

Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

31st Annual General Meeting on 26th October 2019

At Sheldon School, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 6HJ

Minutes of the Thirty First Annual General Meeting of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust (Company number 226779) held at Sheldon School, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 6HJ on 26th October 2019 at 14.00

Present:

Brian Stovold	Chairman
Roderick Bluh	Treasurer/Trustee
Steve Bacon	Trustee
Sue Cooper	Trustee
Colin Fletcher	Trustee
Jenny Stratton	Trustee

Andrew Matters	CEO
Tessa Lanstein	Head of Projects and Land Acquisition
Patricia Clements	Head of Administration

Welcome by Brian Stovold

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked Dave Maloney and MCC Branch for hosting and organising the event. Thanks also given to Patricia Clements, Trust Administrator. The meeting commenced at 14.00.

1. Apologies for absence

David Lynch	Christine Watt	Max Crofts
Dawn Humphries	Rowan Brockhurst	Pam Pugh
George & Melanie Eycott	Julia & Robin Springett	Val Melville
Mr & Mrs Ian Woodhead	David Poulton	Gordon Olson
Ian Lindsay	Adrian Smith	Joye Tucker
Peter Dore	Councillor Steve Watts	Ray Canter
Mike Chislett	Mrs & Mrs A Elwell	Peter Wilkinson
Jeremy Wilcox	Colin Arch	Darrel Donaldson
John Sully	Wendy Cole	Gillian & Ray Bond
Priscilla & Peter Roberts		

2. Resolution to approve the Minutes for the thirtieth AGM held on 13th October 2018 and to consider any matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved unanimously by a show of hands.

3. Resolution to approve the Directors' Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 2019

The Directors' Annual Report was approved unanimously by a show of hands.

The meeting was adjourned for the Treasurers Report.

Treasurers Report

Rod Bluh better news this year than in previous years. The accounts show a loss for the year of £60,000. However, due to the nature of the accounting practices, the accounts do not necessarily reflect the year. The Trust was running low on reserves in March, so spending was restricted to income only. General reserves are

gradually rebuilding after that low point. The Board of Trustees has set and the Trust sticking to a budget which is working.

The Reserves Policy is currently under review by the Board of Trustees and should be in the region of £30-£50K.

There are still £140K of loans to repay and these loans secured on the Peterborough Arms. These three loans are not immediately due for repayment, but there are from individual members whom the Board of Trustees would like to repay sooner rather than later.

Peter Wilkinson has been appointed as Head of Accounting.

The day to day running of the charity is Ok but more money coming in is required.

Various questions were asked of the Treasurer regarding the accounts

Q – Sale of NB Nonsuch – how much did we receive?

A - £22K

Q – Is NB Dragonfly included as an asset?

A – Dragonfly is included on the tangible assets on the balance sheet

Q – Where are the Membership numbers included in the accounts?

A – Membership numbers are included in “Donations & Legacies”

Q – Have membership subscription amounts increased?

A – Good news! Yes, they have increased significantly since new arrangements have been put in place. Income is circa £4K per month from memberships at present

Q – Is a breakdown of Membership by banding available?

A – Not yet but this data should be available in the future

Q – What is in the category “Other Expenditure”?

A – Consultancy Fees £34K, Office Staff £38K and the remaining £35K contains all the other items like rates, water, postage, administration, and insurance.

4. Resolution to approve the Trust’s accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019.

Proposed: Richard Mason, Seconded: Colin Fletcher, unanimously approved.

5. To elect members to the Board of Trustees

a. In accordance with Articles 41 and 42 of the Articles of Association, the following members offer themselves for re-election:

Colin Fletcher – Proposed Sue Cooper, Seconded Dave Maloney

Jenny Stratton – proposed Brian Stovold, Seconded Tessa Lanstein

b. In accordance with Article 36 of the Articles of Association, the following member offers themselves up for re-election:

Steve Bacon – Proposed Arthur Lovage, Seconded Sue Cooper

c. In accordance with Article 44, the Inland Waterways have given notice of its intention to appoint a nominated representative as a member of the Board:

Sue Cooper will continue as the IWA nominated representative on the Board.

d. To elect a Trustee to represent the Membership:

No nominations received for this role. Please could any interested parties approach the Chairman after the meeting if they would be interested in this important role.

