

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF AVON NAVIGATION TRUST AND THE LOWER AVON NAVIGATION TRUST LIMITED 2023.**

Minutes of the 57th Annual General Meeting of the Avon Navigation Trust Ltd and the Minutes of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Lower Avon Navigation Trust Limited held at Crowne Plaza Stratford upon Avon, Bridge Foot, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 6YR on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The Chairman, Jack Hegarty opened the meeting at 11:08 and welcomed all present. The notice convening the meeting was read. Thanks were given to Fiona Rae for her help in securing the room at The Crowne Plaza.

**1. APOLOGIES.** 10 apologies were received.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM.**

The minutes of the 2022 AGM held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman proposed that they are accepted, and a vote was taken and accepted in favour of the minutes presented. There were no matters arising.

### **3. ANT and LANT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 December 2022 & 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.**

Clive Matthews (CM) paid remembrance to members who passed away in the last year. Provided an update on Adrian Mains illness and that he is hoped to be back in office late summer/early autumn. Thanks were given to Daisy Wood and Alex Mellor for stepping in and helping to cover Adrians work alongside Clive. CM presented the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Noted that the Trust had a good year with turnover just over 800K and a healthy surplus of 217K. Licences brought in 59% of income, with Contract work bringing in 31% which finances the major works and improvements to the infrastructure. Both Short Term and Annual licences have increased in 2022 with Short Term licences back to pre-COVID numbers. Noted that Expenditure is below previous years however 2021 had a bad debt provision put through in December which pushed expenditure up in 2021. 2022 Balance Sheet showing ANT current unrestricted assets at 441.3K which is within the reserves policy of 360-768K. ANT Total Net Assets at approx. £2.3M.

The Chairman asked if there were any questions relating to the accounts before we moved on. Paul Cronin asked if the Trust had put in measures with contractors to stop the possibility of another bad debt through contractors. CM answered that the Trust has no financial hit from the bad debt as it was invoiced time/boat cost rather than products bought. The trust have always invoiced up front for contract works but now contractors have to apply for a works consent and sign a cost undertaking document and provide payment before the works can go ahead. Alan McFarland commented that the bad debt cost should be shown in the surplus rather than the expenditure if there was no cost to the Trust. CM stated that the correct accounting process was to raise a bad debt provision to counter the invoice that was raised which is why it is showing in the expenditure for 2021. Peter Gardener commented that it would be helpful to split down the fixed assets on the presentation to disposable and non-disposable. CM answered that the full breakdown was provided in the full accounts which all members were sent a copy of.

CM presented the Volunteer information from 2022:

- 95 Volunteers
- 12 Volunteer Activities
- Total 4107 Volunteer hours
- Volunteering value of hours worked £69,095.

The start of 2023 volunteer season started with 400<sup>th</sup> Reach Masters and Associates meeting in March as well as a Volunteer Dinner in May. ANT squad is on its second year with 12 members now and general volunteer numbers is now 103. A presentation of the Volunteer teams and projects including Avon Recovery Team, the new Corsair Volunteer Team running trip boats and Evesham Volunteer Team to start refitting Evesham Lock House internally. Jubilant has been relaunched and new patrol boat has been donated 'Sharasun'. Analysis has been done on company vehicles and the Trust has replaced two of the land rovers with Ford Ranger pickups that will be used by engineers and volunteers as Volunteer support vehicles. Navigation and Contract works:

Presentation of pictures of works carried out in the period June 2022-June 2023:

- Underwater drone and bent paddles/ paddle failures on some locks
- Fixed Lock railings at Tewkesbury Lock
- Updated signage along the river.
- New Trust moorings at The Valley, Evesham
- Supporting Warwickshire County Council with their works on Clopton Bridge
- Pennywort on the River. Brian Morgan commented that Pennywort had been spotted downstream of Defford.
- 9 weeks of flooding between January and May 2023. Thanks, given to MVS for their support with RAWC in Tewkesbury. Three boats along the river sunk in these floods.
- A fallen tree at King Johns Bridge cleared.
- Flood clearance, weir barrier clearance and tree shearing work.
- Walkway completed at Tewkesbury Lock
- Pershore Lock bottom moorings. Margaret Cronin asked if the poles could be embedded into the walkway rather than on the outside. CM responded that the walkways are designed like that for speed but will take the point on board. Roger Clay commented that timber fendering could be a solution.
- Nafford swing bridge repaired.

