

Minutes of the 50th Annual General Meeting of The Inland Waterways Association, held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 26th September at the Council Chamber, Milton Keynes Civic Offices, MK9 3HQ.

PRESENT

About 75 members were present, plus guests and six members of staff.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Clive Henderson, national chairman, introduced himself and welcomed those present to the meeting. He introduced Tony Collins, chairman of Milton Keynes Branch, which was hosting the meeting, and he then introduced and welcomed Tony Hirst, a vice president of the Association, who had kindly agreed to chair the meeting. Tony Collins gave house announcements relating to emergency procedures, etc.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from 22 members. The names of those offering apologies for absence were not read out to the meeting. Members asked that their sympathies be given to Stanley Holland, who was awarded a Richard Bird Medal at the 2008 AGM and who had recently suffered a stroke.

MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of the 49th Annual General Meeting was proposed by Les Etheridge, seconded by Vaughan Welch and unanimously agreed.

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Helen Elliott-Adams introduced the Association's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2008, and drew members' attention to the financial results for trading activities including Essex Waterways Ltd, iwashop.com and IWA Festivals. The net deficit on the trading by Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd and the loss on investments consequent to the downturn in the financial markets were noted. There had been a reduction on income, as the previous two years had benefitted from windfall income resultant from VAT claims after the Fleming case. Waterway Recovery Group's activities were fully reported within the Association's accounts.

In response to a question seeking further explanation as why the Association's activities for generating funds had declined from £923,695 to £791,379 Helen Elliott-Adams explained that she did not have a detailed analysis to hand but could provide this following the meeting.

Spencer Greystrom expressed concern that the Association's charitable funds were funding the loss made by Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd following the loss made at the Wolverhampton 2008 National Festival. Ian West, chairman of IWA Festivals, explained that the trading company was funded by a loan made by IWA on a commercial basis under an arrangement for which advice had been sought from the Association's auditors. The loss was retained in the company and would be paid back from future profits. Tony Hirst recommended that the full transcript of Spencer Greystrom's question be put to trustees for consideration at a future meeting, which met with agreement.

Acceptance of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2008 and the Report of the Auditors thereon was proposed by Peter Kelly, seconded by Liz Payne and unanimously agreed.

AUDITORS

John Reeve proposed and Alison Smedley seconded the resolution to reappoint Saffery Champness as auditors to the Association and trustees were authorised to fix their remuneration. This was unanimously approved.

SPECIAL RESOLUTION TO CHANGE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF TRUSTEES

Tony Hirst introduced a proposal to reduce the maximum number of trustees to 18 from the previous limit of 24, as allowed for under article 51 in the Articles of Association. Ron Heritage and Spencer Greystrom said that they felt this number was still too high, and that a smaller maximum number was desirable. Neil Edwards explained that trustees had considered this question over a number of meetings and had concluded the current proposal was the best compromise between experience, fair representation and ease of discussion at meetings. Mandy Morley said that many organisations had many more trustees; Tony Dunning queried the composition of trustees with region chairmen and John Baylis explained that, in a reorganisation many years ago, region chairmen had been included amongst the trustees to ensure good geographical representation. Tony Hirst recommended that the present proposals be adopted and the situation reviewed in three years or so. The resolution was proposed by Mandy Morley, seconded by John Dalton and unanimously agreed.

ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

The number of trustee places having reduced this year, following retirements, there were four vacant places for nationally elected trustees, and two nominations had been received and so no postal ballot had been necessary. A fifth vacancy had been created by the resignation of Vaughan Welch in order to be eligible to be appointed as a region chairman. The two nominations were for Les Etheridge and Clive Henderson. Bill Joyce proposed and John Baylis seconded the resolution that Les Etheridge and Clive Henderson be appointed, both for a term of three years, and this was approved unanimously.

BALLOT FOR REGION CHAIRMEN

Clive Henderson reminded the meeting that nominations had been sought for region chairmen under the new process for their appointment by ballot of each of the region's membership. In the event there was no more than one nomination in any region, and two regions were without nomination, thus there had not needed to be any ballots. The initial periods of office of region chairmen had been set by trustees at their May 2009 meeting, and consequent on this the following were therefore appointed as region chairmen, and also as trustees, with effect from this meeting:

Alastair Chambers, chairman of Eastern Region until the 2011 AGM

John Pomfret, chairman of East Midlands Region until the 2010 AGM

Peter Scott, chairman of North East & Yorkshire Region until the 2010 AGM

Alan Platt, chairman of North West Region until the 2012 AGM

Paul Roper, chairman of South East Region until the 2011 AGM

Vaughan Welch, chairman of West Midlands Region until the 2012 AGM

Nominations for the vacant posts of chairmen of London Region and South West Region would be advertised for in the November edition of Waterways magazine, with a ballot, if necessary, with the result to be announced by 26th March 2010. These appointments would then be until the 2011 AGM for London Region and the 2012 AGM for South West Region.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

