

## Minutes of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Linlithgow Union Canal Society held in the Canal Basin Tea Room on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 @ 7.30pm

A list of all members present is shown on Appendix "A"

### Introductions

The Chairman, Stuart Rennie (SR) introduced himself and the current committee. Attendees, especially those here for the first time were welcomed.

Item No.	Item
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1	<b>Apologies</b>
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A list of all apologies received from members was read out by the secretary. It is shown in Appendix "A"

The Annual report has been distributed to all members and the Convenors reports are included in the Report

2	<b>Chairman's Welcome and Statement</b>
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Much of what I would wish to say is in my report in the Annual Report, but there are one or two items I would expand on / clarify.

I would like to emphasise at the outset, that we have had a successful year, activity wise, on the water, and around the basin. It has been a successful year financially, and David will elaborate on this in his report, but there is no doubt we go forward into next year from a reasonably strong position.

This is especially gratifying when you consider many of the items and projects completed ~ many of which had been on the agenda for a considerable number of years, and it has been good to get them ticked off. Items such as the new boiler for the Mel Gray Centre, the refurbished Cycle Shed Roof ~ well done to Alistair & Les ~ I hope they don't mind, but (after talking about them for as long as I can remember) we'll probably never mention these items again.

St Michael of course has also taken up considerable amount of management and "black-hander" time but 2019 finally saw her coming into public service. Still bits to attend to, work is still ongoing, but I am pleased to report that in the past month, **I reached agreement with Leader** that we had achieved the various targets set under our grant conditions, and that element of our obligation is now closed off. We still need to keep records of passenger numbers, operation hours etc., but that is something we do as a matter of course anyway.

I mentioned in my report re our **ongoing relationship with Scottish Canals**. This was something I was keen to address when I first took over as chairman on an interim basis. I am pleased to report that this working relationship has continued to during the past year. We have had a strong influence in the setting up of a new group - **Scottish Waterway's for All** - a group designed to work in conjunction with Scottish Canals, rather than seeing them as the enemy which I regret was perhaps the case previously. This relationship **among other things** has helped us address the successful installation of the **new mooring at Bridge 49 Bistro**, and **selected spot dredging** at points within our operating area. **SWfA still incorporates the LCVG** and the work of that group continues, but the wider remit, and being closer to SC senior management bodes well for the future. Running in Parallel, to SWfA there is still the **"Keep Canals Alive Group"** which is retained as the campaigning body to address any political issues or operational decisions which adversely affect the Societies or wider canal user groups.

Finally, and coming back into our own camp ~ can I also mention our **Strategic Development Group**, and the progress being made on certain projects. You will recall this group was set up to address larger and future projects, to give these projects management attention they deserved, without being diluted by day to day management issues. This concept has definitely helped drive forward three specific items, designed to take us forward into 2020 and beyond.

**Our On-line Booking System** is currently being revamped and we are about to go out to tender to invite providers to rewrite / future proof (as much as possible) the online system. Functionality is not changing, but a few gremlins have been ironed out, and the whole system is being made more user friendly / customer oriented. As we are viewed more and more as a commercial organisation, and the public are expecting to do everything on-line, our booking system is deemed to be Business Critical, and it is important that we continue to address matters like this. We hope to be in a position to Beta test the new system during the close season of 20/21 with a view to it being operational for the 2021 season.

**"Out of Water Facility"** ~ Craning, when necessary, has become more and more expensive, and it now costs circa £4 - £4.5k to lift a boat out and return it to the water. Dry Dock facilities are less flexible than they used to be, and we now cannot attend to more than one In & Out operation in one week. Previously we could attend to three boats in one week's hire of the dry dock for circa £500. The Strategic Development Group addressed this issue and are now developing a trailer system that will allow us to withdraw either Leamington or Victoria without the need for crane hire. This project is progressing and we will hopefully have a prototype in test early in the new year.

**Victoria Eco Project & Refurb** ~ This has carried forward from last year and is moving towards decisions being made on the type of power unit etc. We have had meetings with motor manufacturers, and are in dialog with some who have experience ahead of ours, so progress is being made. It is good to see new members getting involved in some of these projects, and I would like to thank Roger Houchin who has been working alongside Mike to drive the Eco Victoria project forward.

All of these Strategic Development Projects **will require funding**, and we are looking at alternative funding options for all or part of these. And a certain amount of blue sky thinking will be necessary to secure available funds. Only yesterday, I had a meeting with students from Linlithgow Academy who are working up a submission to the Youth & Philanthropy Initiative ~ an initiative backed by the Wood Foundation, to grant organisations like ours around £3,000 to further the objectives of the charity. That's just one example, but there are other funding opportunities being investigated.

So lots going on, and lots to do, but it's good to see these projects progressing to see us set fair for the future..

Does **anyone have any questions** on what's been said so far.

Q: Norman Foulner asked how we would pull a trailer with boat up the slipway. A: It was suggested we would likely hire in a JCB or tractor.

Just before I end this summary of our activities, many of you know that I am stepping down this evening as Chairman. But, like it or not, I'm not disappearing and I hope to continue in some major capacity from out with the committee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported me over the past couple of seasons, those on the committee, the many **convenors and coordinators**, the **black handers** and **volunteers** who turn out endlessly to keep the show on the road, and the **general membership**, who have given me lots of encouragement. It's been a busy couple of years, but I've thoroughly enjoyed it, so thanks to everyone who has helped.

