

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Inland Waterways Association held on 27th March 2010 at Rowington Village Hall, Rowington, Warwickshire.

Present:

Doug Beard	Alan Platt	Paul Strudwick
Ray Carter	John Pomfret	Vaughan Welch
Les Etheridge	Paul Roper	Ian West
Clive Henderson (chairman)	Peter Scott	

In Attendance: Chris Birks [Prospective chairman of South West Region], Neil Edwards [Chief Executive], Helen Elliott-Adams [Finance Manager], Jo Gilbertson [Campaign and Communications Manager], Gerallt Hughes [General Secretary, Committee for Wales], Jerry Sanders [Chairman, Promotions & Communications Manager] and Roger Squires [Chairman, Navigation Committee]

Apologies for absence were received from Alastair Chambers and James Kennerley.

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MINUTES

Trustees approved the minutes of the Board's meeting held on 30th January, including the edited version for publication.

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STRATEGY MEETING

Trustees had met for an informal meeting on 13th March to discuss future strategy for the Association, at which there had been a wide ranging discussion. The following views had arisen from this meeting. Which trustees wished to look at further:

Leadership

1. IWA to build upon its role an umbrella organisation, acting as the leader by adopting behavioural change of organising consultation and facilitating wider dialogue with other interested bodies, particularly where they are members demonstrating support for our aims and objectives. Develop and include other organisations as possible Special Interest Groups, and invite permanent members of other organisation onto IWA committees where appropriate;
2. Be the guardian for all aspects of the inland waterways;
3. Lead the campaign for appropriate funding of the inland waterways;
4. Push the proposals for an inland waterways conservancy to a successful conclusion.

Membership

1. Increase membership over five years to [an amount];
2. Investigate as a priority the use of membership incentives adopting a 'can do' attitude;
3. Investigate as a priority other membership models – e.g. free membership/ support/donate, etc;
4. Offer free IWA membership to those mooring on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.

Youth / Lead programme

1. Investigate the opportunities of developing a youth programme for teens through partnerships with other waterway organisations (e.g. British Canoe Union) and organised youth groups; (e.g. Scouting movement).
2. Give more support to WOW as a pre teens youth programme;
3. Give more support to WRG (including leadership recruitment training and development) to support a WRG based post teen youth programme (from 17 or 18 to 35 years)

4. Develop more volunteering opportunities for members to participate, including clean-up activities tailored to ability, skills and health.

Communication

1. Embrace new technology and maximise its use to reach new audience especially young (including the use of Twitter, Facebook, etc.); use celebrities to make youth programmes more appealing. Look at acquiring patrons.

Trustees reviewed these proposed areas of development and looked at how they might be put into practice.

- (a) **Special Interest Groups.** Trustees noted that Inland Waterways Freight Group already existed as a Special Interest Group, and felt that new groups should be created to cover the interests of (i) boaters and (ii) towpath users, including ramblers and anglers. There was already some contact with waterway user groups, such as the National Association of Boat Owners, through Navigation Committee. There was a need to scope what these groups would do, and what they might achieve separate to Navigation Committee. Peter Scott and Paul Strudwick agreed to take forward proposals for a boaters group, and Ian West, with support from Clive Henderson and Les Etheridge agreed to take forward proposals for a towpath-users group.
- (b) **Guardian of the Waterways.** Trustees agreed there was a need to maintain present work, but there was a need to develop activity at branch level to support such campaigns, and that much more support needed to be given to branch officers to achieve this. Such support would be provided through Navigation and Promotions & Communications committees, although there might be cost implications that would need to be budgeted for. Much more work was required on making it straight-forward for branches to take action. A need to improve e-mail discussion was identified. Recent successes in political lobbying were noted, and there was a need for local briefings for individual politicians. Jo Gilbertson would arrange to provide guidance notes for region chairmen to assist with publicity opportunities at the forthcoming General Election. A range of issues needed to be presented, not just funding.
- (c) **Waterways Conservancy Proposals.** Recent success in promoting the Conservancy proposals to government, user groups, navigation authorities, the press and Parliamentary Waterways Group were noted.
- (d) **Membership Recruitment.** The wish to raise membership to [an amount] in five years was felt to be dependent on progressing new ways to attract people to join the Association. Les Etheridge reported that Finance Committee had discussed the situation concerning membership benefits, and had formed a sub-group of four new members of that committee, who had no pre-conceived ideas, and who had been asked to report back by 12th June. There was also a need to look at entirely new membership structures. Promotions & Communications and Finance committees would need to draw up a development plan for recruitment once the working group had reported back.
- (e) **Membership on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation.** The suggestion to offer free membership of the Association to all those paying for moorings on the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation would be progressed by consulting the views of Essex Waterways Ltd.
- (f) **Youth and Leadership Programmes.** Jo Gilbertson reported that he was already following up an approach with the British Canoe Union, and there had been further discussion at a meeting of Promotions & Communications Committee. Trustees suggested that there were also opportunities to work with Community Boats Association. Promotions & Communications Committee was progressing initiatives with Wild over Waterways.

