

**HISTORIC NARROW BOAT CLUB**  
**Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 11.00am on Saturday 17 May 2014**  
**at Hazelhurst Cottage, Denford, Leek, Staffs**

**PRESENT:** Phil Prettyman (Chairman), George Boyle, Clair Butler, Sue Cawson, Mike Harrison, Paul Hunter, Iain MacTavish, Norman Mitchell, Ros Prettyman, Val Roberts, Alison Smedley, Rupert Smedley,

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Richard Booth, David Daines, Rebekah Fuller, Sarah Hale, Bernard Hales, David Lowe, Daniel Mawdsley, Michael Pinnock, Laura Sturrock, Amy-Alys Tillson.

2 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2014 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 **GATHERINGS AND MEETINGS**

3.1 **Easter 2014 at Foxton**

It was agreed that the gathering at Foxton had gone well and had proved to be a good venue in terms of moorings and facilities at the village hall. There had been a good turnout of boats, with many compliments about the location and the social events; the programme and timings for the weekend had worked well; the sale of the plaques had covered costs, with a small profit; the speakers had been interesting and well received; local people had been complimentary about our use of their church for the organ recital and bell ringing. Phil had sent thank-you emails and had received several positive replies. Laura had a note of the quantities of refreshments consumed. The overall cost of the event (taking into account the hire of the village hall, refreshments, band, expenses and the loss on the glasses) had been £800 and it was thought that this was an acceptable use of club funds to spend on an event for members.

Tat Auction - £638 had been raised. It was agreed that, as it had been advertised that proceeds would go to waterways good causes, donations of £200 each should be made to Foxton Inclined Plane Trust, Waterways Recovery Group's excavator appeal and Chester IWA for the River Dee campaign, the remaining balance to go to club funds. Although a donation to CRT's heritage fleet had been suggested at a previous meeting, it was agreed to spread our support more widely as we had already made a substantial donation to CRT's Flood Appeal at the AGM.

Issues

- the musical entertainment on the Saturday evening had been less successful, probably because of different expectations within the audience – some wished to listen to the (fairly quiet) folk singers, others wished to talk. A louder, instrumental, band might be a better choice for our next gathering.
- only about half of the one-pint commemorative glasses had been sold, leaving roughly 100 in stock. In retrospect, and as suggested by Phil at the time, it would have been better to have had the Foxton logo and club name only on the glasses, without the date, making them more generally saleable after the event. It was agreed to sell them at a clearance price of £1.50 each or 4 for £5.

3.2 **Speakers for future events**

Suggested names were: Tony Condor (canals from the air, canals in the landscape, Gloucester docks), Richard Thomas (several talks available of a general nature, possibly ask him to tailor them for HNBC audience of experts), Bob May (BCN), Nick Hill. Also a speaker on the Manchester Ship Canal, name unknown, but good reports received – Sue would ask Annie Macdonald for his name and contact details.

It was agreed that Paul would contact Tony Condor to book him for the 2014 November Social meeting, to talk on 2 topics (canals from the air and Gloucester docks) either side of the refreshment break. A speaker for the March 2015 AGM was to be decided at a later committee meeting.

## 4 PUBLICATIONS

It was agreed that a sensible plan was to aim to publish a book every 2 years. Sue reported that SUFBRS (Saturn) was aiming to publish Jack Roberts' memoirs in 2014.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### 4.2 Kean Keay Sketchbook – published in 2013

Clair reported that 100 had been sold so far, with the Braunston historic boat show coming up when she hoped more would be sold, and Paul commented that the break-even point was 160. Regardless of sales achieved, it was agreed that the production of the book had generated good publicity for the club.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## 5 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Jim Cook (then Events Officer) had suggested several meetings ago that we should have a communications strategy, and had volunteered to produce a briefing paper. However, it was thought that our communication channels with members (newsletter, web page, Facebook and Twitter accounts), press (Press Officer) and within the committee (email) were sufficient and working well so there was no need for a strategy as such. However, David Daines had reported that the members' Yahoo mailing list was little used and that following changes to his email account, he had lost access to his moderator's rôle and was unable to set up or approve new members. Ros reported that the re-design of the web page might be able to incorporate a members' forum and that this could replace the Yahoo list.

