

Minutes of the LUCS Committee Meeting

5 August 2025

Tea Room

ACTIONS

Previous	AE	Draft young visitors' activity booklet
	RR	St Mags. cooling tank final solution to be tested prior to dry docking
	GS	Arrange Emergency exercises for 40 seaters
	PL	Draft of a passenger incident statement card in consultation with Martine
	PL	Discuss posting feedback on Facebook with marketing team
	PL	Contact Winchburgh Developments regarding 6 th September event and ensure it is suitably publicised
3.1	DS	Confirm date of October committee meeting
4.2	DS	Organise 6 th September flotilla and set up its cruises on the booking system
4.3	DS	Speak to Maureen O'Donnell about Halloween
5.1	AE	Advise No PhuttPhutt about batteries and seek required information from them
5.1	AE	Produce revised estimate for Victoria project
5.1	DS	Speak to Chris Gunstone about Men's Shed's work on Victoria's engine box
5.2	GS	Arrange boatmaster meeting to brief updated Safety Management System
5.2	GS	Ensure ancillary boatmaster course is used to provide refresher first aid training to as many boatmasters as possible.
6.1	IG	Prepare induction document for new volunteers
6.1	DS	Arrange for Scottish Canals volunteer co-ordinator Carol Bell to come to basin to meet the committee
6.2	DS	Prepare and issue LUCS future operations membership survey
6.3	DS	Publish August Basin Banter
9.1	GS	Action recommendations from passenger falling ill incident on 27 th July

Present: Chair David Shirres (DS) welcomed:

Andy Eaglesfield (AE), Ian Gray (IG), Peter Lewis (PL), Mike Smith (MS),

Apologies were received from, Ronnie Reis (RR), David Morrow (DM), Doug Scott (DSc), Graeme Simpson (GS)

1. *Chairman's Welcome and Apologies for Absence.*

DS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. *Approval of Previous Minutes and Outstanding Urgent Actions*

Minutes approved by AE and PL.

3. *General Management*

3.1. Dates of future committee meetings

Next meeting - 2nd September 2025, DS to confirm October meeting date

3.2 Treasurer's Report

Balance at end July totalled £78,264 (Current account £56,778; PayPal £21,486).

Statement of year-to-date expenditure to be presented to next meeting

4. Events

4.1 Fun Day

PL assured committee everything was in hand for Fun Day. Noted that the large marquee is not available, also that there is no music. Prices confirmed £2 for boat trip ticket and £5 for burger and drink. DS to set up on iZettle system.

4.2. 6th September Flotilla and gathering

DS advised that he had been advised that Sorted, FCCT, Bridge 19-40 and Forth & Clyde Canal Society will be being boats. He is to advise private boaters around Linlithgow of event and ask Scottish Canals to publicise it to private boaters

It was agreed that 40-seater boats attending flotilla will offer cruises between Linlithgow and Winchburgh. DS to set up booking system accordingly. PL is to contact Winchburgh Developments to ask them to publicise this. This also needs to be promoted on Social Media.

It was also agreed that LUCs would provide burgers and soft drinks free of charge to visiting boaters in the evening

4.3 Halloween

One constraint this year is a clash with the twinning visit as both 40-seater boats have been booked from 0900 to 1200 on Saturday 25th October.

It was understood that Narrowboat Farm are to provide Pumpkins this year which raises the possibility of a Halloween cruises to the Narrowboat Farm.

DS is to seek views from Maureen O'Donnell and ask if she would like to organise these cruises

4.4 Festival of Light

There is to be a bonfire party at the Almond Aqueduct bonfire party on Friday 7th November with Festival of Light on 8th November. Last year's event was enjoyable though poorly supported.

4.5 Chair's thank you event

DS sought views on what would be an appropriate chairman's thank you event. He explained that as he was away for most of October, this would have to take place in November. The general view was that a short cruise afternoon cruise followed by a BBQ on a Saturday afternoon might be best

5. Boats

5.1. Victoria Project Report

Plating works are now complete awaiting Coastal Marine's testing of the welds

After considering No PhuttPhutt's offer of two x 15 kWh batteries, it has been decided that these are too big and heavy for Victoria. Hence the requirement for batteries is the original order for 3 x 5 kWh batteries with passive provision for two more batteries.

There is therefore no requirement for a new enlarged engine box, though current box needs to be cleaned up with minor modifications for engine controls. DS to speak to Chris Gunstone to see if the Men's Shed could do this for a small donation.

AE is to advise Hugo Palmer about batteries and also seek information about components and whether a thrust bearing is needed. He is also to produce a revised estimate of the cost of the Victoria project.

AE circulated a revised programme based on his realistic assessment of volunteer availability which shows Victoria will probably be back in the water in March.

