

## Inland Waterways Association – North West Region

### Minutes of Electronic meeting held between Oct 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 2015

( Distribution list : Mike Carter; Alan Platt; Steve Connolly; Michael Haig; Michael Limbrey; Gillian Smith; Gillian Bolt; Peter Bolt; Colin Greenall; David Smallshaw )

- 1 Approval of Minutes of meeting held Mar 11th 2015 – OK except for item 5. 4th line "Blackwood" should read "Blackbrook" otherwise approved.
- 2 Branch reports and matters arising -  
*Reports from Region Chairman, Chester & Merseyside and Manchester Branches recorded. (see below)*  
*It's recognised that the wide area covered by the region makes it difficult for all branch officers to attend meetings in person, however it was generally agreed that the need for communications at region level was important.*
- 3 HO ' Lancashire Canals Legacy'
  - Progress on Sankey Container – fitting out completed and funds reimbursed to SCARS from HO.  
*5 Lancashire Legacy, Progress on Sankey Container, funding arrived and Manchester Branch equipment installed*  
Stockport Canal plaques- approval for £2000 for the plaques, One paid for, awaiting planning/listed consents to be obtained by Stockport CS.  
*The cost of the plaques was less than £1000 @ £484 each as far as can be remember d.*  
**Action SC : Its assumed that these are interpretation boards (i.e. not plaques) More details of what these look like required and where they will be sited.**
  - Any suggestions for balance?  
*(GS) " I have spoken to Gordon Harrower as chair of Finance about the proposals to use some of the Lancashire Legacy funds for banners and display materials for the L&L bicentenary. He is in favour in principle so I just need to get some costs together and design plans. I have been in touch with Mike Clarke. He has given me some suggested costs so I now want to finalise with him design ideas and final costs.... "*  
**Action GS to keep MC up to date on developments here.**
- 4 Region Members meeting 2016?

Suggestion by AP, that NW members be encouraged to visit Eldonian Village festival planned for 11/12 June 2016, and that presentation of awards be made there, together with any other region activities

(discussion)

*If the NW Region awards are to be presented at next year's Eldonian festival, does that mean we will not hold a specific members' social meeting in 2016?I understand the pressures that the festival will place on C&M Branch in particular so it may be inevitable that we have to waive the members' social next year. If we do decide to maintain the members' social we will obviously need to decide on a venue and date as soon as possible*

*It's a good idea to encourage all members to attend the IWA Eldonian Village Waterways festival in 2016. However using this event to present the Regional awards depends upon logistics and time available.*  
**Action MC & AP to put this on the agenda for next Chester & Merseyside Festival meeting ( 18/11/15)**

*As an alternative perhaps we could put a North West members social on at Castlefield later in the year.*  
**Action SC to comment on feasibility of a Castlefields event.**

NW Region Awards - Suggestions for nominations for awards – one for IWA member, one for non IWA, sought.

***Nominations to be made to MC via. personal approach, phone calls etc.***

5 Navigation matters ( report attached)

Notes from Navigation Liaison meeting on regional web page. *Thanks to Mike Haig for stepping in as chair, this forum has established IWA as a reliable resource for CRT.*

*Regarding the planned long closure of Bridgewater West of Worsley – **Action MC to follow up with Chantelle S and David B to find out if their planned meeting has happened yet.***

Rochdale Undercroft Gating - Update in Manchester Branch Report ( see below)-

6 Co-opt Alan Platt onto committee pending branch AGM

*Agreed*

7 AOB

*Request for region Chairman to send letter of support for CRT “Leeds & Liverpool Milestones project” HLF bid.*

*Discussion*

*(ML) I have taken the view that IWA is one organisation, therefore if there is a branch letter of support, a Region one is not needed, etc. Others have disagreed with me.*

*Shrewsbury branch have already given the S&N bid support,*

*(AP)I would agree with Michael L that branches and Region don't both need to support a bid, and with Mike C that IWA to approve is a default position. I'm aware now of three pending bids:*

