

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Inland Waterways Association held on 12th April 2014 at Rowington Village Hall, Rowington, Warwickshire.

Present:

Ivor Caplan	Clive Henderson	Peter Scott
Ray Carter	Gren Messham	Jim Shead
Richard Collet-Fenson	Alan Platt	Gillian Smith
Les Etheridge (chairman)	David Pullen	Paul Strudwick
Gordon Harrower	Paul Roper	Vaughan Welch

In Attendance: Neil Edwards [Chief Executive], Helen Elliott-Adams [Company Secretary] and Jerry Sanders [chairman of Promotions and Communications Committee]

Apologies for absence were received from Roger Holmes, Mike Palmer and Kevin Woods (the latter two of whom would have been in attendance).

9772

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ivor Caplan, Clive Henderson and Vaughan Welch recorded their membership of Canal & River Trust's Council. Ivor Caplan, Alan Platt, David Pullen, Peter Scott and Vaughan Welch recorded their positions as members of Canal & River Trust partnerships and other advisory committees. Clive Henderson is a member of Canal & River Trust's appointments panel.

Les Etheridge asked trustees present for any other declarations of interest. There were none.

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MINUTES

The minutes of the Trustee Board's meeting held on 8th February 2014, including the edited version for publication, were approved as a true record of the meeting.

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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

(a) Visitor Moorings

Les Etheridge reported further on a meeting, covered in his paper, held with Canal & River Trust about visitor moorings and Paul Roper updated trustees on a discussion held at the morning's meeting of Navigation Committee. Members of Navigation Committee had felt that the situation on many of CRT's waterways was not improving, and were concerned that some other user groups were being uncooperative in assisting CRT to address the situation.

(b) Waterways Chaplaincy

Les Etheridge reported on a further discussion at the CRT meeting concerning the Waterways Chaplaincy service, and sought views from trustees as to whether IWA should provide some support for this service. [Discussion omitted]. Les Etheridge suggested there was consensus that IWA should not provide financial support but should try to be helpful with moral support, such as awareness-raising. Other trustees agreed but on the proviso that the term 'chaplaincy' was avoided.

(c) Stratford River Festival

Les Etheridge updated the meeting that a good site had been secured for an IWA marquee at Stratford River Festival. Clive Henderson acknowledged there was a considerable amount of organisational work to

undertake to make preparations in time, but he was working with Stratford-upon-Avon Canal Society, CRT and Avon Navigation Trust.

(d) Robert Aickman Birth Centenary

Paul Strudwick advised that IWA North & East London Branch committee members had decided that they did not feel able to progress the application for a blue plaque to be placed on Robert Aickman's former residence at Gower Street. [Discussion omitted]. Trustees thought that a resident in the area was needed to drive this forward. Paul Strudwick said that the branch had made an initial approach to the local authority but found it too difficult. Paul Strudwick would compose an e-mail for mailing to members in the area to see if there was a volunteer willing to take this forward.

(e) Marketing Group

Les Etheridge briefed the meeting on the developing work on the Marketing Group. Trustees agreed that the group should become a full national committee and that Frank Wilson would be invited to the June trustees meeting, so that the new committee's role and organisation details could be agreed.

(f) HS2 Update

Gren Messham updated the meeting with developments on the HS2 rail project, which had also been reported at the morning's meeting of Navigation Committee. Tony Hales, CRT chairman, and Richard Parry, CRT chief executive, were due to meet David Higgins, chief executive of HS2 Ltd, on 24th April. A detailed briefing had been provided for Cheryl Gillan MP to speak in the House of Commons. Michael Fabricant MP, the local MP for the Fradley area, had publicly spoken of his opposition to HS2, and had cited damage to the waterways as one of his reasons. Gren Messham noted the continued political pressures on HS2 Ltd to progress the railway building plans as rapidly as possible. Vaughan Welch reported that there might be some planning gaining in furthering the Lichfield & Hatherton canals restoration as a consequence of the HS2 plans, provided that an alternative low-level route proposed by Michael Fabricant did not proceed.

