

HISTORIC NARROW BOAT CLUB
Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 10.00 am on Sunday 7 May 2017
at Millennium Hall, Vicarage Road, Marsworth HP23 4LR

PRESENT: Phil Prettyman (Chairman), Richard Booth, Clair Butler, Sue Cawson, David Daines, Nick Grundy, Mike Harrison, Iain MacTavish, Norman Mitchell, Michael Pinnock, Ros Prettyman, Val Roberts, Alison Smedley, Rupert Smedley (afternoon), Laura Sturrock.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Sarah Edgson, Bernard Hales, Paul Hunter, Ian McCarthy, David Lowe, Daniel Mawdsley, Amy-Alys Tillson, James Tidy.

2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2017 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 AGM 4 MARCH 2017

- **Organisation** - the recent AGM had been a well attended (about 100 people) and good humoured occasion. All elections had gone through on a show of hands, with no votes against. David D commented that we seemed to have struck on a good format that worked well.
- **The invited speaker**, Julie Sharman, CRT's head of asset management, had spoken interestingly about her early career as an engineer, although her later explanation of how CRT classified and quantified its assets had been rather technical. However, the Q&A session at the end had lasted quite some time and had again been interesting. Phil pointed out that the technicalities of CRT's asset management were critical to future grant renewals.
- **Constitution** – Laura had pointed out that part of the constitution relating to disposal of assets on dissolution of the club did not meet HRMC's tax guidelines. It would therefore be necessary for the committee to submit a motion at least 28 days before the 2018 AGM to change Item 7. Laura would work with Paul to draft suitable wording to be sent out with Newsletter 2017/4. It was noted that changes to the constitution had to be agreed by a majority of members present and that voting slips would therefore be required.

Future speakers – Sue remarked that Tony Lewery had given a very entertaining talk about horse boating at the Ellesmere Port gathering recently; Alison mentioned that Chris Clegg was in the process of digitising a large collection of 1960s photographs; Nick reminded the meeting that he had prepared a talk/presentation about Pleasure Boating in the 1930s, 40s and 50s, which had been compiled from Grundy family 'archives' - mainly surviving photographs and log books of their trips on early hire boats before WW 2 and on their cruiser Heron from 1946 to 1955; Clair commented that Terry Putnam had given an entertaining presentation of the last years of Blue Line and Willow Wren carrying. It was agreed that a shorter presentation was needed for AGMs due to the business meeting taking up some of the time but that longer presentations were better suited to the November Socials or to club gatherings. The following timetable was suggested:

- 2017 November Social – Allan Jones already booked
- 2018 AGM – Sue to ask Tony Lewery
- 2018 November Social – Nick
- Gatherings – Chris Clegg and Terry Putnam.

4 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

- **Procedure** – Phil explained that he had sent interested members a set of tasks that simulated the type of work and attention to detail expected of a Membership Secretary. He had not set a deadline as it was felt that anyone taking up the post needed to be a quick responder anyway. He had made the responses anonymous and had then circulated them to the committee for rank ordering, which had produced two clear leaders. Paul had phoned them with additional questions about time management and availability and Paul's synopsis was read to the meeting.
- **Voting** – after a long and thorough discussion, the matter was put to a secret ballot and the clear winner was Penny Ross. Phil would arrange to go and see her with Paul and Laura to hand over the box of membership paperwork, and would arrange a time for training on the database by Steve. Ros would check address, email address and phone number and would add to the committee contact details, mailing list, website and website membership form as well as forwarding details to Val for the newsletter. Phil would contact the other members who had applied.

- **Interim arrangements** – Phil thanked Mike for stepping in to clear the backlog of cheques and membership letters, and Steve Wood for continuing to update the database and produce welcome letters.