5.2. 40-seat boat Safety Management System

DS proposed the committee formally approve the revised 40-seater boat Safety Management System (SMS) that GS had revised and previously circulated. This was approved although it was recognised that it was essential that LUCS boatmasters and crew understood it.

DS noted that LUCS had to successfully pass an MCA audit of this SMS to retain its passenger certification. Hence it was important to ensure all concerned were aware of its requirements, and in particular emergency exercises and training. It was agreed that a meeting is to be arranged to brief LUCS boatmasters.

Hence a meeting needs to be arranged to brief this out to boatmasters which could also usefully consider recent incidents and ensure everyone has a common understanding of risks associated with 40-seat boat operation.

DS noted that the SMS included the requirement for committee members to have an open-ended safety conversation with boatmasters on cruises one per year.

It was also noted that an ancillary boatmaster training course is to be run in October and that this would be an opportunity to provide boatmasters with refresher first aid training.

5.3. Forthcoming MCA surveys and audits

MCA surveys and audits have been arranged as follows:

17/9/25 St Magdalene. Out of water inspection at Ratho

1/10/25 St Michael Out of water inspection at Ratho

7/10/25 In water inspections of St Magdalene and St Michael, SMS audit

DS advised that MCA Glasgow had confirmed that St Michael's engine compartment was compliant with relevant fire protection, although there was a potential issue about automatic bilge alarm of which Allister Mackie had been advised.

6. Membership

6.1. Attracting and retaining volunteers

AE advised that LUCS had lost several new volunteers who were initially very keen but decided they weren't coming back to the basin. He had contacted these volunteers to ask why. Essentially the response was that they didn't feel that they were being given anything

useful to do and that, as crewing on the boats was completely ad hoc, it was not clear how to learn boat driving.

In addition, AE advised that it is getting increasingly difficult to find volunteers for reception, tearoom and boat crews.

In the discussion that followed it was clear that there is an issue of keeping volunteers involved and making the best use of their time. In addition, a more structured approach to providing volunteers with the required training and boat experience was required.

IG suggested that would be useful to have a document that describes the maintenance tasks for boats and premises for volunteer blackhanders and mentioned the responsible convenors. This would be an induction document which gave volunteers an idea of what needs to be done and the experience and training they need to become a boat driver.

It was agreed that this was an excellent idea. IG volunteered to take this forward.

DS advised that Carol Bell is Scottish Canals volunteer co-ordinator and felt that she could usefully be invited to the basin to discuss volunteering. DS is to arrange this.

6.2. Future LUCS operations

DS voiced concern that the current age profile of LUCS's volunteers will made the Society's operation unsustainable in a few years' time. This was of particular concern for volunteers with customer facing roles.

LUCS currently operates by putting all we offer to the public on the booking system at the start of the year on the assumption that we'll always find somebody to resource what it is we're offering. Though this has worked to date it is becoming increasingly challenging. He considered that the committee must seek the views of the membership before deciding the services that LUCS offers in 2026 at the November committee meeting.

After some discussion it was felt that members views were best sought by a survey which address future services offered, attraction and retention of volunteers and LUCS's purpose. DS is to progress this.

6.3. Basin Banter

DS was conscious that the last Basin Banter had been issued on 21st May and advised that one would be issued asking for volunteers for Fun Day. This would also consider other future events, visitor numbers and the new SMS

7. Marketing and Fund raising

7.1. Visitor numbers

DS tabled the visitor numbers up to the end of July which generally showed an increase in numbers as shown below.

It was agreed that this was almost certainly due to improved marketing and social media campaigns

Weekend Town Trips	133%
Aqueduct Cruises	136%
Weekend Tea Room	114%
Weekday Town Trips	91%

Weekday Tea Room 111%

Falkirk Wheel cruises 85%

7.2. Marketing

PL advised that he was standing down as marketing convenor at the end of the year.

7.3. Fundraising

Not discussed due to lack of time

8. Promoting heritage.

Not discussed due to lack of time

9. *Health and Safety*

9.1. Accidents and Incidents

27th July passenger fell ill on return trip from Falkirk Wheel, cruise held at Bantaskin for over an hour whilst awaiting an ambulance. Key learning points from this were:

- Emergency egress maps need to be easily accessible
- Need for skipper to take account of ambulance response time when deciding where to meet ambulance. For many trips from Linlithgow it might be best to return to the canal basin
- The lack of a defibrillator on St Magdalene
- Roll matt should be added to 40-seat emergency equipment

The committee endorsed these recommendations and agreed that a defibrillator should be procured for St Magdalene. As it is unlikely that this will be procured before the next Falkirk Wheel trip on 31/8/25, for this trip St Magdalene should take the defibrillator from St Michael.

10. Any other business

No other competent business raised.