

Minutes of LUCS Management Committee Meeting held in the Tearoom at the Canal basin on Monday 13 May 2013

Present: Mike Smith, Chairman, Duncan McIntyre (Vice Chairman) Pat McIntyre (Secretary), David Shirres, Ronnie Reis, Stephen Nixon and Allan Melling

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone along.

2. Apologies – Apologies received from Catherine Smith and Stephen Nixon.

3. Adoption of Minutes from previous Meeting - The minutes of the last meeting were adopted. Minutes proposed by Duncan McIntyre and seconded by Allan Melling.

4. DAMS: There were no DAMS.

5. Correspondence received: Mike has received a letter of thanks from the Twinning Association re the trip on St Magdalene that Mike hosted for the French visitors. They have sent a donation which has been handed to Douglas.

A letter has been received from West Lothian MSP Neil Findlay detailing his surgery dates, etc and inviting us to visit the parliament building. Mike is to write to him.

ACTION MJS

6. External Meetings:

Scottish Canals: Mike was invited to a reception at the Scottish Parliament two weeks ago re Scottish Canals launch. The Minister for Transport gave a speech about the future of Scottish Canals and there is going to be a strong emphasis on generating income, and partnering with bodies with any canal connection. Mike suggested that we give a free boat trip to anyone from Scottish Canals and the main canal stakeholders who has not yet been on the canals to the basin to let them experience a trip and to see what we have to offer.

Historic Scotland: Mike had a meeting at the basin with two people from Historic Scotland following on from the meeting he and Duncan had with HS in January. It was recognised that none of Linlithgow's attractions on its own (not even the Palace) was enough to attract people to the town for a day out. Various combinations with other tourist-based sites in the town could provide the necessary pull to provide a day's visit to Linlithgow. Historic Scotland would be interested in mutual advertising with ourselves and the rest. This was agreed and they undertook to talk to the other agencies involved. (Their initial interest is in increasing the school parties that visit, which they already encourage by offering a transport subsidy. The principle is however more generally applicable). They expressed great delight at the MGC as being one of the very few class-sized rooms in town. They will arrange another meeting with the other organisations to find out what we all have to offer and how to bring them together.

LCVG: Stewart Liddle attended to Lowland Canals Volunteer Group meeting and there is a determination to get the canal dredged and weeds cut back. We may well be involved in doing a survey on the weeds in the canal. There is a budget for canal maintenance.

7. Committee Reporting Structure Update: Stewart Liddle has agreed to take over the driver training. Mike to contact Bob Wigley re this update. **Action MJS**

8. Conveners' Reports

Marketing (DM)

LUCS had attended at the Falkirk Wheel in connection with the 'Year of Natural Scotland' and there was lots of interest and enquiries at our stall. As a result of this we took Victoria there for the day and gave out leaflets, etc. Weatherwise it was a poor day but it was felt this was worthwhile.

All future events are being posted on Scottish Canals website, e.g. Father's Day and Falkirk Wheel trips. We have been mentioned in the Visit West Lothian bulletin.

He then spoke about special offers for the summer holidays. For St Magdalene it was decided that for every four fare paying adults one goes free. A loyalty card is to be introduced for every fare paying passenger on both St Magdalene and Victoria. From 1st June to 30th September they will receive a 30% discount on second and subsequent trips.

Someone had given us an excellent rating on trip advisor and appreciated the fact that the crew had spoken to passengers about places of interest, etc on the canal. It was recognised that some Drivers had no desire or aptitude for this aspect, and that they should be encouraged to take an Interpreter with them. Customer interaction is crucial. Douglas offered to ask Gordon Barrie if he would be willing to train people on interesting points of the journey.

ACTION DSR

IT and Social Media

IT: Allan Melling said wireless access points for IT are now installed. He will make a final decision next week on laptops.

Social Media: David said Twitter seems to be going well.

Treasurer (DSR)

Douglas provided the following figures:

The balance in the Bank of Scotland account is £44,843.90

The balance in the Santander account is £58,763.91

The sum of £14,292.44 had been received from Liz Burrow's estate. Douglas said that he should transfer some of this money into a savings account. Liz Burrow's estate solicitor had sent Douglas some shares and he has written to them saying that we had originally said we wanted cash instead of shares. He did not receive a reply from them. Douglas has sent the share certificates back to the solicitors and he is now awaiting a reply.

Douglas said that he has not yet done the Leamington accounts for last year but the practice for the last two years has been that British Waterways accepted our statement without challenge. For the last year the only thing he is claiming for is the gearbox: was there any other capital item we should include? Given SC's new emphasis on income, he asked if we should record the number of hours we spend so that part of our contribution in kind could be evaluated. We should consider this before the next meeting and also think of anything we should be claiming for..

Boats, etc (RR)

Boats: Ronnie Reis said that a new stern deck has been cut for St Magdalene.

He is going to make up a folder for the driver on each trip, containing the documents which have to be completed by the Driver in a handier document. (Technically, it remains a sub-set of the Boat safety manual).

Leamington has been painted. The port window on Leamington needs repaired and he is asking for an estimate.

Alex Inglis. Mike has made a list of things to be done to allow tasks to be run in parallel. He will organise a day soon to get the frame on to Alex Inglis. He is to report further to the funders. Conscious that he has had major distractions from the project, he will contact Chris Hunt to see if he can help on this.

Ronnie requested that feedback sheets could be put on Leamington.

Driver Training: Stewart Liddle is now responsible for driver training and he will get all MCA tests up and running.

Following concerns that long cruises on St M is bad for the knees, Mike suggested a fold down seat for Drivers should be installed on St Magdalene.

New Boat: Re progress on new boat, there has been no feedback of value from current contacts looking at 2nd-hand boats, but Mike Smith is going to join the Steamboat Association to try and source one there.

Tea Room (CAS)

In the absence of Catherine Smith the tearoom volunteers are coping well.

Bookings and Education (DAJS)

Bookings: David Shirres has done an analysis of bookings to date. There has been an increase in Leamington hires and a slight increase on school visits. The booking system is up and running. He asked for volunteers to test this.

Premises (DM)

Tea Room floor to be cleaned and sealed this week.

Workshop/Health and Safety (AM)

Fire extinguishers are due to be checked and inspected on 22nd May. David said he has a list of access points for vehicles along the canal. It had been agreed at the 'Pre-season Drivers' Briefing that we need to have this information in order to take best action in case of an emergency on board. David to develop this further and we should also do a physical survey of these points as opportunity presents. **ACTION DAJS**

Museum/Events/External Talks

Events: Mike asked for an update on Fun Day. He will contact Chris Hunt re progress. **ACTION MJS**

9. Any Other Competent Business

Locking Up: Mike had received a note from Stewart Liddle suggesting that we remind people who are locking up to strike the flags and bring in the signs. Mike to ask Stewart to produce a check list.

LUCS NEWS: Alan Hayes has spoken to Mike and said that he would be willing to produce this.

Driveway Parking: We should try to encourage people not to park on the drive during Saturday afternoons in the season. This will also be asked of kayakers.

Bridge 49 Bistro: This is now open and we should discuss at a future meeting how we can liaise with them. Duncan and Colin to visit them.

ACTION DM

The next meeting will be on Monday 10 June at 7.30 pm