5 AUCTION 25 MARCH 2017

- **Vendors' messages of thanks** for a successful auction had been received from Sadie Heritage, Malcolm Braine and Wyvern Shipping
- **Procedure** – Laura commented that the auction had run very smoothly, the timings were about right (60 Lots per 2-hour session) and the payments system had worked well.
- **Catalogue Photos** – Phil and Iain commented that processing other people's photos of auction items, and filling in the gaps, had been more time consuming than taking all the photos themselves and had resulted in variable quality in the catalogue.
- **Additional Lot items** – Phil reported that he had been approached by members with potential auction items after the catalogue had been issued, and had not been able to accept them.
- **Recommendations for any future auction:**
 - **Commission** – Laura recommended that any future auction would need to take about £10K in order for it to be worthwhile in view of all the work involved, or we would have to increase our commission. This auction, and the previous one, had been based on quality items from only 1 or 2 major vendors, caution would be needed if multiple vendors wished to sell items of variable value.
 - **Photos** - for consistency of layout, size and quality, vendor's own photographs would not be accepted.
 - **Calendar** – Ros commented that having 3 major events (AGM, Auction, Gathering) over a 6 week period had been too much of a burden on the small organising team.
 - **Timing** - Phil recommended a longer lead-in time for members to submit items and a clear deadline.
- **Thanks** – Nick proposed a formal vote of thanks to the organising team who had done the majority of the admin and preparatory work. Agreed *nem con*.

6 GATHERINGS

6.1 BROWNHILLS, APRIL 2017

- **Location** - Phil reported that, despite some initial worries and reports about local crime, the Silver Street moorings had turned out to be a good spot. Handy for local shops and the High Street, and the Community Centre was a good and reasonably priced venue for a weekend of social events. He also believed that the club had gained campaigning kudos for holding events on less-visited waterways.
- **Tat auction** - £413 had been raised and bidders at the auction had agreed that a donation to the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust would be appropriate. It was suggested that the club either match-fund the amount raised to £800 or top it up to £1,000. It was agreed that Laura would send the donation of £1,000 to the LHCRT's Tunnel Vision (David Suchet) appeal to raise £1m by 2019.
- **Martin O'Keefe** (Friday night's speaker) did not want any expenses but had asked for a donation to BCNS instead. It was agreed Laura should send £50.
- **Thanks** – Phil would send formal thank-you emails/letters to both speakers.
- **Navigation issues** – see 8.7 Navigation.

6.2 ELLESMERE PORT, APRIL 2017

Sue reported a huge improvement in the organisation of events at the Port this year (viewing of collections, tours, young curators) and press coverage had been good, resulting in over 7,000 visitors on the Saturday. She would be happy to continue her role as HNBC liaison for next year's Easter weekend of 30 March – 2 April 2018.

6.3 2018 – HEBDEN BRIDGE?

The committee's decision to seek more 'interesting' venues for its gatherings appeared to have been welcomed by members. At the Brownhills event, Paul and Di Monahan (Madeley) had suggested Hebden Bridge as a venue to coincide with local Arts Festival (23 June-2 July in 2017) or for the end-of-May bank holiday weekend and members present had been supportive. However James had pointed out that the end-May date would clash with the BCN challenge and Mike emailed [post meeting] to confirm a clash with ECPDA 50th anniversary rally at Langley Mill.

CRT backing would be crucial and the trip would need to be co-ordinated for water supply and lock usage (similar to Woking) but would not involve setting up social events as the festival would provide these. It could follow on from attendance at the Port at Easter, and, as Graham Boxer (CRT Head of Museums) had been positive about welcoming visiting boats, Phil would investigate if free longer stay-over moorings could be obtained at the museum. Nick suggested a convoy trip along the Ship Canal, but pointed out that individual booking were preferable to avoid

mandatory rafting up. He also suggested investigating moorings at Sowerby Bridge, Alison suggested that shorter boats be encouraged to use alternative routes to Hebden Bridge.

7 PUBLICATIONS

7.1 **Tunnel Book** - Alison reported that there had been no further progress since her report to the committee meeting on 4 March 2017. [REDACTED]

7.2 **Weaver II** – [REDACTED]

8 **WRITTEN REPORTS** had been submitted from the following committee members, and are contained in the Appendix to these Minutes. These reports were taken as read.

8.1 **Chairman** (Phil Prettyman) – verbal report at meeting.

Committee job descriptions – prompted by the need to update the Membership Secretary’s job description, Ros had worked with post-holders, Paul and himself to create/update descriptions for most other committee posts. These had been emailed prior to, and were again circulated at, the meeting for comments. Laura asked that Insurance be added to the Secretary’s role. Ros would upload the descriptions to the Committee Contacts page of the website and forward soft and hard copies to Paul for the club’s records.

