



December 2025 Newsletter



After another hot, dry Summer and an unseasonably warm Autumn, many anglers will be relishing the first winter frosts. It's a period when the fishing can be both challenging but hugely rewarding. Fish are normally at their peak fighting weight and this can often produce a PB. Chub fishing truly comes into its own during the colder months. And, as we all know, this feisty fish can prove a great adversary. It's prime time to target the predators too, with pike and perch feeding

throughout the day regardless of temperatures. Of course the banks are generally quieter and with reduced daylight hours, it calls for short, focussed sessions. Tight lines ><>

PUDDENHOLE UPDATE

Kenward, the construction company handling the Puddenhole project, has confirmed that the S278 crossover document has been approved by Surrey County Council. A date will now be scheduled to commence work on the entrance to the site.

With so much progress having been made over recent months, the club is keen to maintain the momentum. Quotations have been sourced to move forward with the lake extension and the club is looking at potential funding streams to finance this work. We have also been liaising closely with both the EA and the Angling Trust.

While it's difficult to set a date for when the extended lake will be fishable, the club will be doing all it can to complete the work in as short a timescale as possible.

Once the car park is in place, it will open up this under-fished section of the river to members. In anticipation of this, swims have already been cleared and steps installed to improve access to pegs where needed.



CASTLEFIELDS CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Work started on reinforcing the car park area on Castlefields Lake in October. Alas the wet weather has so far delayed completion of the project. The club will be doing its utmost to ensure the work is finished at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, we very much appreciate your understanding of the situation. We will of course keep members up to date as work on the car park progresses.



FISH SURVEY ON CASTLEFIELDS LAKE



Following our fish survey on the river in August, the EA has carried out a biomass survey on Castlefields Lake. Biomass refers to the total mass (weight) of all the fish in a specific surveyed area at a given time. The key objective is to provide a detailed review of the fish population - their health: physical condition, structure: age and size, and status: density and weight.

With little known about the lake's fish community, other than the fish species present, this survey is a vital first step towards developing an effective fishery management plan. The data gathered will enable the club to make informed decisions about stocking, habitat enhancement, or the possible targeted removals of overabundant species. Decisions aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of this popular stillwater fishery.

Joining the EA monitoring team on the day were a number of club officials, as well as members who had volunteered for club activities such as work parties, etc.

The lake was divided into two sections with a stop net while a seine net was pulled through the water to collect the fish. The uniform depth of Castlefields (between 3 and 4 foot) helped maximise coverage by making deployment and retrieval of the nets across the surveyed area much easier.

Fish were then segregated into holding nets, before being identified, measured and counted. This data was then recorded and the fish were safely returned to the water, none the worse for the experience.

As expected, carp were the predominant fish species netted - mainly commons. Good numbers of bream were logged, along with tench, small perch, silvers and ruffe. Some pike were also caught, fish that probably entered the lake when the river was in flood.

The EA team were very happy with the survey and its results. They will now collate the findings and prepare a report, before working with the club on a future management plan.



FISH SCALE SAMPLING



As part of the survey, the EA took scale samples from a number of fish and these have gone back to the lab for analysis. Fish scale ageing is one of the most important tools in assessing the overall health of a fish population. Examination of a single scale delivers a unique insight into the behaviour, biology and life history of a fish. It can reveal evidence of competition between species and provide an indicator of how well a fishery is performing.



ANGLERS UNITE AGAINST LITTER



OUR TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS



We had another fantastic turnout for our latest litter pick with the Angling Trust. What's more, it was **SHIMANO** really heartening to see a couple of our junior members stepping up to help.

We were also joined by Drew Chadwick from the Angling Trust, as well as local EA Fisheries Enforcement Officer, Martynas Pranaitis.

Our team of volunteers scoured the riverbanks and pathways on both the North Bank and Stepping Stones, collecting all manner of rubbish, including a couple of garden chairs.



Recyclable litter was separated from general waste and this was later removed by Mole Valley District Council.



Litter is a real blight on our countryside. Not only is it unsightly, it causes serious harm to wildlife and degrades habitats. Through the AAL campaign, Dorking members have proven themselves to be a real force for good.

The club would like to thank everyone who attended the event. Your efforts are having a positive impact on our environment.



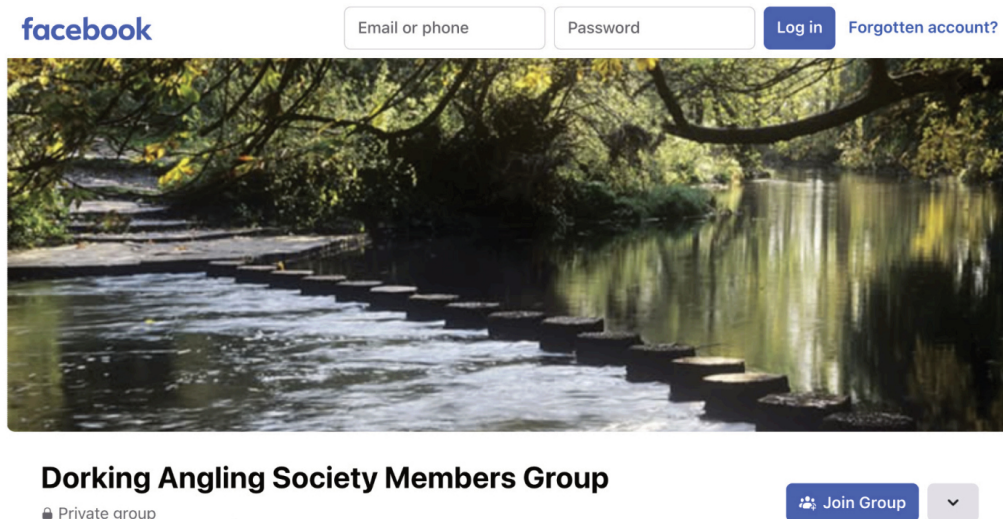
SAFE PIKE HANDLING



As the mercury drops, pike become a popular target for many anglers. However, despite their reputation as an apex predator, pike are a surprisingly delicate species which require careful handling.

