It is perhaps surprising that no mention is made in Chapter 6 of the importance of any improvement which can be made, permanently, in water quality. There are probably greater possibilities for improvement of fisheries in areas where the water quality may be marginal, and where, in consequence, a positive improvement may tip the balance from mere survival to effective establishment of a healthy breeding population, than on any other waters. Further, it is on such waters that the benefits of the improvement are likely to be most appreciated by anglers.

6. Chapter 7 - The Physical Improvement of Coarse Fisheries

The two most important aspects of this work are "fisheries engineering" and provision of access. The former expression covers work carried out, usually on rivers and streams rather than on still waters, in an effort to preserve and improve the natural characteristics of the watercourse. Paragraph 7.3 sets out a number of relevant considerations.

Satisfactory access, suitably signposted if necessary, is helpful to an angler who is a stranger to the water, and the provision of a firm stance, close to water level, with necessary trimming of any branches which might interfere with fishing, goes a long way to increase the appeal of a fishery to the angler. There are anglers who are prepared to force their way through beds of nettles and bushes in order to fish a strange water, but there should be no need for them to have to do so.

7. Chapter 8 - The Production of Coarse Fish

Technical difficulties in hand-stripping coarse fish, together with their very slow natural growth rate, render the artificial propagation and rearing of them unattractive, except in the case of carp, which are an important food fish on the continent.

The time required for growth to a worthwhile size makes necessary a large expanse of rearing pools by comparison with what is required for the rearing of, for example, rainbow trout. These can reach a marketable size in as little as eighteen months, whereas roach, for example, may require four or five years to grow to a reasonable size for stocking, and even then they are not large fish.

As a practical means of producing coarse fish for stocking, when required, the use of a number of natural pools as "fish banks" is probably the most effective approach. Natural reproduction takes place and the young fish are removed by periodic netting. If a number of pools of adequate size are available, it should normally be possible to meet the demands for fish which arise. If, in addition, a few artificial drainable pools are available, odd batches of fish obtained by netting or electric fishing can be held temporarily, if they are not immediately required, and can be rapidly removed without having to net them.

The simplest arrangement for operating a "fish bank" is a lease of a suitable pool with the right to net it as required, subject to safeguards for the owner to ensure that it is not totally denuded of fish. With present pressure on fishing space, however, it is not easy to find suitable pools which are not already used by anglers.

8. Chapter 9 - The Regulation of Coarse Fisheries

Certain aspects of fishery regulation are embodied in statute law, but in view of the need for such legislation to be effective nationally, it may be less flexible than local legislation in the form of byelaws. These can be tailored to suit local conditions and problems, and, subject to the normal procedure, can undergo periodic amendment in the light of experience. Few anglers have any clear understanding of the statute law dealing with fisheries, but many are familiar with an Authority's fishery byelaws. It is important that byelaws should be framed in the simplest possible language so that anglers may readily understand them. Further, they should be kept to a minimum compatible with achieving the required degree of regulation, and they should not, if it can be avoided, make provisions which could lead to abuses. (See paragraph 9.6 (iii) in this connection).

9. Chapter 10 - The Control of Fish Diseases and of Imported Fish

Reference has already been made under Chapter 3 to certain of the more significant aspects of forthcoming changes in import regulations and health certification procedure. Whilst these changes should do much to prevent the importation and distribution, within the country, of non-endemic diseases, and should prevent additional infections of endemic diseases, they will in no way eliminate fish disease.

There are three aspects of disease generally:-

(i) Epizootic disease, which may attack a certain species, or more than one (usually related) species, regardless of their being healthy and living in a suitable environment. The results of such an attack can be devastating, (e.g. U.D.N. in salmonids, and the unidentified disease of roach which struck this species in the Midlands during the middle sixties).

(ii) A localised outbreak of disease induced by stress factors, which could be due to such causes as post-spawning exhaustion or long-term sub-lethal toxic metal pollution, or even to over-crowding. These conditions weaken the resistance of fish to pathogens and they may eventually succumb, (e.g. fungus infection of spawned fish in June/July, locally common, or a similar infection of fish living in marginal conditions in some canals).

(iii) Parasites. These occur widely throughout any natural population of living creatures and represent a specialised form of infection which is, perhaps hardly classifiable as a "disease". The impact of parasitic infections on a population depends on the degree of infestation and the general health of the hosts. Parasites generally aim, for their own good, at living on their hosts without actually killing them.