- (g) **WRG Development.** Trustees agreed that expanding Waterway Recovery Group's range and volume of activities was desirable, but that there were resource implications, both of finance and manpower with the right skills to lead groups. Ian West offered to discuss the position with Mike Palmer, and Jo Gilbertson would seek details of possible opportunities with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award from Jenny Black.
- (h) **Wider Volunteering Development.** Trustees recognised that people would be drawn into the Association if there were opportunities to get physically involved, and that just attendance at monthly open meetings and committees was unattractive to many active people who wanted a more 'hands-on' approach. This would entail new ways of thinking and doing things across the Association. Jo Gilbertson suggested inviting a working group to look at this. Trustees agreed and Jo Gilbertson was asked to progress this.
- (i) **Communications.** Trustees reiterated the importance of using new technology, and for older members currently involved in the Association's management at all levels to embrace the use of new means of communication. IWA's involvement in Facebook groups was noted. IWA's new website was crucial in developing this work, and the recent training seminars for North West and West Midlands regions were commended. Other region chairmen were asked to arrange dates for seminars with David Forrester as soon as possible.
- (j) **Branch and Region Communications.** Clive Henderson asked if one or more training seminars could be put together for branch and region magazine editors. Promotions & Communications Committee would follow this up.

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PROCEDURES FOR APPOINTMENT OF REGION CHAIRMEN

Trustees noted that there was an absence of clarity in the *Procedures for the Appointment of Region Chairmen*, as to the effective date of appointment of a region chairman in the circumstance (a) that there is only one candidate and (b) that the post concerned is vacant at the time that nominations are sought, or up until the date of the Annual General Meeting (or date six months subsequent, where a second process occurs owing to lack of candidates first time round). Trustees had considered this situation in July 2009 when it was known that Alastair Chambers was the only candidate standing for Eastern Region, and that Derek Bradley has retired at the previous region AGM, so there was no sitting region chairman due to retire at the AGM. At that time, trustees decided the date of appointment remained at the AGM, and consequently neither Alastair (nor Peter Scott, though slightly different circumstances) were invited to attend the September 2009 meeting of trustees, which preceded the AGM. It had, however, been suggested, that in such circumstances it might be helpful if the appointment were to take effect on the closing date for nominations – there being no practical necessity to wait any longer. Trustees agreed this view and asked that the following additional clause be added to the *Procedures*:

- 19, In the circumstance that there is only one candidate for a region chairman post, and that there is no region chairman occupying the post at the time that nominations are sought, or for any reason between that time and the time that the ballot result would have been announced had there been more than one candidate, then the one candidate shall be appointed with effect from the closing date for nominations to that post.

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NATIONAL AWARDS

The National Awards Panel had met, discussed the nominations made and submitted a report of their recommendations. After a short discussion, trustees expressed their thanks to the Awards Panel and decided to make the following awards for 2010: [details omitted]

These awards would remain confidential to trustees and the National Awards Panel only until announced. Note: Presentation would be arranged by David Forrester, likely at the national AGM.

Trustees also considered a recommendation to instigate a new Tom Rolt award, and asked the National Awards Panel to follow this up, as a single award, for a piece of literature, with criteria to be set based on Tom Rolt's lifetime interests, including waterways, railways, cars and engineering. Trustees asked that consideration be given to an award honouring Robert Aickman in time for his centenary. Clive Henderson would convey this to the Panel.

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INLAND WATERWAYS ENTERPRISES LTD – LETTER OF COMFORT

The chief executive had circulated a paper to trustees recommending the issue of a letter of comfort to the directors of Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd, as its accounts at the end of 2009 showed that it was apparently reliant upon the Association not to demand immediate repayment of loans to the company. This position was caused by the trading loss in 2008 of £23,720 being brought forward to 2009, with a profit of only £11,235 in 2009 leaving a deficit of £12,485. Directors of Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd present at the meeting declared their interest in this matter. Trustees agreed to the provision of a letter of comfort, in the form recommended, and authorised Ray Carter and Alan Platt to sign the letter on trustees' behalf. Helen Elliott-Adams would arrange for the letter to be cleared with the auditors and finalised.

