

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT CLUB
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 9.00am on Saturday 7 November 2020
by Zoom software during lockdown-2 of COVID-19 pandemic

PRESENT Phil Prettyman (Chair), Richard Booth, Clair Butler, Sue Cawson, David Daines, Kathryn Dodington, Nick Grundy, Mike Harrison, David Lowe, Ian McCarthy, Ros Prettyman, Rupert Smedley, Laura Sturrock, James Tidy, Amy-Alys Tillson, Lucy Waldron (until 10.10am). Val Roberts in attendance as a guest.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Michael Pinnock, Penny Ross.

2 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 12 January 2019 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting, with the following amendments, identified by Richard on page 6:

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| Item 10, 6 Oct 18 No 51 | correct spelling to Tony Conder instead of Condor. |
| Items 12.1 and 12.4 | correct to National Waterways Museum instead of National Boat Museum. |

3 PUBLICATIONS

3.1 Newsletter Editor

- Lucy outlined the difficulties of identifying items for publication in committee email threads. It was **agreed** that committee emails should be considered closed by default and any items for publication should be addressed to Lucy separately or have the subject heading EDITOR.
- Lucy reported on her success in securing an interview with Mark Williams (ex Mikron, then Harry Potter films and Father Brown TV series) about his boating adventures and interests. She hoped to persuade other well known public figures to be interviewed about canals and boating.
- The latest edition, 2020/3, has been produced in a size 10 font which was a good compromise between economy and readability.
- Press date for 2020/4 was 30 November, hopefully to be distributed before the end of the year.


3.2 Newsletter distribution

- Clair outlined some teething troubles in handling draft copies for proof reading and in communication with the printers. It was **agreed** that proof readers within the Publications group would channel their comments to one nominated person who would forward them in one document to Lucy to avoid multiple entries.
- As a method of sharing large documents, Dropbox had not always been successful. It was **agreed** that emails would be sent to alert recipients that documents had been shared rather than rely on software notifications. It was also **agreed** that, on Kathryn's recommendation, Lucy would explore using WeTransfer (<https://wetransfer.com>) as a method of transfer.
- Clair had explored using alternative printing firms but had found none that could staple as many pages as the newsletter usually contained. Kathryn would send Clair the contact details of a printers in Guildford and Clair would investigate.
- Clair wished to send a copy of 2020/3 to the family of the late Sadie Heritage as it contained a tribute to her. It was suggested she contact Brenda Ward (BCNS) or the Jenners (Nb Eli).

3.3 Weaver book 2 – Waterways of England & Wales 1950-1982

- Phil congratulated Mike on the work he and Peter Oates had done in compiling the second book of "Weaver" photos. David D particularly appreciated the maps to help identify locations and Clair liked the repeated use of a colour coding system which had been a feature of Weaver 1. Mike expressed his thanks to Peter for the maps and to Ros for proof-reading.
- Mike had sent a copy to the British Library but had as yet received no acknowledgement.
- Review copies had been sent out and feedback was awaited, but Mike had received a complimentary postcard from Malcolm Braine - Clair would ask if its contents could be used as a review.
- Lucy asked for reviews to be forwarded to her for the newsletter.

3.4 Willow Wren book

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- It was **agreed** to put an appeal for further information in the next newsletter.

3.5 E-Bulletin

- Phil had recently sent an email to all club members for whom the database held an address.
- It was a factual update with bullet points and was not intended in any way to cover the same ground as the newsletter.
- It was **agreed** to continue to issue E-Bulletins from time to time, to incorporate news items from NAG and from discussions with navigation authorities.

Lucy (on NZ time) left the meeting at this point.

