

Minutes of the 49th Annual General Meeting of The Inland Waterways Association, held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 27th September at the Saxon Suite, Daventry Leisure Centre, Daventry.

PRESENT

About 110 members were present, plus members of staff and guests.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

John Fletcher, national chairman, introduced himself and welcomed those present to the meeting. He introduced Lynda Payton, chairman of Northampton Branch, who were hosting the meeting, and he then introduced and welcomed Harry Arnold, a vice president of the Association, who had kindly agreed to chair the meeting. [Members of Head Office staff were introduced during the course of the meeting]. Lynda Payton gave house announcements relating to emergency procedures, etc.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from 158 members. The names of those offering apologies for absence were not read out to the meeting.

MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of the 48th Annual General Meeting was proposed by Audrey Smith and seconded by Roger Squires.

Neil Edwards, company secretary, explained that a proxy form had been included with the agenda this year, and that a number of members had sent in proxy forms nominating either the chairman of the meeting or another named person to cast their votes for them. Some of these proxy votes were firm instructions, and some were at the discretion of the nominated proxy. In cases where the proxy votes were discretionary, the nominated proxies had advised the company secretary how they wished those votes to be cast prior to the meeting.

A vote was then taken on the resolution to approve the minutes of the 48th meeting. In addition to the members present, there were 133 proxy votes. All votes were in favour, other than 2 votes against and 14 abstentions. The resolution was therefore approved.

The chairman of the meeting signed a copy of the 2007 minutes.

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Helen Elliott-Adams introduced the Association's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2007. Particular mention was made of the successful year by the subsidiary company Essex Waterways Limited, and that the remaining operations of Waterway Recovery Group had transferred from the trading subsidiary Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd to the Association on 31st December 2007. Helen also encouraged members to remember the Association in their will, as that was a particularly tax-efficient way for the Association to gain income. From the floor, Laura Sturrock asked why the auditor's remuneration continued to increase and was so high, to which Helen-Elliott Adams responded that a selection of firms were in the process of being asked to tender for work during the coming year.

Acceptance of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2007 and the Report of the Auditors thereon was proposed by Joanna Dalton and seconded by Roger Squires.

A vote was then taken on the resolution to Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2007 and the Report of the Auditors thereon. In addition to the members present, there were 133 proxy votes. All votes were in favour, other than 3 abstentions. The resolution was therefore approved.

AUDITORS

Members from the floor asked whether it was appropriate to reappoint the current auditors whilst there were some concerns at value for money. Clive Henderson, deputy national chairman, and with relevant professional knowledge, explained that it was highly desirable for the Association to always have an auditor, but that in the event that another firm was selected during the year, this could be agreed by a resolution of the trustees and the re-appointed firm would then resign their services, and that this was the usual way to proceed.

A vote was then taken on the resolution to appoint Baker Tilly as auditors to the Association in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 1985 and that the board of trustees (Council) were authorised to fix their remuneration. In addition to the members present, there were 133 proxy votes. All votes were in favour, other than 1 vote against and 15 abstentions. The resolution was therefore approved.

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

The company secretary explained that Julia Hones and Gillian Smith had completed three years terms of office. Julia Hones was retiring and had not sought re-election. Gillian Smith had also been elected as chairman of North West Region, so did not need to stand again for election. During the past year, Stuart Burt and Judith Palmer had resigned as trustees. Douglas Beard and Raymond Carter had sought election. There were therefore two candidates for four places, and so no postal ballot had been necessary.

A vote was then taken on the resolution to appoint Douglas Beard to the Board of Trustees (Council) for a term of three years. In addition to the 115 members present, there were 133 proxy votes. All votes were in favour, other than 5 votes against and 5 abstentions. The resolution was therefore approved.

A vote was then taken on the resolution to appoint Raymond Carter to the Board of Trustees (Council) for a term of three years. In addition to the members present, there were 133 proxy votes. All votes were in favour, other than 1 vote against and 7 abstentions. The resolution was therefore approved.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

A resolution from the board of trustees (Council) had been put forward recommending that:

(a) from 1st January 2009, the subscriptions be amended as follows

Ordinary Member (UK)	£27.00
Family or Joint Adult Membership (UK)	£34.00
Overseas Single Member (Outside UK)	£46.00
Overseas Family or Joint Adult Membership	£50.00
Under 26 (For any member under the age of 26)	£18.00
Senior Citizen (UK)	£18.00