Meetings etc - Since the AGM on 4 March, Phil reported that he had been involved in the following (not counting the Auction or Brownhills which are reported elsewhere):

- **17th March – licensing consultation.** He took part in a telephone survey by Involve, an external independent charity specialising in public engagement. During nearly an hour’s conversation he managed to cover a range of points – including: types of licence, problems of licence evasion, the plethora of wide boats appearing in inappropriate places, and the need to encourage the preservation of historic boats and especially historic butties.
- **22nd March – CRT Council Meeting at Bath.** This was preceded by a visit to the Claverton Pumping Station in the River Avon valley as it was being operated by volunteers. This was a fantastic piece of industrial and waterways heritage and if members had not seen it working he urged them to visit. The meeting proper was more interactive than previous council meetings and he had been able to raise issues and have a proper discussion. The overall meeting was constructive and gave opportunities of networking with senior management, trustees and partnership chairs.
- **5th April – CRT National User Forum in Birmingham.** Phil had previously circulated a report on this meeting. Apparently as he was a Council member he could attend the NUF independently, so this meant that another member of the committee could formally represent the club at these meetings.
- **10th, 28th April, 2nd May – CRT Trustee Interviews.** As a member of the CRT Council appointments committee Phil was involved in the interviews for new trustees. Three trustees have reached the end of their statutory 2 terms and must be replaced (this includes John Dodwell and Lynne Berry, both boat owners). They have particularly strong experience in the fields of finance, investment and charity management. There had been a large and very strong field of high quality applicants in these areas. Phil’s job has been to focus on their knowledge and enthusiasm of the waterways! So far the poorest candidates had been eliminated.
- **3rd May – A telephone interview by BBC Radio (Surrey and Sussex)** for their “Mid-Morning” programme. In the short time that he had (the rest of the programme had over-run!), he was able to give a few plugs: about the canal network in general and the Wey and Arun restoration in particular.

8.2 **Secretary** (Paul Hunter) – no report

8.3 **Treasurer** (Laura Sturrock) – bank balances; donation to BCNS; Tat auction donation; Brownhills Community Centre donation; income from Auction at Weston.

- **Bank accounts** - Laura explained that the club’s constitution required 2 signatories for bank account payments. NatWest had been used for several years and had income from many older standing orders, but did not offer on-line facilities. The wait for monthly statements caused a delay in verifying that membership subscriptions had

been paid. The club's Lloyd's account offered on-line facilities and was used when members requested BACS details. Both bank accounts could be used to pay in money from the Shop and the Newsletter, depending on which was located more conveniently. Laura also monitored the club's PayPal account for payments. Iain had suggested at an earlier meeting that Metro Bank might offer a better deal. Laura had investigated this but determined that the services offered were the same as those from Lloyd's and proposed no further action be taken.

- **See also** 5 Auction (future commission) and 6.1 Brownhills (donation to BCNS and Tat auction proceeds).

8.4 **Membership Secretary** (interim vacancy, notes from Val Roberts) Friends of Cromford; 3 renewal queries

- **Non-renewals** - Steve Wood had emailed a list of 44 members who appeared not to have renewed since December 2016 and Val was able to offer some information on some of these. Ros would pass on the information to Steve and Penny, and would arrange for membership cards to be sent to those who had paid [post-meeting note: Laura identified 6 payments]. Phil commented that contacting the non-payers would be an appropriate follow-up/reminder exercise by the new Membership Secretary.
- **HNBC Award winners** – Val queried whether the customary year's supply of Newsletters had been arranged for the Narrow Boat Heritage Foundation which had been represented at the AGM by NBHF's manager, Kevin Rush. There was no postal address on their website but Sue undertook to find out. They would also receive membership and a welcome pack.
- **Friends of Cromford** – there had been some confusion and delay in FoC receiving the SO form which was now out of date. Laura would liaise with Val to send another one.

8.4 **Archivist** (Richard Booth) – verbal report at meeting

- **Audlem Mill Canal Bookshop** was planning to publish a second volume of its book "Historic Working Narrow Boats Today" for which he had supplied some photographs, as had Nick and Ros.