4 CRT's TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Kathryn, Sue and Phil had taken part in a online meeting with CRT staff who were leading on the current consultation on the reform of the Trust's T&Cs. They had been reassured to learn that the Trust's intention was not to seek ways to limit the use of historic narrow boats on certain waterways, but nevertheless the committee was aware that written T&Cs might be interpreted differently by future management of the Trust, and it was therefore essential that the eventual wording could not be interpreted to the disadvantage of our members' boats, nor in a way that would allow insurance companies to dismiss claims. The current draft wording was woolly.
- Amy reminded the meeting that none of the proposed T&Cs applied to commercial vessels.
- It was **agreed** to form a working party (Richard, Ian, Sue, James) to draft a form of words which could be submitted to CRT. It was important that the text of the T&Cs prohibited out-of-gauge craft from navigating certain waterways but also acknowledged the historic precedence of ex-working boats being able to navigate some waterways, especially where the current official dimensions were inaccurate. Richard had produced a body of work on canal dimensions for BW/CRT, but it was not known what had happened to it. It was important to secure grandfather rights and also to future-proof against official dimensions being reduced by the Trust.
- It was **agreed** to urge club members again to register their boats with the National Historic Ship Register as it was apparent that CRT relied upon such registration when assessing boats for historic significance. It was suggested that the committee could help by producing a generic statement of significance that members could adapt in their submission to NHS.

5 EVENTS (affected by COVID-19 pandemic)

5.1 AGM 14 November 2020

- Steve Wood had set up a virtual meeting using Zoom software on his account which allowed up to 100 participants and unlimited time. To date 25 participants had registered.
- Publicity about the Zoom meeting had gone out in the newsletter but unfortunately distribution had been delayed and the closing date was no longer appropriate. An alert updating members about the new closing date had been posted on the club's Facebook page and the website and Phil had sent an email to all members for whom we held an email address.
- Ros was acknowledging requests as they were received and would send out joining instructions mid-week before the meeting.
- Agenda and documents - it was **agreed** to postpone the motion on changing Rule 3(f) of the constitution about GDPR. Ros would update the agenda (previously sent out with newsletter 2020/1 for the postponed March 2020 AGM) and would send it with the joining instructions. The annual accounts had been sent out with newsletter 2020/2 and the minutes of the March 2019 AGM were on the website. Ros would add the accounts to the website and include links in the notification email.
- It was **agreed** to retain the item on elections to committee posts. Ros would check about voting/polling facilities within the software. [Post meeting note: Steve had purchased an additional Zoom add-on which including voting options. Laura would reimburse him for the one-off month's fee.]

5.2 **Easter at the Port, April 2021**

Sue reported that there had been no recent planning meetings and it was doubtful that any gathering would go ahead. If one did, she thought it would be a small event and limited in numbers. Ian had been asked to give a talk.

5.3 **Club's London Gathering, May 2021**

- Michael had confirmed to Phil that the working party (Michael, Sue, Ray Butler) had recommended that the event be postponed because of the uncertainty about future pandemic restrictions, the short timeframe and the potential financial loss to the club from late cancellation of venues. Sue reported that the team was still keen to organise a London event, maybe in 2022 if the situation improved.
- Laura would contact the venue to cancel our provisional booking and Sue would inform her in good time if another booking needed to be made for 2022.
- Ros would update the Events calendar on the club's website.

6 **HNBC CAMPAIGN – SAVE OUR WATER and WATERWAYS CHAMPIONS**

- The original launch in March 2020 at the AGM had not taken place due to COVID-19 restrictions. Phil suggested we try again in March 2021.
- James commented that despite fewer boat movements this year, there had still been water level problems in the London area which hinted that user-errors were not to blame but rather more to do with the infrastructure and maintenance. Ian concurred, adding that water problems on the Rochdale, even after leaks were fixed, might be to do with the loss of local knowledge and experience of water flow management on lock flights amongst new staff.
- Committee members would forward questions to Kathryn to pass on to Adam Comerford (AGM speaker) so he could address them in his talk.
- Phil wondered if the Trust could consider bringing in experienced retired staff to help with in-service training of volunteers and new staff.
- Phil would follow up a Champions contact for the K&A and find out whether the proposed Reading Abbey festival was going ahead in 2021.

7 **AWARDS**

7.1 **2019 Key and Hemelryk Awards**

- Phil had presented the Key trophy to The Spey Group while SPEY was on dock at Northwich, and David D had presented the Hemelryk trophy to Dawn Tigwell for CANIS MAJOR at the Canal Museum at Stoke Bruerne. The extra plinth for the Hemelryk award was still to be done and extra plaques would need engraving. Clair would liaise with Dave Linney about the plinth and would organise the engravings.
- David had prepared the memento mini-plaques and certificates for both winners.
- The trophies would need collecting during January.