### 6 **REPORTS** Written reports had been submitted before the meeting from the following committee members, and are contained in the Appendix to these Minutes. These were taken as read; the topics covered are listed below, with any decisions/discussions shown as bullet points:

#### 6.1 **Chairman** (Phil Prettyman) – report at meeting:

- Phil had sent written support, as agreed by email, to Chesterfield Canal Society for their HLF bid for restoration work on **Python**.
- **Canal signage** - The club had been asked for its opinion on canal signage – after discussion it was agreed that some was necessary but we would urge it to be at a minimum and not to destroy the ambience of the surroundings, that sometimes signs displayed too much information in small print that it was not possible to read while passing in a boat, that some signs were incorrectly positioned. In addition, it was agreed to ask for distances to be given in miles and not kilometres, and for expiry dates to be included on notices posted on lock gates. Iain added that he had heard of a pilot study at Church Minshull to link local communities with the nearby

canal and he expected it to be in the form of canal-side information boards. Phil added that a similar project was underway at Atherstone.

- **New wide beam boats on the southern GU** There had been a committee email thread about the increasing numbers of these boats, which it was thought were probably registered as continuous cruisers but were more likely for live-aboard use as their cruising opportunities were limited. Two aspects caused concern – the number of wide boats being moored semi-permanently along the canal and the potential unfairness as they were licensed by length, when they took up more waterway space than a narrow boat on the same mooring. Phil would contact Beryl McDowall, who sat on the Licensing and Moorings sub-group of CRT’s Navigation Advisory Group, to ask her to raise this issue.
- **Issues to raise with Richard Parry**, CEO of CRT – in the discussion of donations to a waterways good cause (3.1 above), the archive at Ellesmere Port had been suggested but it was felt that the archive was not sufficiently well set up that our donation would be put to good use. Phil was asked to raise this, as well as mentioning the issue of wide beam boats, crowded moorings and perceived licensing anomalies. It was also agreed that Clair or Iain would mention the EP Archive issue informally to Wendy Capelle (ex NWBC Area Manager, now seconded to CRT Museums & Attractions).

6.2 **Secretary** (Sarah Hale) - nothing to report

6.3 **Treasurer** (Laura Sturrock) - summary of funds; monies raised at Tat auction; cost of staging Foxton event; cost of using direct debits for subscriptions.

6.4 **Membership Secretary** (Paul Hunter) - report at meeting:

- Paul reported that he and David Daines were sharing the membership secretary’s role until the new on-line membership database was ready to use. David had sent a list of new members to Val for publication in the newsletter and, as it was believed that all were N/A (ie non-boat owners), there was no valid reason not to approve their memberships.

6.5 **Archivist** (Richard Booth) – no report

- Alison had received 2 items to pass on for the Archive: photos and details of Aster, and photos of Stork in 1964. Ros took the photos for scanning for the website and would send them on to Richard and to Val.
- Val had an earlier permission to print information from the Stratford Canal Society newsletter but Alison would ask Clive Henderson to double check with the current editor that this permission was still valid.

6.6 **Newsletter Editor** (Val Roberts) – press date 2014/2; request for committee info for newsletter; speakers for members’ meetings; article about raffle tickets; new Who’s Who leaflet; Christmas cards printed ready for Foxton; cost of changing to all colour printing; increased postage costs.

- Easter gathering at Ellesmere Port – George reported that he had a list of boats and agreed that he would write a short report. It was believed that Bob Jervis had photos – Val would contact him for 2014/2.
- Colour Printing – it was agreed that the additional cost of £50 for full colour printing was good value and would both update the appearance of the newsletter and save Val a considerable amount of time by not having to “greyscale” the photos. However, it would mean moving to a different printer (the one who did the Christmas cards) and we would therefore lose the franking service (and discounted postage costs) the current printer provided. It was agreed that Iain would investigate the options of purchasing/leasing our own franking machine, and that Val would arrange full colour printing of newsletter 2014/3, using stamps to send it out if a franking option could not be arranged in time.
- Weil’s Disease leaflet – Alison had received a request from WRG for further copies for distribution at their work parties. It was agreed that Val would update the logo and arrange for a further 2,000 to be printed. An earlier decision to provide them free of charge (as good publicity and as a public service by the club) was endorsed.