*Monty(Supported by SD&NW)*

*S&N ( ditto)*

*L&L (to be supported by Region)*

***Action - MC to send letter of support for milestones project bid to CRT***

*IWA lead for Leeds & Liverpool Bi-Centennial project is Audrey Smith*

8 Date of next meeting - tbc – Spring 2016?

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## REPORTS

### IWA North West Regional Chairman's Report - Oct 2015

Firstly I would like to thank my predecessor Alan Platt for all his work and dedication over the last 6 years as IWA North West Regional Chairman. I hope to emulate the high standards he has set for the role. Please do bear with me if I get things wrong in the early days.

I'm starting with a clean slate and avoiding looking back too much. However taking into account recent issues on the Lancaster and Rufford arm perhaps this may be too much water under the bridge, perhaps a subject for a later report.

Looking forward, I have taken on the role of Regional Chairman with a few primary aims, one of which is to promote communications between IWA branches and membership.

Here are a few things that, I hope you will agree, we should be talking about :

- Increasing the profile of IWA and promoting our aims and objectives.  
*Not only to attract new members and supporters but to make the public aware of the simple facts. IWA was primarily responsible for 'saving' the canals and waterways for the benefit of the nation and we continue to campaign for improvements, restorations and heritage conservation. No matter how you caveat this, its true.... This needs to be a message we carry around with us as we talk to people about the great joy that our waterways bring to everyone.*
- Involving and educating local communities  
*Promoting the benefits of their canals and waterways. I have spent many hours working with schools and local community volunteers who now view their local canal as a valued place, worth taking time to look after. Specifically in the more urban areas we are starting to see communities taking ownership and getting so much more from the experiences. Lets continue to sow the seeds. Canal & River Trust are now becoming a 'professional' charity with fundraisers, marketing professionals and targets etc. we need to ensure that the message they put out is based on communities and education, specifically in urban areas. Recently driven by CRT there has been lots of good publicity, TV features etc, which extol the rural idyll and the quiet life boosting the holiday hire market etc. However we need to ensure that the trust have a balanced approach with communities & education getting more resources .*
- Getting more value from our Navigation Authorities and Local Councils.  
*Its not acceptable for the Navigation Authorities, Developers and Local Councils to work in isolation. Local Authorities must commit resources to maintain the local waterway community and environment as part of their development plans. We can see many areas where waterways have provided the catalyst for urban regeneration. A report commissioned by IWA, carried out by Nottingham University, demonstrated that for every £1 spent on waterway restoration the local economy benefited to the tune of £7. This makes a great case for waterway restoration which I'm sure many local authorities and developers have already taken advantage of. However we do see many schemes that have been rather un-sympathetic, ignoring the local waterway users and jarring with the undoubted heritage value of sites. We must be vigilant and campaign to ensure that waterway heritage is preserved and users and boaters get a fairer share in this economic bounty which has perhaps lined the pockets of local developers, at the expense of our waterways community.*

There's lots more.. to be saved for later reports. I have suggested a few items that I think we should be talking about. I'm sure you all have many more which I'm more than welcome to put on the agenda.

# Report from Shrewsbury District & North Wales Branch

Since the last Region Meeting in March 2015 the Branch has held four business meetings in April, June, August and October.

## Branch Events:

March: Branch AGM

May: Very successful social trip to Anderton boat lift (also open to SNCT members)

June: Summer walk at Brewood

August: Lockwind at Hurlleston (we were able to man all the locks for the whole weekend)

## Other Events attended:

April: Friends of the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Area event at Llanymynech

April: Region social at Eldonian Village, Liverpool

May: Norbury Canal Festival (branch stall)

May: Monty Triathlon (organised by the Friends of the Montgomery Canal & supported by the branch)

May: Lion's Day in Shrewsbury (branch stall)

May: Audlem Marina RNLi Festival (branch stall)

June: Shrewsbury River Festival (branch stall)