10. Chapter 11 - Accessibility of Fisheries to Anglers

The majority of fishing rights enjoyed by anglers are available to them through their membership of an angling club or association which leases the rights from the owner for the benefit of members. This chapter therefore relates primarily to the provision of fishing by Water Authorities, and should be read with that in mind.

At the same time, mention should, perhaps, be made of the arrangemnet which exists in a number of places, whereby the owner of what is regarded as salmon or trout fishing may extend an invitation to a club to fish his water at a particular time of year for coarse fish which exist there in addition to the game fish. It is usually a condition that any coarse fish caught should be taken away and not returned to the water, but the sport available is often so good that anglers are prepared to make arrangements to meet this condition. Such an arrangement is know to exist on the Rivers Wye, Usk and Eden.

11. Chapter 12 - Effects of Angling Pressure and other Amenity Uses of Water Inimacable to Fisheries

The increase in angling pressure on many waters over the past ten years is only too evident. Despite the minor increase in capacity to accommodate anglers which occurs annually through the opening up of wet gravel workings, the construction of impounded pools, etc., it seems likely that, as with other sports based on inland waters, a point of saturation will be reached before long. This in turn is likely to mean that clubs will have waiting lists for entry, as in the case of many golf clubs today, and that the individual angler who is not a club member will have even greater difficulty in finding somewhere to fish.

In considering the conflict which may exist between angling and other water-based sports, it should not be forgotten that although sailing, power boating, water skiing, rowing, sub-aqua swimming and canoeing (to mention some of the principal activities) are virtually unaffected by angling, angling itself can be adversely affected to some degree by all of them. Despite being the largest single participant sport (as is pointed out in paragraph 12.1), angling is thus also the most vulnerable of water-based sports. It is perhaps for this reason that anglers tend to adopt a somewhat unyielding attitude when they believe their sport to be threatened!

12. Chapter 13 - Future Trends in Coarse Fish Angling

Although, on the basis of present trends, it seems likely that interest in coarse fishing will continue to increase, the effect of rising petrol costs on mobility has yet to be felt. If, as is widely forecast, the price of petrol rises to £1.00 per gallon, there is likely to be a considerable reduction in travelling for the purpose of fishing far afield. This, in turn, is likely to lead to increased demand for suitable fishing sites closer to home, and may result in the commercial development of artificial pools and in the establishment of coarse fisheries in reservoirs which are at present used to provide trout fishing. There may well be some financial inducement to bring this about, for many clubs command considerable funds.

As is mentioned in paragraph 13.13 the problem of merely finding any free water space at all may overtake that of pollution and abstraction in significance, and the solution of multi-purpose use may prove to have harmful effects on a fishery which are not at present appreciated. Where an Authority controls a water, it may be possible to impose limits on the pressures, angling and otherwise, to which the water is subjected, but such a procedure might prove unacceptable to clubs as a means of controlling pressure on their own waters.

13. Chapter 14 - Applied Research

Paragraphs 14.10 and 14.11 appear to contain the essence of this chapter's views, and the suggestion in paragraph 14.11 might be capable of adaption to a Divisonal structure in this Authority. An arrangement such as that suggested has the advantage of tackling all aspects of a problem simultaneously and producing a correspondingly broad answer.

14. Chapter 15 - Finance

Good points relating to expenditure on coarse fisheries are made in paragraphs 15.6 and 15.7. Much of the kind of work referred to in the latter paragraph comes under the heading of "fisheries engineering", which is mentioned in comments on Chapter 7.

It is satisfactory to note that the proposals in paragraph 15.8 are currently under consideration by a Sub-Committee of the Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee, which has already made good progress in formulating proposals for Regional Rod Licence duties.

In considering the reference in paragraph 15.9 to the commission payable to licence distributors, it must not be forgotten that an Authority is entirely dependent upon these people for the wide distribution of its fishing licences. If the commission is to be kept down to an economic figure, every effort must be made to simplify the issuing of licences. The introduction of Regional licences will reduce the number of different licences required; the redesign of the licence lay-out, and the possible use of "once-only" carbons or "carbon backing" should be considered with the object of cutting down the labour involved in issuing a licence, and thus enabling the distributor to earn his commission more easily.

In view of the great pressure on the Authority's finances which exists at present, and which seems unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future, it is clearly essential that the maximum practicable amount of revenue should be forthcoming from licence duties as a contribution towards the cost of providing fisheries services in the Region. Even so - and taking account of any additional revenue from the sale of fishing permits on the Authority's waters, and of "fishery contributions" from "several fisheries", if the powers under Section 38 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1923 should be used - a considerable deficit on the fisheries account is likely to remain, which will have to be met from the general water charges of the Authority. It should be noted that any development of fishing on the many water supply reservoirs now owned by the Authority would be likely to result in a considerable increase in revenue from this source.