Of course, as with all types of angling, fish welfare is an absolute priority. For this reason, many now believe fishing for pike in winter is more ethical. Lower water temperatures and higher oxygen levels greatly increase the fish's chance of survival after release.

The Pike Anglers' Club is an organisation dedicated to the conservation, promotion and protection of pike. They have prepared a code of conduct for anglers : www.pacgb.com/fishing-for-pike



If you haven't yet joined the club's new facebook group, we'd strongly advise you to do so. It's a great way of keeping in touch with upcoming events and enabling members to share opinions. As the name suggests, the site is expressly for the use of members. To join, follow this link: www.facebook.com/groups/995587842672423/?ref=share&_rd

NEW CLUBMATE UPGRADE FOR 2026



As we approach the New Year, the club is upgrading to the new 'Unlimited' Clubmate platform. This represents a significant change and will make online use easier and simpler for both the club and our members.

This premier Clubmate tier comes with numerous benefits, all designed to make the running of a club as smooth and professional as possible. Another key feature, coming soon, will allow anglers to access an offline digital membership card without internet connection.

GRAVEL CLEANING COMPLETED ON THE NORTH BANK



Thanks to the efforts of club volunteers, gravel enhancement work was successfully completed within the September/October time frame. Desilting and loosening the gravel allows for greater egg survival and subsequent fry recruitment. In accordance with our bespoke permit, we will be carrying out this important work again during the vital April/May pre-spawning period.

NATURAL RECRUITMENT v STOCKING PROGRAMME

Anglers regularly argue for stocked fish to be introduced to improve fishing and increase catch rates. While this may seem like a quick fix, natural recruitment will maintain the health of the ecosystem and the long-term sustainability of a fish population.

Introducing stockies to a river can put the native fish at risk from disease and parasites. In addition, farm-raised fish are often more domesticated and lack the natural instincts needed to evade predators and compete effectively in the wild. The focus of our club is very much on habitat improvement and other conservation efforts to encourage natural fish recruitment. Over time, these actions will greatly reduce the need for an artificial stocking programme, creating a more resilient and healthier fishery for the next generation of anglers.



ANGLING ALLIANCE GETS THE GO AHEAD

RIVER MOLE ANGLING ALLIANCE

The River Mole Angling Alliance is finally coming to fruition. The formation of a unified body of clubs, working together across the catchment, was first raised in 2023. Crucially, this exciting club-driven initiative now has the full backing of the Environment Agency.

Meetings will be held bi-annually to discuss issues affecting clubs, ranging from habitat improvement to fisheries enforcement. Guest speakers will also be invited to talk on various topics of interest. The ultimate aim of this new alliance will be to encourage greater collaboration, with clubs taking coordinated action to tackle shared challenges.



BEANIE WITH LED



PERSONALISED TRAVEL MUG



CAP



MERRY MERCHMAS



PUFFER JACKET

With Christmas nearly upon us, why not visit the club's clothing section on the Clubmate app. You'll find a great selection of ideas for presents, all emblazoned with Dorking's logo.

If you're looking to layer up as temperatures start to drop, there's a wide range of clothing to choose from. Top quality winter warmers include beanies, hoodies, fleeces, breathable softshell jackets and premium insulated bodywarmers, available in a choice of colours.

Orders take between 5 to 7 days for arrival, although most are delivered much sooner.



ROLL TOP BACKPACK



SOFTSHELL GILET



WAIST BAG



FLEECE

A CONSERVATION SUCCESS STORY



As you'll have read in previous Newsletters, the club has been collaborating with the Waterlife Recovery Trust in an effort to control, and ultimately eradicate, mink on the River Mole. In the first year of working with the WRT, our dedicated group of Dorking volunteers have now removed eleven American mink from two traps.

This conservation initiative was inspired by a desire to protect our precious water vole population, but it has saved many hundreds of other native species preyed on by this voracious carnivore. It's the club's hope that, in due course, water voles can be reintroduced to the Mole, a river where they were once commonly seen.

Thanks to the success of this local trapping programme, we have expanded our reach to include Puddenhole and Norbury Park. There are also plans to place mink traps on other sections of the river in the New Year.

If you see a water vole while fishing on the Mole, please report it to the club by emailing: watervoles@dorkingas.co.uk



Dorking & District Angling Society 2026 Membership Survey

The club will be sending out a survey to all Dorking members at the beginning of January. Our society has grown significantly over the last two years and, if we are to plan appropriately for the future, it's vital that we get member feedback on a number of issues. The short questionnaire will help us build-up a picture of the wants and needs of anglers, as well as their fishing habits. Remember, the survey itself will be anonymous so please be honest with your answers. Once the data has been collated, the results of the survey will be published in a forthcoming Newsletter.