A resolution from the board of trustees had been put forward recommending that as from 1st January 2010, the subscriptions be amended as follows

Ordinary Member (UK)

£27.00

Family or Joint Adult Membership (UK)	£34.00
Overseas Membership (per single address outside UK)	£59.00
Senior Citizen (UK)	£19.00
Senior Citizen (UK – two members aged over 65)	£21.50
Corporate – Non-profit making bodies	£47.00
Corporate – Profit making bodies - up to 20 employees	£52.00
Corporate – Profit making bodies - more than 20 employees	£104.00
Single Life Membership (UK)	£540.00
Joint Life Membership (UK)	£680.00
Overseas Life Membership (per single address outside UK)	£1,180.00

One year's free membership is 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

Monthly membership rates are set at one twelfth of the annual rate, rounded up to the nearest ten pence, and

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.

Spencer Greystrom asked whether those paying by monthly membership were not gaining credit at the expense of other members, but Helen Whitehouse replied that the ability to offer monthly membership was a good marketing tool and Neil Edwards explained that the monthly fees were rounded up so there was some extra income. Clive Henderson commended the reduced number of membership categories to save on administration and recruitment costs. The benefits of members paying their subscriptions by direct debit were drawn to attention.

The resolution was proposed by Michael Wright, seconded by Alison Smedley and approved unanimously.

AWARDS

The Cyril Styring Trophy, the Association's most prestigious award, was presented to Roy Sutton in recognition of his work as an Honorary Consultant Engineer. In accepting the award, Roy paid tribute to the work of Tony Harrison, equally a long-serving honorary consultant engineer but who had been ineligible for the award as a serving trustee.

Tony Hirst presented Richard Bird medals to Malcolm Fielding (South Yorkshire & Dukeries Branch), David and Nancy Johnson (Nottingham & Derbyshire Branch), Les Franklin (Milton Keynes Branch) and David Harman (Kent & East Sussex Branch), who were all present to receive their awards.

Clive Henderson then announced the winners of the 2009 branch achievement award as IWA's Stoke-on-Trent Branch, particular for the branch's continuing work on the Burslem Port Project, Uttoxeter Canal restoration, Cheshire Locks campaign, close working with boat clubs and waterway societies in their area and lobbying of local politicians, particularly Staffordshire Moorlands MP Charlotte Atkins, IWA's 2008 Parliamentarian of the Year. The award was presented to Alison Smedley, secretary of Stoke-on-Trent Branch.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Clive Henderson gave a brief resume of his first year as national chairman, and the many places and events that he had visited. He gave special thanks to the many hard-working volunteers at IWA

events, especially the National Festival, and said he had been much impressed by visits to Canalway Cavalcade and more recently to see the work of Essex Waterways Ltd on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.

Tony Hirst thanked members of IWA Milton Keynes Branch for providing an excellent venue, and others for their work, and members for taking the trouble to attend.

Members were asked if they had any questions or comments for trustees.

Ron Heritage and Alison Smedley felt that there could be more encouragement of competition between branches for membership recruitment.

Peter Caswell suggested that some organisations used agents to undertake recruitment work and suggested exploring recruitment to wider audiences.

Helen Whitehouse outlined experiences of recruitment by Lichfield Branch and commended giving talks to other organisations.

Nancy Johnson asked if there were opportunities to counter vandalism through WRG activities, and Spencer Greystrom reported on the positive experiences of River Gipping Trust in using prison labour for restoration work.

Tony Dunning, Mandy Morley and Frank Wallder spoke on the opportunities for volunteer work, especially supporting waterway restoration, for older volunteers.

Clive Henderson gave an appreciation for the trustees retiring from office: John Fletcher (11 years as a trustee, including six years as national chairman), Tony Harrison (15 years as a trustee, including chairmanship of Restoration Committee), Mike Palmer (15 years as a trustee, but continuing as chairman of Waterway Recovery Group), John Baylis (28 years as a trustee – possibly an all time record, including chairmanship of Navigation Committee), Peter Kelly (7 years as South West Region chairman), John Reeve (23 years as chairman of North East Region) and Roger Squires (9 years as chairman of London Region, including chairmanship of Navigation Committee and as a deputy national chairman).

Clive Henderson thanked Tony Hirst for chairing the meeting, and brought the proceedings to a close at 4.15 pm.

Appendix

Apologies for absence were received from:

Harry Arnold	Alastair Chambers	Steve Morley
Julie Arnold	David Pullen	Peter Payne
John & Helen Bedingfield	Ian & Pam Fletcher	John Pomfret
Peter & Gillian Bolt	John Fletcher	Roger Savage
Libby Bradshaw	Helen Henderson	Audrey & David Smith
David Carrington	Stanley Holland	Roger Squires