(g) CRT Restoration Initiative

Les Etheridge reported further on the meeting with CRT concerning its waterway restoration initiative. Les Etheridge noted that Geraint Coles intended to run some training courses on various aspects of restoration work, the first of which was likely to take place on 21st June and that he was also working on ways to encourage young people to become involved in restoration and achieve educational qualifications. Les Etheridge suggested that Geraint Cole be asked to prepare a paper for a future trustee meeting.

(h) Membership Recruitment

Les Etheridge updated the meeting on membership recruitment work being undertaken by Katie Thomas, membership recruitment officer at Head Office, and said that there was a lot of work being undertaken which was beginning produce results. Les Etheridge mentioned that Lord German and Richard Benyon MP, the previous waterways minister, had both joined IWA as personal members as a consequence of Sir Tony Baldry's award acceptance speech at the recent parliamentary dinner.

Trustees:

- (a) Noted the national chairman's update report.
- (b) Agreed the concept of support being offered to the Waterways Chaplaincy service on a clearly non religious basis.
- (c) Approved in principle the formalisation of the Marketing Group as a national committee, subject to their role and organisation details being brought to, and approved at, the June trustees meeting.

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STRATEGY

Les Etheridge had prepared a paper, which had been circulated with the agenda, to update trustees on the actions that had been undertaken to follow up the strategy discussion at the February meeting. The paper was noted.

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IWA VISION AND MISSION

Les Etheridge briefed trustees on the Marketing Group's consideration of IWA's vision and mission statement. A paper had been attached to the agenda and a number of trustees had commented by e-mail prior to the meeting. Les explained that the paper did not attempt to change any policy, but was intended to improve the Association's communication of its work and marketing. [Discussion omitted] Les Etheridge asked trustees to submit written comments to Frank Wilson by 21st April, i.e. just under two weeks before the Marketing Group's next meeting on 3rd May. The need for crisp and straight-forward messages was noted.

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HEAD OFFICE PREMISES

Gordon Harrower introduced a paper, attached to the agenda, which summarised the findings of a working group set up by Finance Committee. The paper had concluded that there was no economic benefit of moving premises during the remaining term of the current lease. [Discussion omitted]

Trustees agreed:

- (a) The Association should plan to retain its existing premises at Chesham for the duration of the present lease.
- (b) Equipment presently stored in the Lichfield area should be reviewed with a view to either removal to Chesham or disposal, within the next six months, following consultation with relevant parties.

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APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Neil Edwards had prepared and circulated a paper with the agenda covering proposed committee appointments. Trustees:

- (a) Approved the appointment of Gren Messham to Navigation Committee for a term of three years.
- (b) Approved the appointment of Gemma Bolton, John Butler, Gordon Harrower, Peter Johns, Phil Newman and Jim Shead, each for a term of one year, and the appointment of Frank Wilson for a term of three years, to the Marketing Group.
- (c) Noted that Ray Carter and Gordon Harrower were due to complete their present three year terms of office as nationally elected trustees at the 2014 AGM.
- (d) Noted that Richard Collet-Fenson, Paul Strudwick and Paul Roper would complete their present terms of office as Region Chairmen at the 2014 AGM.

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COMMITTEE AND COMPANY MINUTES

Trustees accepted the following committee and company minutes:

Finance Committee	8 th February
Navigation Committee	8 th February
Restoration Committee	25 th January

Promotions and Communications	1 st February
Waterway Recovery Group	26 th January
Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd	8 th February (including edited minutes for publication)
IWA Festivals (now Events)	25 th January
Essex Waterways Ltd	5 th December (including edited minutes for publication)

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MATTERS ARISING

Trustees noted a report circulated with the agenda covering matters arising from previous meetings. With reference to minute 9636(f), Gordon Harrower said that Finance Committee was looking at Key Performance Indicators and expected to bring a report to trustees shortly.

