

Minutes of the 54th Annual General Meeting of the Inland Waterways Association, held at 2.00pm on Saturday 28th September 2013 at Ettington Community Centre, Rogers Lane, Ettington, Warwickshire, CV37 7SX.

PRESENT

54 members were present, plus two employees who were not members.

WELCOME

Les Etheridge, National Chairman, welcomed those present to the meeting.

MINUTES OF 53RD AGM

The minutes of the 53rd AGM were approved.

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Gordon Harrower, national treasurer, introduced the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2012 and explained the main areas of income during the year. The benefits of legacies and other potential sources of income were highlighted. Gordon Harrower explained that membership recruitment remained a problem for the Association and that Finance Committee had decided that other areas of revenue generation should be explored and the a new position would be created at Head Office for a Fundraising Officer. The aim was to make this role self-funding in the medium term. Questions were raised about expenditure and it was noted that more details were available in the both the annual review, which had been circulated to all members and in the full accounts. David Chapman, Chiltern Branch, raised concerns about the new Gift Aid available on small donations and also asked if future presentations could highlight where the Association's money was being spent.

Dave Chapman proposed and Gillian Smith seconded a resolution to approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2012 and the Report of the Auditors. The meeting unanimously approved the resolution.

AUDITORS

John Butler proposed and Gen Messham seconded a resolution to reappoint Saffery Champness as auditors to the Association. The meeting unanimously approved the resolution and trustees were authorised to fix their remuneration.

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Four nationally elected trustees, retired on completion of their three-year terms of office. There were four vacancies for nationally elected trustees. Three candidates had put themselves forward: Ivor Caplan, Gren Messham and Jim Shead; therefore no ballot was required and their appointment as trustees for a three-year term of office was noted. Les Etheridge thanked Alasdair Lawrance and Ian West for their service as trustees and Ian's work as Festivals Chairman.

ELECTION OF REGION CHAIRMEN

Les Etheridge reminded the meeting that nominations had been sought for two region chairman posts where terms of office had been completed and one where there was a vacancy. There had been only one nomination and Peter Scott, chairman of North East Region was re-appointed until the 2016 AGM. Les Etheridge thanked Alastair Chambers, who had retired as Eastern Region Chairman earlier during the year, and John Pomfret, who retired as East Midlands Region Chairman at the meeting, for their service as trustees.

The vacancies for East Midlands Region and Eastern Region would be advertised in the next edition of *Waterways* magazine.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

A special resolution from the board of trustees had been put forward recommending that as from 1st January 2014, the subscriptions be amended as follows:

	Annual
Ordinary Member (UK)	£32.50
Family or Joint Adult Membership (UK)	£40.00
Junior Membership Electronic	£1.00
Corporate - Non-profit making bodies	£55.00
Corporate – Profit making bodies – up to 20 employees	£60.00
Corporate – Profit making bodies - more than 20 employees	£122.00

Life membership rates are calculated at 20 times the standard rates. Monthly rates are calculated at one tenth of the annual rates. The concessionary rates for senior citizens (age 65+) are calculated at 80% of the standard rates. The reduced rate for electronic membership is 80% of the standard rates (available for ordinary and joint membership categories only).

There was a lot of discussion about the proposed increase in membership subscription rates. The general consensus was that an increase in rates could reduce membership numbers due to an increase in lapsed members in the current economic climate.

Les Etheridge asked for a show of hands on the resolution. There were nine votes in favour of the resolution, thirty-one votes against and fourteen abstentions. The special resolution was therefore not approved and membership rates would remain unchanged for 2014.

CHAIRMANS ADDRESS

Les Etheridge addressed the meeting and said that his guiding principle was what was good for our inland waterways. Specific areas covered were membership and activities, IWA and continuous cruisers, HS2, the Environment Agency navigations and IWA festivals.

The very positive work done by WRG and branch work parties was noted along with the need to increase recruitment. Much positive work benefiting the waterways had been achieved. Les commented on the need for IWA's position on continuous cruisers to be properly understood. IWA had campaigned for the right to continuously cruise and was fully supportive of all those who complied with the rules.

In respect of HS2 he explained that it was not for IWA to be involved in the political issues as to its merits or otherwise and that it was clear that members had different views on the merits of HS2. IWA's job was to fight to protect the waterways and to ensure that the best possible mitigation was achieved.

The announcement in July that the Environment Agency navigations would not be transferred to the Canal & River Trust in the timescales expected had been a considerable disappointment. Les stressed the importance of increasing the political pressure and that meetings had been arranged with the Waterways Minister and Shadow Minister. Branches were asked to support by writing letters to the MPs in their area.

Festivals in 2013 had the benefit of exceptionally good weather and good results had been achieved at Canalway Cavalcade and the National Trailboat Festival. The National Festival at Cassiobury Park, whilst having good features, had disappointed in making a loss of over £40,000 and having a low public attendance. The old model for the National was no longer considered to work and needed to be revised. The possibility of holding a 2014 National Festival at Stratford-upon-Avon was being considered and a definite decision would be made on 12th October and made public soon after. Les said that there were significant anniversaries to celebrate at Stratford in 2014 but a National Festival would only be run if it made overall sense and that the finances needed to work. He also said that it was important that IWA ensured the anniversaries were properly celebrated.

Some members expressed concerns that plans for a National Festival were being delayed and stated that the ideal time-frame would be for locations to be known two years in advance.

Les Etheridge handed over to Ian West for the announcement of the following national awards:

NATIONAL AWARDS

The Cyril Styring Trophy, the Association's most prestigious award, was presented to Harry Arnold in recognition of his contributions to the IWA for over 30 years including his editing of *Waterways* magazine from 1992 to 2007 during which time he had raised the profile and immediacy of the magazine.

The Christopher Power Prize, for waterways restoration, was awarded to Bernie Jones for his work on the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals. A cash prize would be given to the Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust.

The John Heap Salver, for fund-raising work, was presented to Roy Chandler for his long term commitment and work in raising considerable funding for IWA's Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.

Richard Bird Medals for members of the Association whose efforts and support are considered to have brought significant benefit to the Association over a sustained period were awarded to Roy Cleverly, (Milton Keynes Branch), Mick and Carole Golds (Erewash Canal), John Stockland and Margaret Beardsmore (both of Lichfield Branch), John Brice (Chiltern Branch) and The Canal Cruising Company of Stone, which was founded in 1948 by Randell Wyatt and has been run by the Wyatt family ever since.

The branch achievement award for 2013 was made to Chiltern Branch.

THANKS

Les Etheridge thanked all the members who had attended and then closed the meeting.