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COMMITTEE FOR WALES

The National Chairman welcomed Gerallt Hughes to the meeting and asked him to report on recent activities of the Committee for Wales. Gerallt explained that the Committee takes a pan-Wales view, but tried to avoid duplicating work undertaken by IWA's two branches in Wales. The Committee had most recently met in November 2009 at Wolverhampton Boat Club, and following recent changes to branch committee officers, there would need to be a change to the Committee's membership. Potential new members were being sought. The Committee was next due to meet at the end of May in Newport.

The Committee was particularly concerned with the issue of funding for waterway restoration schemes in Wales, and was trying to lobby the Welsh Assembly Government for greater support, which was not helped by responsibility for waterways in Wales remaining with the London-based Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. In summary, the committee was working well.

Trustees thanked Gerallt for attending the meeting and for his continuing work with the Committee. Trustees were delighted that Gerallt was willing to continue in office for a further period.

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COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The chief executive had circulated a paper with the agenda. Trustees:

- (i) Approved the reappointment of Madeline Dean to Promotions & Communications Committee for a further term of three years;
- (ii) Approved the appointment of Gillian Smith as a corresponding member of Promotions & Communications Committee for a term of three years;
- (iii) Approved the reappointment of Audrey Smith as a corresponding member of Promotions & Communications Committee for a term of three years;
- (iv) Noted the resignation of Frank Wallder from Promotions & Communications Committee;
- (v) Noted the retirement of Malcolm Bridge from the WRG board;
- (vi) Noted, with sadness, the recent death of Barry Green;

(vii) Note the updated list of national committee members, subject to (vi).

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COMMITTEE AND COMPANY MINUTES

Trustees accepted the following committee and company minutes:

Finance Committee	30 th January (including edited minutes, for publication)
Navigation Committee	30 th January (including edited minutes, for publication)
Restoration Committee	12 th December (including edited minutes, for publication)
Promotions and Communications	5 th December (including edited minutes, for publication)
Waterway Recovery Group	17 th January (including edited minutes, for publication)
Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd	25 th January (including edited minutes, for publication)
IWA Festivals	7 th November
Essex Waterways Ltd	18 th December (including edited minutes, for publication)

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MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Neil Edwards had prepared, and circulated with the agenda, a paper covering matters arising from previous meetings. This was noted, and Clive Henderson gave updates on the following minutes:

Minute 9218(b) – This item had been cleared with seminar for branch and region officers held at Stoke-on-Trent on 6th February

Minute 9218(c) – Now that trustees had seen the branch and region role paper, this would be put to branch and region officers for consultation.

Minute 9272 – Possible options for board evaluation were being considered; trustees asked that charitable funds were not spent on using online evaluation systems or engaging consultants to undertake this work.

Minute 9328 – Trustees asked that the note on data protection be re-circulated to them.

Clive Henderson noted that there remained three vacancies amongst the nationally elected trustee positions, and asked that suitable candidates be encouraged to stand for election.

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BRITISH WATERWAYS ADVISORY FORUM

Clive Henderson informed trustees that he allowed a nomination for his name to go forward to the ballot for chairman of British Waterways' Advisory Forum. Trustees endorsed this.

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BRANCH AND REGION BYELAWS

Region chairman had expressed concern that the current byelaws required them to approve every publication and press release, however routine, mundane or non-contentious. After a short discussion, trustees agreed that clause 4.2 in both the region and branch byelaws be amended by the addition of the words "*with the exception of those just promoting routine activities*" after the words "*press releases and the like*".

Clive Henderson reported that he had been asked by Promotions & Communications Committee to attend a meeting of each region committee in a listening-only capacity, which he had agreed to do.

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NEXT MEETING

Trustees noted that the next meeting (apart from any special meeting to consider strategy) of the board of trustees would take place on Saturday 12th June at Rowington Village Hall. Subsequent meetings, in 2010, are due to take place at:

31 st July	(at Rowington)	4 th December	(at Lapworth)
9 th October	(at Rowington)		

Trustees were reminded of the forthcoming Canalway Cavalcade, and of the National Festival, and asked to make arrangements to attend if at all possible.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 4.00 p.m.