Projects:

Presentation of the current projects within the Trust. Corsair, the new trip boat. Installation of plaque for Pershore Lock Island Tree Project. AVON and Neptune project update. CM concluded by thanking all staff and volunteers for their help with a tricky start to the year. The Chairman asked if there were any questions raised within the presentation. Helen Brazier asked what happened to the tree debris from the river. CM explained the Trust takes the debris away and has controlled fire. Neil Jones asked if the wood is sellable or given back to the farmer and whether it could be repurposed into brickettes as an extra income stream. CM stated that it is returned when possible. The Chairman commented that the potential for it to be repurposed is something that the Council are looking at. Peter Gardener asked why the planning permission for the White-Water project was not included in the CM report. The Chairman stated that CM was presenting on Operational matters and funded projects and that the Chairman would be briefing the members attending later in the meeting.

Michael Hodges proposed to adopt the report of Council and Financial Statements of Lower Avon Navigation Trust and Avon Navigation Trust are accepted, seconded by Brian Morgan and vote carried in favour.

#### **4. TO CONSIDER AND IF THOUGHT FIT CHANGES TO ARTICLES 36 AND 42.**

Article 36 to read 'that unless otherwise determined by a general meeting, the number of the members of the council shall not be less than two nor more than 10, including the treasurer and the secretary. Votes were carried by a majority.

Article 42 to read 'At the time of the Second Annual General Meeting and at the Annual General Meeting to be held in every subsequent year, one fifth of the members of the Council

for the time being, or if their number is not a multiple of five then the number nearest to one fifth shall retire from office.’ Alan McFarland asked if this meant that it would go from 4 to 2 members of council retiring. The Chairman confirmed that this was correct. Votes were carried by a majority.

## **5. TO CONSIDER AND IF THOUGHT FIT TO PASS CHANGES TO ARTICLE 76 and 78.**

The Chairman thanked John Kellett for raising whether article 77 should be amended at the same time due to the similarities of 76 and 78. It was agreed to look at the changes of 76,77 and 78 at the same time.

Article 76 to read ‘A notice may be served by the Trust upon any member either personally or by sending it through the post in a prepaid letter or by sending it by email, addressed to such member at his registered address or email address as appearing in the register of members’.

Article 77 to read ‘Any member described in the register of members by an address not within the United Kingdom, who shall from time to time give the Trust an address within the United Kingdom or email address which notices may be served upon him, shall be entitled to have notices served upon him at such addresses, but, save aforesaid, only members described in the register of members by an address within the United Kingdom or an email address shall be entitled to receive notices from the Trust.’

Article 78 to read ‘i) Any notice, if served by post, shall be deemed to have been served at 12:00 noon on the second day following that on which the letter containing the same is put into the post, and in proving such service it shall be sufficient to prove that the letter containing the notice was properly addressed, stamped and put into the post as a prepaid letter. ii) if served by email, shall be deemed to have been served on the day and time the email was sent and in proving such service it shall be sufficient to prove that the email containing the notice was properly addressed and sent.

Vote carried by a majority.

**5. TO ELECT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT OF ANT AND LANT:** ANT Council members retiring this year Brian Morgan, James Jarvis and Penny Clover. The Chairman thanked Brian Morgan for his 40 years on council and all the great work he had done for the Trust. He will be staying on as a Volunteer and Reach Master at Fladbury Lock. Thanks were given to Penny Clover and her fundraising efforts alongside Alex Mellor and CM added his personal thanks to how much she has helped with fundraising for the Trust. Thanks were given to James Jarvis for his effort in restructuring Volunteering. ANT Council members standing for re-election: Roger Clay. Roger Clay presented a brief biography of his professional background alongside his background within the Trust. Vote carried by majority.

