An anglers association has been ordered to pay a £66,000 fine after admitting breaching health and safety laws that led to the death of one of its volunteers.

On 9 October 2019, a group of volunteers from the Birmingham Angler's Association (BAA) were carrying out routine fisheries maintenance working, cutting back and clearing vegetation along the riverbank near Pershore, Worcestershire. As fallen branches were being cleared with the use of a chain saw, Maurice Taylor, a member of the party, was hit on the head by a thick falling branch.

Mr Taylor was treated at the scene and then taken by air ambulance to University Hospital, Coventry having suffered a traumatic brain injury. A week later, when it was clear he would not recover, Mr Taylor's family made the decision to turn off his life support.

An investigation by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) – on behalf of Wychavon District Council – **found that the group of volunteers had received no formal health and safety instruction, had not been properly trained for the kind of work they were carrying out, and were using inadequate equipment.**

No documented risk assessment was carried out, against the BAA's own policy; guidance from The Angling Trust had been ignored; and a proper exclusion zone around the felling site had also not been set-up.

At a hearing On April 28 2021 at Worcester Magistrates' Court, BAA admitted breaching the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act, for failing to ensure the safety of those not in its employment. The organisation was fined £66,000, and ordered to pay costs of £17,500 plus a victim surcharge of £181.

In summing up, the District Judge pointed out that in response to the incident, the BAA had suspended volunteer work and advertised for a paid fisheries officer, which was a reflection of what the organisation should have been doing prior to the accident. The Judge said the BAA's health and safety procedures were out of date and volunteers were not properly trained.