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NAVIGATION COMMITTEE

The following items had arisen from Navigation Committee's meeting held that morning:

- (a) Budget cuts on Environment Agency were a source of considerable concern. The Thames was likely suffer cuts of about 26%. The situation on the Anglian waterways was unclear as IWA no longer had any representation on the Environment Agency's Anglian committees. The Medway was in a much stronger position, owing to a higher proportion of boater funding.
- (b) The state of Sutton (also known as Elvington) Lock on the Yorkshire Derwent was a cause of considerable concern as both the upper and lower gates were in a state of deterioration, and owners of the structure were not inclined to undertake any work. There was no navigation authority for the river, but a long and difficult political history. It was intended to try and encourage a local resolution to the problem and IWA might be asked to contribute some funding.
- (c) There had been a recent visit by IWA Great Ouse and Peterborough branches to Welches Dam, which remains closed to navigation and it was expected that local proposals to reopen the lock and adjoining channel would now be developed
- (d) Visitor moorings on CRT waterways remain a cause of great concern, and had been reported in the national chairman's report earlier in the meeting (minute 9774(a)).

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PROMOTIONS & COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

Jerry Sanders briefed trustees on Promotions and Communications Committee's response to the strategy review (minute 9775), and noted that support was needed from region chairmen. He drew attention to the Stratford River Festival and suggested that national press coverage should be obtained, but reported that his committee did not have the abilities to take that on at present.

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WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP

Mike Palmer had submitted a note to the national chairman prior to the meeting giving a report on (a) progress at Inglesham Lock, (b) plans for further work on the Grantham Canal in conjunction with Canal & River Trust, and (c) the new employee to support WRG's work, based at Head Office.

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RESTORATION COMMITTEE

The following items had arisen from Restoration Committee's recent meeting:

- (a) The seminar jointly organised with CRT on 10th May had not yet reached the planned level of bookings and region chairmen were asked to encourage restoration groups in their area to book.

- (b) Recent improvements to the restoration pages on the Association's website, which were being undertaken by Gemma Bolton at Head Office, were noted.
- (c) The Committee planned to make improvements to the Restoration Handbooks.
- (d) The Committee had reviewed the navigation potential on the Somerset Levels.
- (e) The Committee had reviewed the outcome of recent IWA grants to [a restoration group].
- (f) The Committee planned to undertake an electronic survey amongst waterway restoration groups.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE

Gordon Harrower reported on the following items that had arisen from Finance Committee's meeting that morning:

- (a) The draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Association and subsidiary companies had been considered and were being finalised for approval at forthcoming meetings.
- (b) The achievements and work in hand for fund-raising, particularly noting Acheman Challenge, were noted.
- (c) A risk management paper was under preparation for [a future] trustees' meeting
- (d) There were continuing membership recruitment concerns notwithstanding promising results from work by the Membership Recruitment Officer. The conversion rate from the 'First Year Free' members had increased to 32%.

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INLAND WATERWAYS ENTERPRISES LTD

Gordon Harrower reported that the following items had arisen from the Inland Waterways Enterprises Ltd board meeting held on 2nd April:

- (a) Preparations for Canalway Cavalcade, Saul Pageant and the Northampton 2015 rally were all proceeding satisfactorily, albeit with a general shortage of willing volunteers.
- (b) The board had discussed the longer-term viability of the company under its present structure and there was concern that minimal profits from the constituent parts of the company were being outweighed by overheads. Each part of the company was being thoroughly reviewed to see whether it was sufficiently viable, taking account of overheads and benefits to the Association.

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GILLIAN SMITH

Gillian Smith announced that she would not be able to attend meetings for a period of about eight months as she planned to travel abroad commencing in October. Trustees noted and approved the period of absence.

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ACHEMAN CHALLENGE

The National Chairmen led trustees' congratulations to the team of Head Office staff in their 'Acheman Challenge' sponsored event, which had raised over £13,000 towards the purchase of a new excavator for WRG.

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NEXT MEETING

Trustees noted that the next meeting of the board of trustees would take place on Saturday 14th June 2014 at Rowington Village Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 4.02 p.m.