The Chairman thanked Alan McFarland for his application to become a member of council but at the time there is no vacancies on the Council. A discussion was had regarding the number of members of council currently. Alan McFarland voiced that he wanted to be on the council as a Member representative. The Chairman thanked him again for his application and asked him to keep an eye on any vacancies coming up and to apply again if he wishes.

**7. TO APPOINT ACCOUNTANTS:** Messrs. Bowker Stevens and Co expressed their willingness to be re-appointed. Penny Clover asked whether there would be a conflict of

interest due to their help with accounting cover this year. Paul Jackson responded that for the 2022 accounts there would be no conflict. It may require an independent reviewer in 2023. Proposed by Michael Hodges and seconded by Mike Thompson. Vote carried.

#### **8. TO TRANSACT ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

Hazel Brazier commented that Weir Brake Lock gates had dropped and asked if it had been attended too yet? CM responded that sometimes on that lock the silt can make the gates stiff, the engineering team are currently at pilgrim lock and will look at it when they get to weir brake. Paul Cronin commented that they had been through the lock to attend the meeting and it was working fine.

Steve Myers reported that there was a hire boat that had trouble at Offenham with no weir barrier and that two boats got stuck in the lock at Harvington. CM thanked Steve for the comments and stated that new signage had gone up this year for boaters to be made aware.

The Chairman presented on the history of the White-Water Project and the steps that had been taken to get to planning permission level. The design and build of the project is to be completely grant funded and to include the rebuilding of Wyre lock and moorings. Initially looked at Pershore island which was not suitable and then Wyre Island was proposed. Planning permission is currently pending. John Kellett stated that according to studies participation rates are low when travel to the venue and no facilities are available. Another report states that white water financial feasibility is low. Would it not be better to have the white-water project at Pershore island as a pumped facility rather than Wyre Island. The Chairman responded that technical advice so far is that Pershore is not suitable. If planning permission is granted, then is an acceptable area. The trustees would only continue with the project if it was a viable project which would be looked at further down the line.

Paul Cronin said that people are currently unable to apply to be members at the moment. The Chairman responded that the applications have been delayed due to Adrians absence but haven't been closed. CM stated that currently the website is not working correctly and not only causing issues with Membership but also licences. The issue is currently with the IT support. If people want to apply to be members, they can still apply by post.

Willie Arnold asked how the trustees will balance their safety responsibilities alongside the planning application for the white-water project. The Chairman responded that as a statutory navigation the trust is responsible for all safety including powered and unpowered vessels and would be looked at all stages of the development if it went ahead.

Caroline Jones asked whether Wyre lock would be rebuilt as a diamond lock as part of the project. CM responded that although it is not listed, and the trust are not tied to any design it would be rebuilt as it is with blue bricks. Roger Clay added as a point of interest that CRT are now looking at steel gates for their locks.

Willie Arnold asked for confirmation on whether the quorum of trustees had changed. CM responded that the quorum hasn't changed, the quorum is 2 and the maximum is now 10.

Alan McFarland commented that no consultation on the white water had happened with members and local stakeholders and that no new members were allowed to join since March. CM responded that as previously commented the website has been having issues not communicating to the office which is being investigated by the IT support and membership has never been closed. Alan McFarland raised the following questions: Why has the Trust changed to 'Amateur Sport' on the Charity Commission, why have you stopped membership applications, why have you not told members about the white-water project, why have you not consulted the local community. The Chairman responded that nothing has changed on the

charity commission and that the issue with membership has been explained previously. He responded that the statutory process is being followed with regards to the planning permission and that there is no manipulation happening within the Trust and the Trustees would not allow this to happen.

Peter Gardener asked if an AGM to move to an EGM would be raised before work carried forward with the white-water project. The Chairman responded that the white-water project had been going on for many years and that if it passed planning permission then the correct procedures would be followed.

Caroline Jones expressed thanks to the Trustees and employees of Avon Navigation Trust for the work they do maintaining the River Avon.

Jack Hegarty thanked all for attending the AGM and closed the meeting.

**Meeting closed at 14.00**