July: Making Waves at Welshpool (organised by MWRT and supported by the branch) (branch stall)

July: Montgomery Canal Forum

July: Himalayan Balsam Bash at Newport (organized by SNCT & supported by the branch)

July: Aqueduct Marina Open Day (branch stall)

September: Whitchurch Gathering of Boats (branch stall)

October: Skittles evening at Stafford Boat Club with Litchfield & NSSC branches

## Planning Issues:

- 9 6 new dwellings at Gledrid: Objected to this inappropriate linear development.
- 10 Pear Tree Cottage extension at Crickheath: Objected to the scale and character of the plans – extensions subsequently scaled down.
- 11 3,960 solar panels at Manor Farm, Crickheath: Comments made without objections. Plans subsequently modified and passed.
- 12 3 dwellings at the former station site at Pant: Commented on the implications for the former tram-road.
- 13 Ellesmere marina, hotel leisure facilities, chalets & housing: Concerns voiced regarding the new plans. Plans subsequently modified.
- 14 Mid Wales Connection Project (National Grid pylons): In September, Department of Energy and Climate Change refused planning consent for all four of the wind farms that would have used NG's proposed connection. Although there are other wind farms looking to connect in Mid Wales, if it's established NG's connection is not needed, NG has said it will not progress with its plans.

## Meetings attended:

April: CRT forum at Nantwich

**Branch Magazine:** The summer issue can be seen on [waterways.org.uk/shrewsbury](http://waterways.org.uk/shrewsbury). The autumn issue will be circulated in November.

## Branch Committee changes:

- Hugh Appleton resigned but agreed to help out at events.
- Denis Farmer retired as Treasurer and Alan Platt has taken over the post.

**Dawn Aylwin Secretary October 2015**

## Report from IWA Chester and Merseyside Branch

This report is short due to a number of issues affecting the Branch at present.

2016 Festival Eldonian Liverpool – we have on going meetings with the other three partners. Firm boat bookings 53 – the maximum we can accommodate is 120.

The tidal gauge destined for the Dee Lock is finished and at present at Taylors Yard Chester. We still have no indication from CRT or the EA as to when this will be installed.

£1m of projects as shown in the 'Chester Waterway Strategy' have been approved to go ahead on the gateway approach into Chester along the Shropshire Union Canal. The first one at the King Charles Tower worth £280,000 will be officially opened late November. Others to follow.

The Branch recently presented a £500.00 cheque to the Pride of Sefton community Boat. They will be involved with the Festival next June with the special guests and other projects.

Following a talk by Ken Pie from Radio Merseyside and Wirral Radio he has promised to give the Festival air time a little nearer to June 2016.

The Branch is actively seeking a News letter editor and someone to lead on the walks. We are also in the market for new committee members to be part of the committee as from our next AGM in March 2016.

The NWM at Ellesmere Port is closing for refurbishment and therefore we will be changing our social meetings to the Holiday Inn hotel next door for the December, January and February meetings.

Due to a complaint from one of our 'less mobile' members lodged with IWA head office about the Rolt Rooms not being DDA compliant it may be that we will need to find a new venue. We have complained to the Museum about the situation we find ourselves in but they are not proposing to remedy the situation.

Peter Bolt

Chairman

IWA Chester and Merseyside Branch

## Report from Manchester Branch

### Rochdale 9 Under-croft

David Baldacchino 'phoned me the on the 13<sup>th</sup> October on his way out of a meeting regarding the design of the gates and associated features. It would now seem that many of the suggestions made by branch and region representatives when we met with met with David, at his request, at the under-croft on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July are being addressed. In particular, the gate at the end of the tunnel, location 2, between locks 85 and 86, is now being moved [20mts?] to underneath the small overbridge into the court. This move is to accommodate our concerns re the narrowness of the towpath at the original location. Other aspects of this gate are being investigated.

At the gate onto Auburn Street [location 3], all our requests, bar one, have been addressed; the one exception is the gate height will remain the same.

