

## **Proposed Weir Works Including Barrowford**

### **Background:**

The Environment Agency under an EU regulation has an obligation to improve the water quality and accessibility of the inland waterways to migratory fish such as Salmon and Sea Trout. An Environmental Agency report was written about five years ago highlighting the alterations and requirements needed to successfully re-introduce migratory fish to the Calder and its tributaries. The main barriers to successfully achieving this were seven weirs situated between Padiham and the Water Meetings.

The Calder Catchment Group an organisation made up of angling clubs and other interested bodies has been lobbying for the necessary work and infrastructure to be carried out to enable migratory fish to use the local streams. Funding has recently been made available and the Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust has successfully applied for funding to carry out most of the essential work needed.

### **Work Required:**

The first work due to be started within the next few weeks includes the modification of the weir at the former power station at Padiham. The next stage is the remodelling of the weir at Montford Hall Brierfield. The weir at Caldervale Mill was removed as part of the recent river wall bed/ remodelling work carried out at Reedyford a few years ago. This only leaves four weirs within Barrowford impeding fish migration:

- Weir to rear of Berry's Mill: The proposed work which does not require planning permission involves the re-profiling some of the concrete work probably dating from after the floods of 1967. This will improve the flow of water and aid fish leaping the weir when water levels are suitable.
- Weir adjacent to the Marsden Building Society: This again involves minor alterations to the shape of the weir and the introduction of some large boulders to the river lower than the weir to again optimise water flow for migratory fish. This work also does not need planning permission only the consent of the land owner.
- The Weir situated adjacent to the Heritage Centre: This will be the largest project and will entail the construction of a fish pass and the work will need planning permission.
- Weir above Higherford Mill: This weir is currently in a collapsed state and does not present a major obstacle to migrating fish. There is currently no funding to do any remedial works to this weir but if in the future this weir is rebuilt a fish pass will need to be incorporated into the scheme.

### **Parish Council Involvement**

The Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust is giving the Parish Council an opportunity to make comments on the various proposed work to be carried out within Barrowford and with the first two weirs this will be possibly just minor comments on materials. The major project for consideration is the weir situated adjacent to the Heritage Centre. The Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust is now considering two schemes after the initial scheme of routing the

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fish pass around the weir and through the land at the site of the former public conveniences in the park but the Heritage Trust for the Northwest have several issues relating to industrial heritage/archaeology with the first design. Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust has now proposed a second alternative scheme and is at present costing this. The second scheme will probably be more visually apparent but if built of traditional local materials could enhance the existing structure as site of local interest. The timescale for this project means that plans have to be drawn up and submitted as soon as possible due to the funding being time dependant.

The Trust due to these time restrictions on funding would like the planning application to proceed smoothly and feel that this can be best achieved by involving interested organisations and public bodies at the design stage to lessen the possible perceived impact of the fish pass on the existing weir and surroundings by taking on board comments and suggestions and where practicable include suggested finish details which do not impact on the design's integrity as a fish pass. The Clerk has been informed that most of the costings and drawings will be completed in the next few weeks and suggests that Mr. J. Spees from the Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust be invited to the next GP Meeting to discuss the scheme and drawings.