7.2 **2020 Key & Hemelryk Awards**

- David reported that no entries had been received to date. There was some discussion about possible candidates and it was acknowledged that COVID-19 restrictions had limited the opportunities to work on vessels.
- Phil suggested the committee might look at previous year's runners-up if no new nominations were received but urged committee members to send suggestions to David D for consideration at January's meeting.

7.3 **Special Award (new)**

- David showed how the brass mini-plaque could be adapted for a new award that the committee could use for a variety of purposes – eg to acknowledge continuing maintenance or outstanding service
- It was **agreed** that he should contact the foundry to order a batch of 20 which Clair would collect.

8 **MATTERS ARISING from ACTION LIST dated 12 January 2020**

Jan 20, 6.2 Banners – Clair reported that Sandra Green had produced artwork, Nick would re-send DBA information.

Jan 20 9.2 Webmaster payment & SO letter– Laura had completed both actions

Jan 20, 9.6 Newsletters – Val had newsletters packed and ready to go

Jan 20, 9.6 Talk at Chesterfield – Val had attended, the talk had been reasonably interesting but she was not sure for wider audience. Ros to research an existing list of potential speakers and circulate it.

Jan 20, 9.7 Shop stock – Clair had retrieved Key books, now stored at Shrewsbury. 2nd hand books had been disposed of. Christmas cards were boxed and ready to go when gatherings resumed.

Jan 20, 11 Mountbatten grant application – James reported the application had not been successful.

Oct18, 3 HARDY funding application – Kathryn reported nothing received.

Mar 19 New printer – Laura reported Penny no longer required a new printer as she had made other arrangements.

Sept 19, 5 Helpers for newsletter – superseded by creation of Publications Sub Committee.

Sept 19, 8.4 Heritage Advisory Grp – Sue to send Phil name of new national heritage adviser, Phil to follow up. Amy reported a disappointing lack of feedback from CRT to IWA's approaches on heritage.

May 17, 10.2 – Richard had box of photos of diagrams for modelling, from an unknown source. Clair suggested he should ask in newsletter for donor to get in touch.

9 REPORTS had been received from the following committee members and are contained in Appendix 1 to these minutes. These reports were taken as read, topics raised are shown in italics. Other discussions and verbal reports at the meeting are listed as bullet points.

9.1 **Chairman** (Phil Prettyman) – *CRT's Terms & Conditions, Boaters' Rep meetings, Nat Waterways Museum's Collections Advisory Panel, e-Bulletin*

9.2 **Secretary** (Kathryn Dodington) – *Stoke Breurne Canal Museum, Regional Advisory Board membership, Blisworth tunnel incident, sinkings, boat horse road, Village At War 2021*

- **Insurance** was due soon, Kathryn expected insurers to require answers to 5 probity questions as in recent years. Phil, Kathryn, Laura, Lucy, Richard and Penny (as Officers) would need to answer.
- **CRT maps and resources** – Dr Becky Peacock (National Waterways Museum) had agreed to safeguard items of historic significance in CRT offices that were due to be closed or mothballed. Committee suggested Braunston office maps, Ocker Hill, Little Venice, Gurrells Way (Rochdale). Kathryn to write to Stuart Mills, CRT Chief Investment Officer, requesting assurance. [Post meeting note: confirmation received from Stuart Mills that artefacts would be logged and moved if necessary.]

