



Registered Charity No 1078752

MOWS Newsletter

Winter 2022/23

Mick's Musings

Last Knockings

Anyone who attended last year's AGM will have noticed that it was with a heavy heart that I announced my resignation as Chairman, after many years in the position. I instinctively knew it was time to step down and bring fresh ideas and innovation to the table via a new leader. I would like to thank all those who have helped me in any way down the years and wish the new incumbent all the success in the world. I hope I have left the ship in good order and will endeavour to smooth the learning curve for the new Chairman.

But, in the words of Bob Dylan, "I ain't goin' nowhere", as I intend to remain on the committee and be as active a member as I was before. I will still be attending meetings and work parties and will still be available to give slideshow talks to groups and societies that require them.

Our present committee is as strong as it has been for many years, and it will need to be to face the challenges that are sure to present themselves as we move the restoration forward. But I am confident that MOWS will eventually overcome all obstacles, and once again Melton will be connected to the waterway system of this country, enabling the town to become a plum (or should that be pie?) destination for the thousands of boats and visitors that travel around our beautiful waterways each year.

Mick

Mick Clowes

Work Parties at Eye Kettleby Lock

There's nothing quite like a good bonfire ... or two. Not that our volunteers need to keep warm as they probably don't feel the cold with all that tree trimming and cutting back undergrowth.

Work continues at Eye Kettleby Lock, but a few more work parties there should be sufficient to complete the transformation.

... And they even get time for a very well-earned break!



Cheers to our volunteers!



Wombling (Litter) Free

Elsewhere, the Melton Wombles have also been busy. Their volunteers, Sue and Kim, have done a circuit of Egerton Park and collected 6 bags of litter from the banks. Sue reported that there is much more debris and litter to clear, which is only accessible from the river, especially between MOWS compound and the disused footbridge. One of our volunteers, Dave, has said he would be happy to assist with providing a boat so this area can be cleaned up.

Forthcoming Sunday Work Parties

Eye Kettleby Lock: 5 & 19 February, 5 March
Thrussington Mill Lock: 2 & 30 April

These may be subject to change, so please check our Facebook page beforehand.

AGM Report

The 2022 Annual General Meeting took place on Saturday 5 November at the Sysonby Knoll Hotel in Melton.

It was a lively meeting, despite attendance being slightly down on previous years. That said, we saw some new faces and much discussion ensued after time was called when we all tucked into the Danish pastries and cups of tea and coffee (always a good cuppa at the Sysonby Knoll Hotel).

The business side of the AGM went smoothly, with the previous year's minutes being adopted and this year's society accounts being approved, etc. The chairman read his report regarding the past year and announced at the end of his speech that he would be retiring from his role as chairman. A new chairman is yet to be announced.

We had three new applications to join the committee (see page 3 for more details). Happily, all applicants were approved and are now fully fledged members and have already attended a few committee meetings.

The meeting closed at 11.15am. The minutes are available to read on the society's website.

New Committee Members

We welcome our new committee members and are sure they will make a great contribution to the society.

Our committee now comprises 10 members:

- Dave Andow
- Eric Brown
- Glynn Cartwright
- Mick Clowes
- Jerry Filor
- Lorrie Forman
- Jono Hewitt
- Geof Malone
- Jane Martin
- Rob Nash

We have also co-opted Cllr Rob Bindloss on to the committee to be our spokesperson in the council chamber, as well as providing eyes and ears on current town activities.

Our three newbies are Glynn Cartwright, who was instrumental in creating Melton Matters Wombles, although he no longer has any connections with the group (other than continuing to use the name). Secondly, Eric Brown, who is heavily involved with Melton BID, and Rob Nash, a keen volunteer at the work parties, who knows more about breakfast cereals than anyone I have ever met (don't ask).

We are hoping that a couple of these people will be able to expedite our permissions for the rowing boat fleet (see article on page 4). We shall see if they can bring any pressure to bear but, in the meantime, rest assured the society remains in safe hands.

Footpath Rangers Report

There is a very significant amount of tree planting underway in fields between Frisby and Asfordby. My photo is taken from just below the Bellway development in Frisby, looking north towards the Asfordby Jelson housing estate. The River Wreake is in the background, bordered by a line of trees. We will have more details of the indigenous species in due course but as the trees mature into 'Frisby Forest', the landscape will change considerably. I have to say that despite the formality of the rows, I am really pleased at this new initiative by the Dawes family, who are local farmers, and have talked to Frisby school children and are getting them to do some planting later in the spring. After all, the woods are for them.

Ellen Senior of LCC is organising a briefing session on public rights of way at County Hall on 23 February. It is aimed primarily at volunteers who work on the Leicestershire Round, plus footpath volunteers who work in conjunction with their PCs. I will attend and feedback anything of interest.

Mike Patterson



Further Talks on River Landing Stage

Committee members recently held constructive meetings with Melton Borough Council and the Town Estate to explore ways of working together. At both meetings we were able to explain in detail current MOWS projects and long-term plans as well as explore areas where assistance might be available.

At a meeting with the Council's Growth & Regeneration Team, organised by "our own" Councillor Rob Bindloss, there was appreciation of the Society's continuing efforts to maintain the Melton Ring and recognition that there are many opportunities for developing it as a major attraction for both residents and visitors.

A starting point will be the introduction of our rowing boats (for those who are not up to speed, we have 7 rowing boats ready to launch as soon as some details are resolved). We also gave a briefing on the ongoing work developing the area around Eye Kettleby Lock as a destination for walkers, runners and cyclists (with an improved footpath from Melton) and the introduction of a trip boat from the town to the lock.

While the Society's ultimate aim is the reopening of the old Melton Navigation from Syston, there is general recognition that a focus on the Ring and the river to the lock (just over 2 miles of navigable waterway) can bring visible and very positive results in the short term.

The rowing boats need a landing stage and we had a continuation of earlier discussions with the Town Estate who are the owners of all the land alongside the River Eye as it flows through the town's parks. The Town Estate are very positive about the boats and also see them as a big attraction for the town. Hopefully the details can be sorted soon – ideally in time for the good weather to arrive so that hirers can enjoy the hidden delights of Melton's waterways.

Membership Renewals

Thank you to all members who have paid their annual subscription ... and a reminder to those who haven't yet paid. If you pay your society membership subscription yearly, but do not have a Standing Order set up at your bank, you should have received a reminder about your membership renewal before 1 February from our new Membership Secretary, Glynn Cartwright.

We would be very grateful if you would please renew your membership as soon as possible. Thank you.

Welcome to new members ...

Sharon Butcher
Mark Frisby

Chris Fisher
Lisa Taylor

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