6. Resolution to approve the re-appointment for Messrs Morris Owen as accountants for the Trust at remuneration to be determined by the Board.

Proposed – Rod Bluh, seconded Chris Barry

7. Special Business

No special business was proposed

8. Any Other Business

Rod Bluh added his apologies for “dropping Brian Stovold in it” by stepping down as Chair and expressed his thanks for Brian’s work as Chairman this year

The formal part of the AGM closed at 14.30

Chairman’s Report

This has been another challenging year.

Thanks were given to the Board of Trustees. A special acknowledgement was made to Sue Cooper, the Inland Waterways Association nominated Trustee who is due to retire shortly as she has taken up the position of Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council. No successor has yet been appointed by the IWA and thanks was given for her support and advice as a conduit to the IWA.

The Chair wished to thank the Vice-Presidents for their on-going support.

At the end of the last financial year, Sheila Wade stepped down from her positions on the Executive Committee and as Treasurer/Trustee. She brought a wealth of experience of marketing, comms and PR to the organisation and thanks was expressed for her service to the Trust.

Goodbyes were also said to Jock McKenzie. Jock had been brought in to Master plan the major restoration projects needed but had also worked on the planning for DLCC and the ongoing Project Heron. The Chair expressed his thanks for all the work which Jock had undertaken.

Gordon Olson stepped down since the end of the last financial year as a Trustee but transformed into Head of Fundraising. Brian expressed his thanks for his continued services to the Trust.

In the breach, again since the last financial year, Jenny Stratton was co-opted on the Board for a temporary period.

We are in need for more Trustees for the Board and this will be a continuing task to find those with the skills necessary for this important role.

Jonathan stepped down at CEO earlier in the year. He was CEO during an incredibly challenging period for the Trust and thanks are noted for his efforts on, for example, the Studley Grange issues.

Andrew Matters has stepped into the breach by becoming our CEO until a more permanent replacement can be found. Thanks go to him for his efforts leading the Executive whilst pursuing full time work.

Thanks went to all volunteers including the BOT, Executive team, boat team and everyone else working on the canal. Thanks also to our small number of paid staff often working well beyond their paid hours to help up out. Nancy in accounts, Elaine chasing membership, Jaye on fundraising and especially to Patricia, our Head of Admin.

Thanks go to our stakeholders, The Wilts, Swindon, and Oxfordshire Canal Partnership, and their Partnership Officer Ken Oliver.

This year marked the third anniversary of the sad loss of volunteer Peter Konitzer. The Trust does not intend that his memory should be forgotten. Whilst we are advised that the CPS are not charging the Trust with criminal charges, we now move to the next stage of the investigations involving the HSE. Everyone is asked to continue to respect the ongoing process and remember Peter’s family.

The priority at the start of my taking on the role of Chair was to try and foster better working atmosphere within the Trust. After a difficult start and since the end of the financial year in question, the Executive is working very much more smoothly, and it is hoped that branches feel more included than excluded now.

There is much to do this next year. The challenge continues to be to cover our core costs and to increase our income such that we can employ professional project management and get some more groundwork started and finished i.e. actual restoration. Work is needed, for example, enhancing our membership and of course, any help for the Trust in whatever capacity, will be welcomed. We should not forget what has been achieved so far. We have our frustrations as an organisation, we are very much still here and I look forward to reporting progress next year.

Trust Awards Ceremony

Juanita Poulton announced and gave out the AGM awards.

Tony Davy Crystal Award 1

This is awarded to the Branch or Peterborough Arms Team or Boat Team which contributed the most volunteer hours. This was awarded to Melksham, Chippenham & Calne Branch and was received by Dave Maloney

Tony Day Crystal Award 2

This is awarded to the Branch or Peterborough Arms Team or Boat Team that has increased its volunteer hours most significantly. This was awarded to West Vale Branch and received by Brian Stovold

Tony Davy Memorial Bowl

This is awarded to the individual volunteer who contributed the most hours during the year to the Trust. This was awarded to Jock McKenzie who was not present but had sent a message of thanks.

Pick of the Branches

This is awarded to the Branch who has recruited the most members. This was awarded to Swindon Branch and received by Rod Hacker.

Presentation by Tessa Lanstein

A presentation was given on some of the current and future work of the Trust.

Open Forum

The usual open forum followed, thereafter.

Meeting closed at 16.10