6.7 **Club Shop** (Clair Butler) – shop takings and sales at Lapworth (AGM) and Foxton; sales of Keay book; shop at Chester campaign rally and donation to IWA funds.

- It had been agreed, by email discussion prior to the meeting, to make a donation to IWA funds from the shop’s takings at the Chester campaign rally.

- Clair and Iain would be attending Braunston by car and would therefore have problems transporting the shop stock to the event. They would liaise with George about the possibility of loading the stock onto Badger at Bollington, Etruria, Stone or Atherstone. Another possibility was to ask the Marina at Braunston if they could store the stock prior to the gathering.

6.8 **Navigation** (Sue Cawson) – report at meeting:

- There had been little response about navigation difficulties from the boats attending Foxton, but Sue had sent in a report to CRT.
- Sue had also written to Graham Holland (CRT Head of Assets) about our collaboration with IWA on identifying problems at winding holes.
- The problem at Napton Lock 10 had been resolved very quickly thanks to an intervention by Richard Parry - a temporary repair had been carried out in order to allow boats through.
- Stoppages winter 2014/15 – draft programme now out for consultation.

6.9 **Press Officer** (Sarah Hale) - noting specific to report, usual activity re Foxton.

6.10 **Website** (Ros Prettyman) - target date for launch of updated website; using PayPal; using Direct Debits; changing the tone of the text; adding closed forums to replace committee email list and Yahoo groups; calendar function; events galleries.

- Having reported that the re-vamped website was likely to go live soon, Ros explained that the boat database would probably stay as it was on the old site and would be updated later as Phase 2. She also outlined Jo Taylor's proposal to create a database capable of logging and recording all parts of an historic boat's hull/cabin, to show how a boat might have been cut and re-joined, or created from separate parts of another boat. The committee felt this was overly complicated and might delay the launch of the Db, probably only being applicable to a few boats.
- Paul, Steve and Ros, at an ad hoc meeting at Foxton, had provisionally set a date of end May for completion of the new site, but this was now looking unlikely. Ros would ask Steve Wood if end June (in time for Braunston) would be achievable.
- Approval was given for the use of PayPal for on-line sales and for membership payments. It was also agreed to offer Direct Debit for membership renewals. PayPal would incur a charge to the club, but it was felt worthwhile to provide a better service to members and the shopping public. In her Treasurer's report (see Appendix item 6.3) Laura had commented that the club did not pay any bank charges as we were treated like a charity, so she hoped that we might not incur a charge for accepting payment by Direct Debit.

6.11 External organisations – no reports

6.12 **Area Reps**

**Central Shires** (Rupert Smedley) – two engineering vacancies; HS2 crossings; overall budget reduced; regular asset visit schedule established; Glascote Top side pond cleared; offside vegetation cleared; hours of volunteer work; Cut Gallows footbridge at Nuneaton; Sharing Towpath consultation; proposed works for 2014;

**East** (Amy-Alys Tillson) – Denver Sluice reopened as planned; new River Manager at Cam Conservancy; few Cam visitors; complaints about depth on Northampton flight.

- Sue commented that it was well known that the Northampton flight could be shallow, but it was not generally perceived as a huge problem.

**East Midlands** (Mike Harrison) – report at meeting:

- Holme Lock on River Trent had been closed for months but was due to open today (17 May). Problems had arisen because of the nature of the underlying ground (sand).
- Sawley flood lock was not being monitored as had been done in the past and was being left “on” when this was not necessary, thereby allowing a build-up of silt. Mike would ask Sean McGinley, Area Manager, for comments.

**London** (Michael Pincock) – additional enforcement officer to be recruited; shortage of official visitor moorings; worsening problems with continuous moorers; action by Islington Council.

- Iain commented that the over-crowding of visitor moorings, as experienced in SE area, was beginning to spread to other areas too.
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- It was agreed to keep a watching brief on the moorings situation, adding our voice occasionally when appropriate, and it was felt that CRT's approach might change when new personnel were appointed following Sally Ash's retirement.