8.5 **Newsletter Editor** (Val Roberts) – press date 29 May; urgent reminder for submission of reports; Weaver photos at Gloucester duplicates; quotations for membership leaflet printing; missing publications for Archive; boxes of photo collections for long-term storage; Data Protection Act query.

- **New membership form** – the quotation from the printers used by FoC was extremely competitive but Val was worried about quality. She shared copies of the ones done for FoC but these were felt to be adequate, heavier paper not being required. She would await Penny's contact details and would then order a quantity.
- **Storage boxes for long term archive** – Iain considered that the club would need to fill about 10 such boxes to make the costs viable. Val had 3 boxes packed, Richard estimated he would have a further 2 possibly 3 when he had finished digitising archive material. Iain wondered if Paul would have old Minutes to add, and Nick commented that he had a small box of material. Phil suggested that initiating the storage facility might bring in more donated material and thought that an article for the Newsletter would be appropriate.
- **Access to members' records and the Data Protection Act** – Val had forwarded a suggestion from a member on how the club could distribute members' details despite the DPA. Ros pointed out that the committee had spent a good deal of time working on a club policy that was in line with the law (based, with permission, on that issued by IWA) and strongly disagreed that it should be ignored. She argued that attention should be paid to implementing 2 provisions of the policy, namely a list of members+boats, and a list of names+addresses for committee members only. A printed version of the latter would amount to 26 pages so she proposed distributing it by email to the committee. The list of members+boats would need to be worked on by Penny and Steve. Nick commented that members of the Dutch Barge Association with a login were able to see brief details of fellow members and wondered if this could be done for the club's website. Ros would ask Steve. Alison commented that a new version of DPA would be coming into effect in 2018 so our policy would need to be re-examined then

8.6 **Club Shop** (Clair Butler) – sales at Lapworth and Brownhills; on-line sales.

- **New book** - Clair mentioned a new book about Staffordshire life at Great Haywood: "A Rural Revolution" . Interest was shown and it was agreed she should buy 5 copies.
- **Braunston Historic Boat Gathering** – Clair warned that she might not be able to take the Shop to Braunston as the previous car park/camping site had been used to dump dredgings from the canal. The proposed alternative car park was some distance away, and might not offer camping facilities. Laura would check.

8.7 **Navigation** (Sue Cawson) – verbal report at meeting

- **Brownhills navigation report by Nick** – Sue commended the detail provided to CRT by Nick and urged everyone who had attended the Brownhills gathering to send reports about navigation problems as it was a 'numbers game'. Mike, as harbour master, had a list of boats and emails.

- **Birmingham & Fazeley** - Richard was particularly concerned by the navigation problems (rubbish in bridge holes and lack of depth at lock landings) encountered by deep draughted boats at Minworth and reminded the committee that the B&F was a main route and should not be compared with the expected problems on part of the BCN.
- **Northgate locks, Chester** – the locks were closed because of a cill failure.
- **Hurleston** – money had been set aside for exploratory work as part of the national budget. Topic on agenda for Partnership meeting.
- **Visit to the Saturn at Trevor basin** – it was expected that Allan Leighton (Chairman of CRT Board of Trustees) and Richard Desmond (publisher and major donor to CRT) would visit the Saturn at Trevor.
- **Filance Lock** – a new problem had emerged recently with a bulge in the lock wall appearing which had caused some boats to become stuck. Phil commented that previously this had been a very “wet” lock with water pouring from the towpath side after emptying - it was now dry but bulging.

8.8 **External organisations** – (Alison Smedley, IWA rep) EA campaign on Anglian area waterways; Edgbaston Tunnel objection; IWA publicity for club auction.

- **IWA East Anglian Waterways campaign** – Alison reported that the campaign was on hold pending the 2017 general election.

8.9 Area Reps

East (James Tidy) – Although James was no longer East Rep, he had sent a report on the Willow’s journey out of the region for which the committee was grateful: dredging through Upwell & Outwell; Nene and Northampton Arm in fairly good shape.