15. Chapter 16 - Future Statutory Responsibilities

Being merely a summary of the various requirements of the Water Act, 1973, relating to fisheries and associated matters, no comment appears to be required.

16. Chapter 17 - Recommendations

The list of recommendations based on the text of the Report is a long and comprehensive one. Many of the specific points mentioned relate to matters which have already been discussed in these comments, and further remarks appear to be unnecessary.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

SOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE Item No. 6

11TH DECEMBER, 1974

CLITHEROE SEWAGE WORKS - DISCHARGE TO RIVER RIBBLE

1. The Secretary of the Ribble Fisheries Association has asked for a report on the discharge to the River Ribble from the Clitheroe Sewage Works.

2. The reconstructed works have been operating for two to three years and the discharge is channelled into a small, culverted feeder stream of the River Ribble, the outfall thereby now being upstream of the original point of inflow.

3. The dishcharge, pink in colour, is caused by a dye used by a local manufacturer and whilst unattractive in appearance this element of the discharge is not of a polluting nature.

The outfall drops over 4 feet from the pipe into the river and causes turbulence creating a froth on the surface of the water.

4. The quality of the discharge is adversely affected by an effluent produced by another company in the Clitheroe area and discussions are taking place at the present time between Officers of the Authority and the Company in an attempt to improve the position.

5. The Ribble E.T.U. are looking into the feasibility of resiting or improving the outfall.

Item No. 7

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

SOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11TH DECEMBER, 1974

UNIT FISHERIES OFFICER'S REPORT ON FISHERIES ACTIVITIES

1. Coarse Fish Salvage and Stocking

Ponds at Ormskirk and Preston were netted and the fish transferred to other ponds in the area at the request of local angling clubs. Freshwater fish which became stranded when the British Waterways Board drained the Leeds/Liverpool Canal at Altham were netted and returned to the canal.

Brown Trout

The Lodge at Trutex Mill was netted and 229 4"-10" brown trout were transferred to the Clitheroe Association water on the River Ribble.

2. Poaching

Poaching activity has continued to be heavy although frequent high water conditions have provided some relief. Poachers have been apprehended and eight nets seized as a result of dedicated work by the Bailiffs.

The Bailiffing effort has now been directed to the spawning areas. One temporary Bailiff has been engaged to assist with spawning protection and another man employed to cover the area of Bailiff M. G. Davis who terminated his employment with the Authority on 27th October, 1974.

3. Fisheries Management

Electro fishing and netting for salmon and sea trout has produced an adequate number of fish to supply ova for Langcliffe Hatchery. Most of these fish were caught between the 15th October and the beginning of November. The possible extension of the angling season to the 31st October may adversely affect the collection of fish for propagation by the above methods in the future.

Stripping is progressing favourably and the number of eggs laid down in the Hatchery will be reported at the January meeting.

In an effort to determine the cause of heavy mortalities in alevins and fry, a supply of electricity has been installed at Langcliffe. This will enable continuous monitoring of pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen and suspended solids. Two commercial incubator trays have been installed to act as a control for comparison to the performance of the main incubating installation.

4. Salmon Disease - Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis

A small number of diseased salmon have been observed since the weather has become colder, no fish appear to have died as a result of disease despite the large stocks in the River Ribble.

5. Fish Mortalities

Date	River	Species	Nos.	Cause
15.9.74	Landgate Lodge, Ashton-in-Makerfield	Coarse Fish	1000+	Sewage from fractured main sewer.

6. Migratory Fish Runs

The table below shows the numbers of fish passing through the electronic counters on the Ribble system. This year has produced the best runs of salmon for several years and large catches by anglers have been reported, several anglers taking six salmon in a day.

Fish Monitoring Figures 1974 (20"+)

	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	Tot.
Waddow Hall (R. Ribble)	28	2	2	121	553	540	421	342	2009
Locks Weir (R. Ribble)	-	-	-	6	63	67	73	45	254
Winckley Hall (R. Hodder)	-	-	4	8	19	363	40	124	558

Item No. 8

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

SOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

11th DECEMBER, 1974

POACHING

1. Concern has been expressed by the Chairman of the Committee, in connection with the alleged extensive poaching of the Rivers Ribble and Hodder.

2. The Chairman will report to the meeting with reference to this situation and any possible remedial action.