There are some changes to the plans at location 1, lock 84, in that details that aid boats to work the lock, [up-hill] out of hours will be improved with the provision of CRT key lock, a bollard at the bottom of the ramp, landing point improvement, and further measures to stop access from this point into the locked-up section.

You will appreciate this is a long ongoing negotiation and the above is brief, I will be happy to answer any questions. At this point in time I have not received written confirmation of the above.

## North West Regional Navigation Liaison Meeting.

Date : 01/10/15 ( 14:00 )

Venue : Navigation Rd., Northwich.

Attendees :

<u>Canal &amp; River Trust</u> Wendy Cappelle ( North Wales & Borders Waterway Manager) Chantelle Seaborn ( North West Waterway Manager) David Baldacchino ( Manchester & Pennines Waterway Manager)	<u>Inland Waterways Association</u> Steve Connolly – Manchester branch Michael Haig - Shrewsbury & North Wales (facilitating) Mike Carter - NW Region Chairman Alan Platt – Shrewsbury & North Wales
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### Notes from the meeting

#### Review of action items from previous meeting:

- New CRT website to be launched next week with improved search engine and revised layouts. It was noted that IWA NW region was not formally asked to review new site prior to release. - Action Complete.
- DB reported that the definition of a Restriction was any issue that causes navigational delays of less than 4hrs. Thus any navigational delays over 4hrs will be classed as a Stoppage. DB Action Complete
- Manchester Undercroft consultation. IWA objections were published on Manchester Planning website in July, MC action complete. **See item below.**
- Risk Assessment and Method Statements have been drafted on the use of portable floating platforms for offside vegetation clearance. MC Action Complete. **See item below**
- The winter maintenance schedule enclosed as attachment for current meeting, MC Action complete, **See item below.**
- Upper Peak Forest Canal, bridge 6 adoption requires to be clarified, see item below. **(SC action carried forward).**
- Ring the Ring, project. See item below. Historic date of opening of complete Cheshire Ring to be clarified. **(Action MC to follow up with John Tackley)**
- CRT Wigan service block plans to be clarified, not discussed due to time constraints. **(CS Action, carried forward)**
- Logistics for Liverpool Link boat movements now finalised. MC & CS action complete.

#### Regional Consultations

Follow up consultation on Leeds & Liverpool Link changes will be carried out during Nov/Dec Initial feedback indicates potential problems with staffing resources to operate swing bridges. MC indicated that CRT budgets should be increased in line with the Liverpool's rising status as the primary CRT location nationally. **(Action MC to seek comments from Richard Parry, via Navcom)**

Marple Aqueduct fencing. Detailed plans not yet available. **(Action DB to monitor situation)**

Manchester Undercroft consultation – Planning permission has been obtained for fencing off the undercroft area overnight, the next step is for the LA is to obtain a Safety Protection Order which is valid for 3 years. IWAs opposition to this plan was reiterated, alternative plans based on investment in developments that remove barriers to the waterways in this area are IWAs preferred solution. MC encouraged CRT to 'think big' when considering the future of the canals in Manchester. The 'Discover Manchester's Wonderful Canals' initiative is a start but not enough, IWA will continue to lobby LA and developers to invest more resources to make Manchester a 'must see' waterways feature. In addition a suggestion for a CRT "welcome station" on the Rochdale 9 with IWA volunteer help or with towpath rangers etc. was considered. **(Action SC to lobby local councillors via. Local Branch and MC seek comments from Richard Parry, via Navcom)**

Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal; Prior to submitting a detailed planning application for the Middlewood site Scarborough Group stated that A restored canal is seen as central to the success of the development, providing a green corridor / focal area for residents. **(Action SC to invite MB&B Canal Soc. to compose restoration update/report for an IWA bulletin. )**

## Winter Maintenance Schedule 2015/16.

The North West Area winter maintenance schedule was discussed and agreed with the following caveats.