- **Area Rep** - Phil reported that Sarah Levick (Enceladus) who lived locally was willing to be East Rep and it was agreed to co-opt her. Phil would send her the Area Rep job description and ask her to liaise with Alan Buckle (fuel boat Bletchley on R Nene) and club member Jane Charlesworth (the Clypeus at Ely) to pick up boating issues in the area as the Enceladus was Midlands-based.
- **Northampton Arm** – Nick believed that CRT team was carrying out repairs, working its way down the flight
- **Old Bedford River** – Richard believed that several IWA volunteers had managed to navigate the OBR.

East Midlands (Mike Harrison) – Trent warning signs not replaced; complaints about Tatenhill, Dallow locks, Swarkestone bridge, Aston lock.

- **Mick Poyser’s report on problems with locks** – Sue emphasised that the club should follow up on the issues raised to ensure CRT responded and took action, and Phil complimented the report which was exactly what was needed.
- **Missing signage on the Trent** – Sue commented that R Trent was very badly signed and Mike added that what signs there were disappeared regularly and were not replaced.

Kennet & Avon (Nick Grundy) – K&A dredging progress; pump failures.

London (Michael Pinnock) – [post meeting link sent to details of new London moorings]

- **New waterside moorings** - established at Hackney Wick, Ducketts and Actons were designated as “leisure” but appeared to be effectively residential. Clair and Iain would visit and send details and photos to Phil ready for the next CRT Boaters’ Reps’ meeting on 10 May.
- **Bollards** – Clair had noticed that bollards had been painted yellow. Michael commented that barge bollards were being removed.

Manchester, Pennine & Potteries (north) (Ian McCarthy) – new gates without strapping posts; polyurethane grout on lock chambers; planned summer dredging on Macc, Upper Peak, Barton Turn, Lower Peak, R Irwell from M&BBB, Caldon river section; volunteers and achievements; re-development of Marple facilities; Consal Forge leak; HVNC length issues queried, also depth; Bridgewater closed; fishing championship on Shroppie.

- **Strapping posts on new locks** – Ian had drawn attention to inconsistencies in design of replacement lock gates. Sue commented that, despite assurances from CRT that Bradley (narrow locks) and Stanley Ferry (wide locks) workshops had precise drawings for lock gates, often it was the local supervisor who requested like-for-like replacement instead of what *should* be there. She doubted that each workshop had the plans claimed for it. She also commented that she had seen narrow gates for the Shroppie being made at Stanley Ferry despite assurances that Bradley was the expert workshop. Richard, as Archivist and in order to establish a baseline, would write to CRT asking what plans they had at each workshop. Phil asked that Ian look at the maker’s plates on new gates to see where they had been manufactured and to let Sue know.

- **Shower block at Marple** – the committee did not see that the issue of whether and how the Marple facilities were re-furnished was club business, and that they would prefer funds to be spent on dredging. Sue suggested that the local Partnership be asked to bid for external funds and suggested seeking Ray Butler’s advice.

Manchester, Pennine & Potteries (south) (Rupert Smedley) – T&M, new path on Newcastle Road lock.

- **Newcastle Road lock** – Rupert had visited the lock and the new tarmac path along the middle of the lock side was as ridiculous as it appeared in the photographs. Phil commented that there were both aesthetic and heritage grounds on which to complain, as well as lack of consultation. Rupert would send a complaint as Area Rep about the heritage side and Phil would contact the Waterways Manager about lack of consultation.

North East (David Lowe) – Yorkshire ex Commercial Barge group formed; replacement of bottom extra gates at Leeds lock; Mainmast oil tanker trips Hull-Leeds; Port of Leeds project progressing slowly; CRT rules on staffing locks; Drewsbury Arm dredging; NE Waterways Manager becomes interim CRT Head of Boating.

North Wales & Borders (Iain MacTavish) – poorly attended User group; future funding; HS2 impact; EA transfer; new Partnership members; green flag status judging imminent; R Weaver festival; awards for Anderton Lift and Trevor basin; overview of planned dredging; Hurleston formally on list of issues requiring investigation.

- **Whixall Marina on the Prees Branch** of the Llangollen has been sold by CRT to Grocontinental, a local logistics firm with no previous business interests relating to the waterways.
- **CRT marketing initiative** – CRT’s wish to have same “brand identity” impact as National Trust was not succeeding and they did not appear to have any sensible major initiatives to get themselves known. Ideal spots were where roads crossed the canal. David D commented that towns and cities with canals running through did not in general publicise them as an asset, an exception being clear signage to the canal from Paddington station.

