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MP backs call to set up more angling clubs

7:10pm Monday 14th September 2009

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By [Richard Vernalls »](#)

ANGLING can help young people develop important skills and boost self-confidence, according to an exp-ert on fishing.

Mark Eacock, manager of Worcester Angling Academy, was invited to give a talk to members of the UK's Angling Development Board (ADB), the Angling Trust, members of county ang-ling clubs and Redditch MP Jacqui Smith.

He told the audience that fishing was "an inclusive sport" which could "reach everyone" making it an "ideal vehicle" for a range of activities which could help young and old people, particularly those who feel isolated and those with specific needs.



WAY FORWARD: Redditch MP Jacqui Smith, centre, with senior coach Chris Lancaster and Mark Eacock, manager of Worcester Angling Academy, after the talk to fishermen.

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Mr Eacock was asked by the ADB to give the talk because of the success of the Callow End-based academy – which has 18 coaches – in setting up new clubs and organising one-off events.

Recently, together with the police, the academy organised a free event for 140 youngsters with the aim of setting up a new youth angling club in Droitwich over the next month.

With 1.5 million angling licence holders and four million fishermen in the UK, Mr Eacock said the sport has the potential to bring people together through fishing clubs and co-operation with schools and youth clubs to teach life skills.

He said: "We're hoping that with the help of Jacqui Smith, the Govern-ment will realise how many people are out there fishing and what it can achieve through angling.

"It is totally inclusive for anyone and everyone."

The talk was held at the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre in Redditch. After-wards academy coach Chris Lancaster gave angling lessons to a group of disabled youngsters and a teenagers with behavioural problems.

Richard Hanley, ADB regional development officer, said he wanted angling to have a greater sporting profile and create a wider appreciation for the positive impact it can have on people's lives.

He said: "We want to make it more than just a pastime."

Ms Smith said she was impressed with the work done nationally by the ADB and would be raising the issue with the Govern-ment. She said: "I hope that the ADB can build on its early success. I will be taking up angling matters with the Government and in parliament. I hope that youngsters and families take a look at our local fishing clubs because they have a lot to offer."

For more information about the new Droitwich angling club, log on to worcesteranglingacademy.co.uk.

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