

Minutes of the 55th Annual General Meeting of The Inland Waterways Association, held at 2.00pm on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at Foxlowe Arts Centre, Market Place, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6AD.

#### PRESENT

84 members were present and 4 members of staff.

#### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Les Etheridge, National Chairman, welcomed those present to the meeting. Bob Luscombe, Chairman of North Staffordshire and South Cheshire Branch provided a brief introduction including the safety notices and Les then introduced Karen Bradley (MP for Staffordshire Moorlands) who gave an opening address to the meeting.

#### MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2014 were approved subject to the deletion of the words quoting views expressed by individual members at the meeting on the resolution concerning the Articles of Association.

#### ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Gordon Harrower, national treasurer, introduced the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2013 and highlighted the main areas of income and expenditure during the year including the restoration works that had been carried out. Fundraising Officer Toby Gomm was introduced to the meeting and it was noted that to date new fund-raising initiatives had raised £32,450 for the Association. Gordon Harrower concluded by stating that there are many future challenges for the Association; improving our income generation remained vital.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 and the Report of the Auditors thereon were approved with no votes cast against.

#### AUDITORS

The meeting approved a resolution to reappoint Saffery Champness as auditors to the Association and trustees were authorised to fix their remuneration.

#### ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Two nationally elected trustees, Ray Carter and Gordon Harrower were due to retire on completion of their three-year terms of office. There was one vacancy for a nationally elected trustee. Thus there were three vacancies for nationally elected trustees. Three candidates had put themselves forward: John Butler, Ray Carter, and Gordon Harrower, therefore no ballot was required and they were appointed as trustees each to serve a three-year term of office.

#### ELECTION OF REGION CHAIRMEN

Nominations had been sought for the posts of region chairman for South East Region, London Region, and Eastern Region. There had been one nomination each for (a) South East, being for Gareth Jones, and (b) London Region, being for Paul Strudwick, so therefore no ballot was required and they were appointed as trustees each to serve a three year term.

Paul Roper retired as chairman of South East Region and did not stand for re-election. Les Etheridge expressed the Association's thanks to Paul Roper, on behalf of the trustees, particularly for his efforts as chairman of Navigation Committee. Richard Collet-Fenson retired as chairman of Eastern Region and did not stand for re-election. This post remained vacant and nominations would be sought again in the November edition of Waterways magazine.

## CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Les Etheridge gave a presentation covering his second year as national chairman and addressed various topics including a review of membership issues, festival performance in 2014 and going forward to 2015.

### Looking Forward

Les Etheridge stated that in terms of the strategy going forward there were 3 key strands:

- (1) Protecting the Inland Waterways;
- (2) Ensuring IWA is seen as an active and responsible organisation;
- (3) Improving how we get the IWA message across

He referred to the meetings with senior politicians that he had attended in relation to the proposed transfer of the Environment Agency's navigations to Canal & River Trust and the campaigning work that was on-going in relation to the HS2 route and its adverse affect on the waterways. Les also reported on issues concerning continuous moorers and stressed that IWA was supportive of people living on boats and of continuous cruisers who met the requirement to bona fide navigate. However IWA did not support people buying boats to live on without recognised residential moorings who were not meeting the requirements. Unfortunately the rules had not been strictly enforced by British Waterways in the past and Canal & River Trust would find it difficult to resolve the problems but it was essential that they did to ensure that all boaters had a fair opportunity to moor and use facilities.

Les Etheridge reiterated the importance of IWA being seen as an active and responsible organisation that made things happen and was therefore very pleased to report a large increase in the number of branch working parties and the continuing high level of WRG volunteer hours that resulted in a great deal of high quality practical restoration work .

He also commented on the excellent technical restoration work that is performed by the Association through support to waterway societies and the provision of expertise by IWA's honorary consultant engineers. A new marketing committee had been set up. Les Etheridge stated that he considered that IWA had an important role in ensuring the future of the inland waterways.

Gren Messham gave a presentation on the HS2 campaigning work. He outlined the proposals and clarified the stages of the consultation and identified progress to date. IWA's role had been to review the proposals as they affected the waterways both locally and nationally. Gren said the main issues were noise nuisance and visual intrusion. IWA had been pro-active in suggesting site specific solutions in particular the proposed realignment at Fradley. Helen Whitehouse asked for a vote of thanks to be recorded to Gemma Bolton, at Head Office, for her graphics and other work, including for the production of the HS2 leaflet for the recent House of Commons Select Committee site visit at very short notice.

Les Etheridge thanked Gren for his presentation and handed over to John Butler for the announcement of the following national awards:

### NATIONAL AWARDS

The Christopher Power Prize for waterways restoration was awarded to Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust for the work that the Trust's members and others have put into re opening this important cross country route

The John Heap Salver, for fund-raising work, was presented to Bernard and Joyce Snell. They have worked tirelessly for the IWA and in particular the Kent and East Sussex Branch for over 20 years and through their fund raising work enabled many projects benefiting the waterways to be undertaken.

Richard Bird Medals for members of the Association whose efforts and support were considered to have brought significant benefit to the Association over a sustained period were awarded to Gillian Bolt

(Chester and Merseyside Branch), Ron Evans (Chester and Merseyside Branch), Roger Savage (North Staffordshire and South Cheshire Branch), Philip Sharpe (Lichfield Branch) and Christopher Skelhorne (North Staffordshire and South Cheshire Branch),

#### THANKS

Les Etheridge thanked North Staffordshire and South Cheshire Branch for hosting the event and all the members who had attended the meeting on behalf of the trustees and then closed the meeting at approximately 4.20 pm.