9.3 **Treasurer** (Laura Sturrock) – *accounts for the year to date, balances, reduced travel expenses*

9.4 **Membership Secretary** (Penny Ross) – *No report*

9.5 **Archive** (Richard Booth) – *boat histories on the website, photographic collections, cataloguing of archive files, archive of newsletters, list of extant narrow boats, Midland Canal Transport history, butty article for newsletter*

9.6 **Newsletter Editor** (Lucy Waldron) – *verbal report at meeting*

- See Items 3.1 and 3.2

9.6 **Newsletter distribution (Clair Butler)** – *PO service Drop&Go, delivery problems to CRT Milton Keynes, proof reading issues, printing delays, Sadie Heritage family contact*

- See item 3.2
- Clair wondered if the CRT Northwich offices remained open to receive newsletters. Sue thought the depot was being used but that office staff had been transferred to Wigan. It was believed that CRT's Milton Keynes offices were not being re-leased by them. [Post meeting note: Kathryn wrote to Liz Waddington, Editor of CRT's The Source, for an updated list of which offices were closing and where staff were relocated.]

9.7 **Shop** (Clair Butler) – *favourable response to Weaver 2, other books and cards being ordered, stock reducing, stock take due at end of month*

9.8 **Press** (Amy-Alys Tillson & James Tidy) – *verbal report at meeting*

- The next HNBC column in NarrowBoat would be about the Weaver 2 book.

9.9 **Awards** (David Daines) – *presentation of trophies, long term merit award, 2020 awards*

- See item 7

9.10 **Website & Social Media** (Ros Prettyman) – *website updates, Facebook announcements*

- Clair reported that some emails from Phil about the AGM had ended in members' Spam boxes. This was difficult for the club to control, but Ros would put a note on the club's Facebook page asking members to look, and also reminding them that they could apply up to 13 November, the day before the AGM.

9.11 **Navigation** (Sue Cawson) – *NAG update, customer service facilities, British Canoeing, managing areas of high demand, Harecastle bookings, vegetation, dredging scours, winter stoppages programme, 2020/21 stoppages*

9.12 Regional Co-ordinator Reports:

East Midlands (Mike Harrison) *verbal report at meeting*

- Mike noted that former lock houses were on the open market at asking prices of £420-500K

London & South East (Michael Pinnock) – *HNBC gathering, London boat numbers, dredging, weed growth, Hammersmith Bridge, preventive maintenance, itemised lock listing issues*

- James mentioned the current consultation on changing arrangements for boaters in London region (more facilities, bookable moorings) and wondered if the club should respond. It was **agreed** the response was best left to London reps with local knowledge.

North West (Nick Grundy, Ian McCarthy) – *reports on Llangollen, Shropshire Union, Macclesfield & Peak Forrest, Trent & Mersey*

- An email from Nb Alton suggested that water supplies on the Macclesfield and the Peak Forrest canals were unlikely to be sorted soon and that he expected problems to continue for the next 3 or so years which would present difficulties for coal boats trading on those canals.

Wales & South West (VACANCY)

West Midlands (Rupert Smedley) - *WM Regional annual meeting, WM User group report, dredging, Cannock Extension dredging, new Hazelhurst footbridge*

Yorkshire & North East (David Lowe) – *Leeds marine aggregate traffic, Friends of Naburn, Figure of Three locks*

- David explained that although welcome, the new freight trade to Leeds was posing problems for CRT due to a shortage of lock keepers. Increasing tonnage would entail more lock workings and skippers were not permitted to self-operate. There was a worry that toll income barely covered the staff costs and dredging costs were high as the spoil was contaminated. He believed CRT had applied for funds to help, outcome awaited.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

10.1 **Modern engines or electric propulsion in historic narrow boats**

Rupert, who was involved with an IWA sustainable propulsion group, wondered whether the club would consider that an historic narrow boat that had an electric engine installed to meet pollution guidelines should still be considered historic. After a wide ranging discussion, it was **agreed** that, provided such adaptations did not preclude the boat from being returned to its as-built condition, there was no reason not to consider it “historic”. Ian commented that NHS Register had varying levels of historic accreditation according to changes made, and this might be one of them.

10.2 **Thanks to Steve Wood**

The committee recorded their thanks to Steve for his invaluable help with the IT practicalities of running the club, from website updates and revisions to Shop and PayPal issues, newsletter mailing labels and virtual meetings.

11 **DATES & TIMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

9 January 2021 at 9.00am (online via Zoom)

Further dates in 2021 to be discussed at January meeting.

The meeting closed at 1.15 pm

Phil Prettyman
Chairman