### 3 Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes were Proposed as accepted by Ian Walker and seconded by Jim Lonie.

A copy of the approved minutes will be posted onto the member's web site.

### 4 Matters arising from previous minutes

None

## 5 Report of the management committee

This is covered in the annual report and chairman's statement.

## 6 **Accounts for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018.**

David Shirres referred the meeting to the 2 papers - "Trustees report and unaudited accounts" and the treasurer's report in the Annual Report.

The meeting was asked to note :

A) that these are in accounting terms and some money is accounted for in different accounting years

B) The large "one off" spends are for Victoria crane lift out/in, and the central heating boiler.

C) The financial position is fairly robust, especially for the year after the St Michael outgoings. We offer popular services and have no staff expenditure.

D) we now have a Paypal account and a credit card reader.

Q: Danny Callaghan – why the spend on "Thistledown" ? A: this was for adjustments to enable moving Thistledown to allow for St Michael berthing.

Q: Norman Foulner – why did St Michael cost ~£170k when the new boat at Ratho cost significantly less and is broadly the same size and fitted out in the same fashion ? A: built under different MCA rules and the Ratho boat has a smaller passenger capacity.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Peter Nixon and seconded by Dennis Franks.

## 7 & 8 **Independent Examiner Report**

The Treasurer proposed that the Independent Examiner(Philip Bald) be appointed for a further 12 months. This was approved by the meeting. Proposer Danny Callaghan, seconded by Ronnie Reis.

## 9 **Appointment of Solicitors**

The Treasurer proposed that the Solicitor(Pagan Osborne) be asked to continue for a further 12 months. This was approved by the meeting. Proposer Danny Callaghan, seconded by Joan Tyler.

## 10 Election of Officers and Members of the Committee of Management for 2019

So far, there have been very few nominations for committee positions. We can have up to 13 members on the committee - 4 of which are the Officers (Chairman / Vice Chair / Treasurer & Committee Secretary). This potentially leaves 9 other "ordinary" positions.

While the management committee has a role to play, much of the day to day organisation is done by the various convenors. There are a number of vacant roles to fill.

### Election of Committee Officers

Committee was elected as follows:

Office	Name	Proposer	Seconder
Chairman	No nominations		
Vice Chairman (see below)	Mike Smith	Stewart Liddle	Andy Devenport
Treasurer	David Shirres	Stuart Rennie	Mike Smith
Secretary	Douglas Robertson	David Shirres	Dennis Franks

### Ordinary committee members

Name	Proposed by	Seconded by
Lynne Nelson	Stuart Rennie	Sandra Purves
Calum Dougan	Ronnie Reis	Mike Smith
Ronnie Reis	Stewart Liddle	John Aitken
Mike Smith(see below)	Stuart Rennie	Ian Walker
Andy Eaglesfield	Ronnie Reis	Danny Callaghan

The Chair requested any further nominations. There were no further nominations, or volunteers from the meeting to take on other roles.

Q: Norman Foulner – would SHR stand again as chair? A: SHR would not be standing again. NF : acknowledged the extremely good job that SHR had done in his year as Chair.

Q: Normal Foulner – would SHR stand as a committee member? A: no, but will stay actively involved in the society.

John Aitken made the point that the vice-chair is the deputy for the chair, is not the "chair elect".

Q: Stewart Liddle - would Mike Smith take on the role of vice-chair? A: Mike agreed. (so formally proposed by EASL and seconded by Andy Devenport).

Stuart Rennie stated that the Articles said it was up to the committee to address the issue of no chair being elected, so it now passes to the new committee to consider.

Traditionally at this juncture, the Chair would hand over the reins (and the celebratory bottle of whisky) to the new chairman, but in the absence of a new Chair SR continued to chair this meeting.

Danny Callaghan proposed a vote of thanks to Stuart Rennie to recognise his year as Chair. This was enthusiastically supported by the meeting.

#### **11 Proposals for the coming year**

The Strategic Development Projects mentioned earlier will form a major element of next year's proposals.

SR made the point that it will be up to the incoming committee to address new issues, and develop strategies going forward. These will build on much of the work done over the past couple of years, and will see a continuation of more Social Events for members, while continuing to drive the Society forward to bigger and better things.

#### **12 Fixing of subscriptions**

It was agreed that there would be no change to the subscriptions. Proposed by Danny Callaghan and seconded by John Aitken

#### **14 Close of meeting**

The Chairman thanks the members for their attendance and active participation

## Appendix A – Attendees & Apologies

Mike Smith	Colin Tyler	Tricia McLuckie
Allister Mackie	John Tyler	Audrey Simone
Ann Mackie	Sandra Purves	Nuala Lonie
Ronnie Reis	Peter Nixon	Jim Lonie
David Shirres	Gordon & Liz Beetham	John Aitken
Stewart Liddle	Diane Fairgrieve	Gordon Barrie
Tom Jamieson	Elsbeth Ross	Lynne Nelson
Ian Walker	Barbara Braithwaite	
William Irvine	Norman Foulner	
Andy Eaglesfield	Danny Callaghan	
Stuart Rennie	Dennis Franks	
Andy Devenport	Doreen Franks	

### **Apologies received from**

Doug Scott
Gordon Hewitt
David Roy
Richard Toleman
Lynn Aitken
Jeanette Nixon