

## MELTON & OAKHAM WATERWAYS SOCIETY AGM - 11 NOVEMBER 2017

Minutes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on the 11 November 2017 at Sysonby Knoll Hotel, Melton Mowbray.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM.

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from I Butler-Stoney, K Etherington, R Gibson, I & C McDonald, M Murray, P Posnett.

### 2. Minutes of the 19th AGM held on Saturday 12 November 2016

Agreed and signed by the chairman.

### 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None.

### 4. Chairman's Report (Michael Clowes)

The Chairman gave his review of the Society's activities during the past year.

**Website:** The society's new website has been up and running for several months. Tom Coward, the new administrator, has redesigned the whole website, making it much more accessible and user friendly. The Chairman thanked our previous website editor, Nick Cooke, who designed the original website and looked after it for many years.

**Volunteers:** As the weather improved earlier in the year our volunteers were able to pursue more outdoor activities which included the resumption of their regular work parties, which after the Christmas and New Year break reveal that the amount of work required seems to be never ending. The Chairman thanked them for their efforts, hard work and camaraderie. As always, he said I stand in admiration at a group of people who have dragged themselves out of a warm bed to attend on a Sunday morning, and can still find their sense of humour whilst cutting back trees in the pouring rain!

**Guided Walks:** The better weather allowed committee member, Paul Dadford to begin his programme of guided walks where the attendance this year has been encouraging enough to persuade him to pursue this activity again in the new year. We were assured that a cake shop or pub is always on the itinerary!

**Parish Councils/Footpath Rangers:** In addition to the walks, Paul Dadford has also spent many hours talking to Parish Councils along the waterway to establish a rapport with them and put together group of Footpath Rangers, to keep their eye on their particular stretch of the Wreake Valley Way and report back any problems with either the water space or adjacent footpath. The society are still looking for more wardens and he thanked Paul for his efforts.

**Boat Dock:** The saga of the double boat dock rumbles on with numerous obstacles still being placed in the path, but one by one, the society are surmounting these and look forward to the time that the site can be cleared- provided they have had a tree surgeon inform the council planning department that the trees are fit to be felled! Their long-suffering secretary, Dave, has faced all the dock problems with a smile and he was thanked for his resilience in this matter. The society have also enlisted the Waterways Recovery Group to help out with our funding applications for the dock build, which despite their own numerous attempts have so far fallen on deaf ears.

**Keep Britain Tidy/Waterside Care:** MOWS were contacted by the Waterside Care group of the "Keep Britain Tidy" organisation to become part of this group. During Mows meeting with them it became apparent that the society were already exceeding their criteria and were welcomed in with open arms.

**River Clearance Vessel:** MOWS were also contacted by the Cromford Canal Society, who enquired about hiring the river clearance vessel, "Mole", to do some dredging on their patch in Derbyshire. Although they do not have the full permissions in place yet, the society look forward to meeting them when they come to Melton for some training on the river.

**Partnerships:** Sadly, MOWS attempts to form Eastern and Western End Partnerships did not pan out a planned, as people appeared to get a distorted view of what was intended. The idea of forming two small committees to organise and oversee restoration work from either end of the Melton Navigation to eventually meet in the middle, was lost on most attendees in a sea of conflicting ideas. The Chairman felt that a different approach may be needed to pull together as a united brand.

**Events/Talks:** The society attended a few events and did a number of talks for various groups. Good attendances at the Braunston Boat Gathering and Grantham Discovery Day meant that the stand was very busy. However, this only revealed the great numbers of the public who are not aware of the society, so this is a situation that MOWS need to address.

**Navigation Rights:** This year the MOWS committee was given a talk by Adrian Stott who has some very interesting ideas concerning navigation rights on our waterways and gave food for thought to carry forward.

**Melton Distributor Road:** A meeting was recently attended with Andy Jackson, who is the Senior Project Manager working on the proposed distributor road to the East of Melton. This meeting resulted from the society's response to the original road plans where they pushed the idea of a traffic free walkway and cycleway between Melton and Oakham using the line of the Oakham Canal, whilst still not dismissing the idea of full restoration in the distant future. Whilst not being able to tell MOWS anything concrete, Mr Jackson promised to look at the proposals and consider them when more detailed plans had been formulated. Although he is now well aware of the situation, the society could not understand why they had not been considered as a statutory consultee in the first place.

**Green Corridor:** Paul Dadford has established good relations with both Rutland county and Oakham councils and is at present putting together ideas for a green corridor walking route away from Oakham towards Melton.

**The Society Newsletter:** This is now distributed to more people than ever and this year has afforded us some useful contacts, bringing forth the possibility of some grant money and the occasional article in various waterways magazines.

**Roles within the Society:** Melton know little about the society and the value of our work in improving the environment, whilst helping to reduce the possibility of flooding, is lost on the local councils and the local population. We are, without doubt, Leicestershire's best kept secret. In an attempt to put our society's name on social media, we need a strong social and media presence. We are still looking for a volunteers - Publicity Officer, as well as Health & Safety Officer and Events Co-ordinator. The Chairman asked people to let him know if they would be willing to spend a small amount of time helping out with any of these.

**Our Thanks go to:**

Everyone at Sysonby Knoll Hotel  
The committee  
Volunteers  
Luke Walker of Waterways Recovery  
Town Estate  
Riparian landowners  
Society members.

**5. Treasurer's Report (Jan Dadford)**

The Accounts for year ending 31 August 2017 were presented. Membership subscriptions were up this year due to the increase in subscriptions last year. Overall, the Society made a slight profit. The accounts were approved by the meeting.

**6. Election of Committee Members**

Retiring committee members, R Booth, M Clowes and D Rudman all agreed to stand for re-election. All were re-elected by unanimous vote.

**7. AOB** ) Taken as

**8. Open Discussion** ) one item

We had a lively discussion and topics discussed were:

- Tool appeal to members.
- CRT ownership of first 100m of towpath under 3-way bridge.
- Grove School landing stage and container.
- Tree removal for boat dock.
- Contacting 103 The Eye and Melton Times for regular articles and updates.
- Memories of Old Melton on Facebook.
- Sainsbury's Melton - Grants and publicity.

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The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting. A light lunch was available for those wishing to stay and chat. A minute's silence was taken during the meeting as a mark of respect on Armistice Day.