North West (Daniel Mawdsley) – no report

South East (David Daines) – very short notice of short term stoppages, more numerous than previously; stop-and-shop facilities at Berkhamsted

- **Grant’s Lock** – David had had a good response from Vicky Martin (S E Waterways Manager) to the photo of cill damage at the lock. He would follow up.
- **Quick stoppage programme** – insufficient notification was a worry for boaters planning routes. Sue wondered if the stoppages were being coordinated nationally or locally. Alison reported that Ian Fletcher (IWA) had produced a map showing critical routes.

South Wales & Severn (Norman Mitchell) – verbal report at meeting

- **Tall Ships** – visiting last weekend in May, docks had been dredged reasonably well.
- **Commercial traffic** – CBOA hoped to do more carrying from Sharpness to below Worcester Bridge.
- **Strong stream notices** – Sue would ask NAG to query their location/existence and Norman would follow up locally.
- **Standard 8 movie** – Norman reported that the Museum had an old film and wondered if anyone had a projector so it could be viewed. David D and Mike would check.

Thames (Bernard Hales) – no report

West Midlands (Sarah Edgson) – no report

- **Edgbaston tunnel** – Sue had seen the plans for the narrowing of navigation through the tunnel. There had been long-standing pressure on CRT to take some remedial action on the towpath width and now money was being put up by the City Council for a cycle route. Sue reported that there was another plan for a different cycle route which might relieve the pressure on the tunnel scheme.

9 **MATTERS ARISING** from previous meetings not already covered (see Action List)

9.1 **Mini plaques** (March 2017, item 4) – Iain expected to collect them soon.

9.2 **Winter photos for Christmas cards** (Jan 2017, 11.7) – Val had emailed a selection of photos to the committee but had had no response. Clair would ask Bridget Carter if she had any.

9.3 **Film module** (May 2016 item 7.8) - Sue reported that CRT was keen to help with another film and it was on the agenda for NAG, it might focus on safety at locks, sinkings and cilling.

9.4 **Weaver photos held at Gloucester Museum** (Oct 2015 item 8.4) – Val would like to have sight of them in order to compare with the ones held by the club. Norman to investigate.

9.5 **Recordings of boat people** (Oct 15, 6.4) – Norman reported that the people who had the copy of the recording had moved and could not be found.

9.6 **Action list** – it was noted that several items were now too old to action, and others were on-going rather than for immediate action. They would be retained as reminders.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 **Loss of boat building skills and knowledge** – Rupert reported a comment from Rex Wain lamenting the loss of knowledge about historic boat building skills that he and Simon had gained through their work on previously un-restored historic boats such as the Denebola. Sue reminded the meeting of Roger Fuller's presentation several years ago about a project to produce a book recording such skills. Iain suggested the club should send a formal offer to help with publishing, in the same way as with the Ken Keay sketchbook. Rupert and Richard to enquire about the production of material from the Wains.

10.2 **Quantity of photos** – Laura reported that photos taken by John Wallace had been donated by Neil Ratcliffe at the AGM, together with some rolled up plans. He did not want them back and suggested they be passed on if the club did not want them. Richard took them with a view to digitising if appropriate and would pass originals on to Val at the next meeting.

12 DATES, TIMES & LOCATIONS OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Although a meeting room at the Brownhills Community Centre had been mooted, it was felt that a charge of £70 was expensive so Alvecote was confirmed, but it was emphasised that a finish time of 4.00pm was essential. Ros would cancel the Brownhills booking.

- 5 August 2017 (Saturday) 11am The Samuel Barlow, Alvecote (finish by 4pm)
- 1 October 2017 (Sunday) 11am The Samuel Barlow, Alvecote
- 25 November 2017 11am Lapworth Village Hall, prior to Social at 2pm
- 13 January 2018 11am The Samuel Barlow, Alvecote (Sue to check availability)
- 3 March 2018 10am Lapworth Village Hall, prior to AGM at 2pm

The meeting closed at 5.30 pm.

Phil Prettyman
Chairman