Weston Marsh Lock works schedule may change as surveys results come in. If any longer term stoppages are to be considered here the alternative route via Runcorn Docks will be established as an alternative. This location is also being considered as a suitable venue for a CRT Open Day **(Action WC to monitor and report)**

The planned long term stoppage (4 months) on non-CRT Bridgewater canal at Worsley will be the subject of a meeting between CRT and Peel Ports as soon as possible. The most effective way of publicising this stoppage via CRTs customer information systems/website is to be a crucial outcome of this meeting. **(Action BD & CS)**

## Dredging & Water Supply

Water retention on Wigan flight has continued to improve with the scheduled overnight lock ups and use of volunteer lock keepers.

BD reported that planned dredging on Huddersfield Canal (lock21W to 13W) will be full line/profile dredging not just spot dredging.

## Vegetation Clearance.

A copy of the Risk Assessment and Method Statement for use of floating platforms for offside veg clearance, drafted by MC, is to be released to CRT managers ( **Action MC**)

Guidelines for Hedge to 'Waters Edge' specification need to be reinforced with CRT contractors. It was noted that saplings more than 75mm dia. would not be cut by contractors, such 'saplings' will be the subject of a 'Tree Order' **(Action MC, SC & MH invite Local Branches to identify areas where 'waters edge' has not been cut.)**

## Events

Feedback from recent Leigh festival will be shared with the local authority, the water based features were fine, however issues with some areas of site (ownership and insurance) detracted from this event. ( **Action CS** )

Plans for Leeds & Liverpool Bi-Centennial 2016 events are progressing via CRT hosted committee. ( **Action CS to ensure progress reports continue as developments occur**)

IWA Liverpool Eldonian Canal Festival 2016 – IWA would like to thank the staff of CRT Wigan Office for their continuing support and fortitude in the ongoing logistical planning for this large event. Event details were distributed to all CRT managers. ( **MC to supply site prep details to CRT NW Ops managers**)

Maesbury Marsh 2016 – Info. on this planned event to be supplied to WC (action MH via. Local Branch)

Northwich (Hathurst) river festival 2016 draft plans to be obtained from RWNS **(Action MC via, Local Branch)**

## User Forums

Feedback from User Group Forums although a valuable planning resource for CRT is becoming sparse due to recent poor turnouts. CRT & IWA will continue to consider options for increasing the appeal of these forums, e.g. advertised days for conference/surgeries etc.. **(Action All)**

## Volunteering & Projects.

Clarification on reporting volunteer hours to CRT was obtained. > Hours for any IWA members attending IWA workparties who are also registered as CRT volunteers will be individually identified in volunteer hours returns.

The schedule for works as part of the 'Ringling the Ring' project on Cheshire Ring needs to be presented as soon as possible. **(Action SC & MC)**

## Other Items

- Hurleston bottom lock – No further movement of lock walls has been detected, HNBC (nb Plover ) successful transit was monitored recently – CRT recognises that its tight but there are no plans for further scabbling works.
- Dee Lock developments stalled due to delays with EA flood relief works. The IWA tide gauge board has been purchased and assembled and is ready for installation as soon as EA works allow. **(Action MC to follow up with CRT engineering via. Local Branch)**

- “On the water” experience for CRT Partnership and staff members – After a very fruitful boat trip on the Ashton DB would like to follow up with more boat trips on Rochdale & Aston. Other areas have also had good on the water experiences.
- Trent & Mersey - Preston Brook > state of the track ( **CF to next meeting** )
- Recycling bins progress – CRT feedback indicates that the mix is not good, with some boaters failing to sort waste as required . (**Action MC to investigate via. Local Branches prior to submitting a report for the IWA bulletin**)
- Availability and state of Services at Atherley, Middlewich and Wigan continues to be an issue.  
Proposals for L&L Wigan services to be clarified (**CS Action**) ( **CF to next meeting**)

Next Meeting – 25/2/16 at Red Bull offices

----- End of reports -----