**Manchester & Pennine** (George Boyle) – new marina at Furness Vale and proposed removal of towpath mooring.

- George had not been able to attend the recent User Group meeting.
- Bugsworth Basin – a new wash wall had been completed, but depth was so shallow that a modern boat had been unable to get in close enough to reach the mooring rings on the wall.
- A boat had sunk in the centre of the channel at New Mills and had been causing navigation difficulties for historic and modern craft. CRT had only added warning notices. After several weeks, and several call-outs at some expense, they had finally moved it.

**North Wales & Borders** (Iain MacTavish) – update from CRT on vision and mission; hold on hiring & new appointments may indicate imminent re-structuring; winter stoppage achievements and proposals for next programme; recycling; article on Hurleston for next newsletter.

**North East** (David Lowe) – additional signed visitor moorings on Aire & Calder and Leeds & Liverpool; perceived lack of short-term moorings in Leeds.

**North West** (Daniel Mawdsley)

**South Wales & Severn** (Norman Mitchell) – User Group report – offside vegetation & reeds cleared, draft stoppages plans for Worcester & Birmingham, Droitwich, R Severn

- Richard Parry's (CRT CEO) boaters' meeting - Norman felt the Q&A session had been well handled
- Partnership meeting - Last winter's flooding had left the region with major problems. All signage in the area had been amended from BW to CRT. Senior departmental managers reported at the meeting.
- Saul – a laser-operated bridge was causing problems as its opening was being triggered by passing swans.
- Sue asked if there was any update on the floating pontoons, but Norman had not been able to check this yet.

**West Midlands** (Sarah Edgson) – Dean Davies (Area Manager) being seconded to another role in CRT, Ian Lane covering; presentation on CRT's strategy/internal changes; planned summer works and winter stoppages programme; volunteering; new initiative "floating taskforce" using workboats; grant for 22km of towpath improvements and railway access points but concern over cyclists' speed; HS2 routes and crossings; conservative party conference affecting boats passing through Birmingham city centre in September.

### **Area Rep vacancies**

Following Rebekah Fuller's resignation as West Mids Rep, Sarah Edgson had been approached informally to see if she would be willing to take on the role (to be confirmed at the March 2015 AGM). It was agreed that Phil would send her a written invitation. [Post-meeting note – Sarah accepted the invitation and had been added to the committee mailing list.]

Kennet & Avon Rep – Tom Judd had not sent reports recently nor attended committee meetings and had not stood for re-election at the AGM. Nick Grundy (Beatty) had indicated that he might be willing to become rep for this area following his retirement. Phil would check with Nick about a probable date.

## **7 MATTERS ARISING**

- 7.1 Droitwich plaques (March 2014, item 5) – Alison reported that only 2 remained to be delivered (Manchuria and Gosport). It was agreed to post them rather than wait any longer for an opportune meeting to hand them over.
- 7.2 Windlasses (January 2014 item 10.1) – Sue reported that CRT was investigating standard sizes. Paul would research the possibilities of producing a small steel windlass, not a Dunton replica as previously suggested.
- 7.3 LMS maps (October 2013 item 7.2) – Paul reported that the cost of scanning them was approximately £30 each. It was agreed that he should arrange the scanning.

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 8.1 Basingstoke 2016 – Sue was doubtful whether enough boats would make the journey south to justify the cost of putting on the event. It was agreed that Phil would draft a notice for the newsletter and that we should only go ahead with this venue if we received 30 or 40 positive replies/commitments by the November social. Ros to investigate adding a poll to the website.
- 8.2 Nb Conway (a Claytons cut-down) Alison had been asked for its whereabouts. Sue thought it was located on the Staffs & Worcs. Alison to ask Amy to enquire via Facebook for sightings.

9 **Date and place of next meetings**

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|------------------|-------|---|
| 16 August 2014   | 11 am | Beggarlee Wharf, Church Lane, Horsley Woodhouse   |
| 4 October 2014   | 11 am | 30A Toyse Lane, Burwell, Cambridge  |
|                  |       | (suggested locations were Lapworth, Napton, Braunston or Burwell. It was decided to run a quick email poll after the meeting – Burwell was chosen.) |
| 22 November 2014 | 11 am | Lapworth Village Hall prior to the Members' Social  |

The meeting closed at 5.05 pm

Phil Prettyman  
Chairman