Joint Senior Citizen (UK)	£20.00
Overseas Senior Citizen (Outside UK)	£27.00
Charities, Voluntary Bodies and Navigation Authorities	£47.00
Charities and Voluntary Bodies with turnover of under £1,000	£32.00
Small Companies, with up to 20 employees	£52.00
Large Companies, with more than 20 employees	£104.00
Single Life Membership (UK)	£405.00
Joint Life Membership (UK)	£510.00
Single Life Membership (Outside UK)	£690.00
Joint Life Membership (Outside UK)	£750.00
Senior Citizen (over 60) Single Life Membership (UK)	£270.00
Joint Senior Citizen (over 60) Life Membership (UK)	£300.00
Senior Citizen Life Membership (Outside UK)	£405.00

(b) one year's free membership be offered to participants that attend a full week on one of Waterway Recovery Groups' Canal Camps for the first year following attendance at a Camp

(c) monthly membership rates be one twelfth of the annual rate, rounded up to the nearest ten pence, and

(d) the qualifying age for senior citizen membership had risen to 65 in 2007, but that those qualifying from age 60 would continue to do so.

The company secretary explained that subscription rates had last increased at the previous AGM, with effect from 1st January 2008, and that trustees had decided to propose small increases each year so as to keep pace with inflation without having any large increases in one year. This was reflected in the resolution proposals, which increased subscriptions by an average of about 4%, this being the rate of inflation for the year ending April 2008, as trustees had made their recommendation in May 2008.

Ian West proposed the resolution and it was seconded by Stanley Holland.

A vote was then taken on the resolution. In addition to the members present, there were 133 proxy votes. All votes were in favour, other than 5 votes against and 5 abstentions. The resolution was therefore approved.

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

The company secretary explained that the trustees had proposed a special resolution to adopt revisions to the Articles of Association as set out in a document available at the meeting. The proposed changes had been circulated to members in advance and had been available on the Association's web-site for some weeks. The company secretary explained that the Articles had been first adopted in 1958 and had been periodically updated since then, most recently in 1999. The purpose of the current revision was largely to modernise some of the wording and reflect more recent changes in law and recommended practice.

From the floor, David Stevenson wondered why the title 'Council' had been changed to 'Board of Trustees' and why it was necessary for there still to be more nationally elected trustees than regionally elected ones; Peter Scott felt that the changes to the Articles were not as far reaching as they could and should have been; and Guy Morgan felt that further changes should be considered to separate region chairmen from being regionally elected trustees.

John Pomfret, a trustee, responded to these points, suggesting that trustees should take note of these points raised and consider whether further revisions to the Articles should be considered in the near future.

Tim Lewis then proposed the resolution and it was seconded by Peter Kelly.

A vote was then taken on the resolution. In addition to the members present, there were 133 proxy votes. There were a total of 181 votes in favour, 22 votes against and 23 abstentions. The resolution was therefore approved.

The chairman of the meeting signed a copy of the revised Articles of Association to be kept in the Association's official records.

AWARDS

Harry Arnold presented Richard Bird medals to Stanley Holland, Ian Thompson, Marian Stearman, Arthur Page and David King. John Fletcher announced that Richard Bird medals were also being awarded to Fred Andrews, Philip Ogden, Pat Pritchard and Keith Gibson, who were not able to be present at the meeting.

John Fletcher then announced the winners of the branch achievement award as IWA's Ipswich Branch, particular for the branch's continuing work on the Ipswich & Stowmarket Navigation. The award was presented to Chard Wadley, Ipswich Branch chairman.

The Cyril Styring Trophy, the Association's most prestigious award, was presented to Liz Payne.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

John Fletcher reminded those present that this would be his last Annual General Meeting as national chairman, as was due to retire from the post at the November meeting of trustees. He reflected on issues that had arisen during the past year, and during his six-year term as chairman, and how his time as national chairman had, especially recently, taken him through great changes in his personal circumstances. He had been particularly pleased to be able to open the Middlewood section of the Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal, including the Margaret Fletcher Tunnel, eight days previously, and only the previous day had been present at the re-opening of the Droitwich Barge Lock, which WRG had worked on through the summer, financed by a very successful appeal supported by IWA.

John Fletcher then gave an informal slide presentation covering the past twelve months.

Stanley Holland then led members in a tribute of thanks and gratitude to John Fletcher for his six years as national chairman.

Harry Arnold thanked members of IWA Northampton Branch for providing an excellent venue, and others for their work, and members for taking the trouble to attend.

John Fletcher thanked Harry Arnold for chairing the meeting, and brought the proceedings to a close at 4.10 pm.