

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF AVON NAVIGATION TRUST AND THE LOWER AVON NAVIGATION TRUST LIMITED 2024.

Minutes of the 58th Annual General Meeting of Avon Navigation Trust Ltd (ANT) and the Minutes of the 73rd Annual General Meeting of The Lower Avon Navigation Trust Limited (LANT) held at The Banking Hall, The Angel, 9 High Street, Pershore, WR10 1AF on Saturday 10th August 2024.

The Chairman, Jack Hegarty opened the meeting at 11:04 and welcomed all present. The notice convening the meeting was read.

1. APOLOGIES. 14 apologies were received.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM.

The minutes of the 2023 AGM held on 24th June 2023 were circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman proposed that they are accepted, seconded by Roger Clay (RC) and a vote was taken and AIF. There were no matters arising.

3. To consider and adopt the Report of the Council and ANT Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023 and LANT Accounts for year ended 31st March 2024.

Clive Matthews (CM) paid remembrance to members who passed away in 2023 and provided an update on Adrian Main's (AM) health. Thanks were given to Daisy Wood (DW) and Alex Mellor (ALM) for stepping in and helping to cover AM working alongside CM.

CM presented the ANT accounts for the year ending 31st December 2023. Noted that the Trust had a good year with turnover at £866K with a net income of £126K. Annual licences increased, however short-term licences were down due to flooding. The 2023 balance sheet showed ANT had healthy net current assets of £450K. CM noted that general running costs are normally under 50% of the annual total expenditure, this was higher in 2023 due to the extra costs associated with covering AM absence.

CM delivered a presentation of ANT operations in the period June 2023-July 2024:

- Assisting works at Clopton Bridge and Eckington Bridge.
- Pennywort clearance. ANT is working together with EA to look for EA funding and methods to clear and eradicate the infestation.
- Binton bridge closure and works.
- Heavy flooding closed navigation 2 weeks early in October 2023. From 2023 winter to 2024 spring there were 140 days of flooding and 25 days not flooded. 5 severe floods, 2 critical floods with the last flood happening just before whit week 2024.
- Severe flood damage including multiple sunken boats along the river.
- ANT team removed a steel bar and debris from Abbey Mill, Tewkesbury.
- Will Fish (WF), ALM and Dave Mechen (DM) attended White Water Technician training to strengthen our flood response ability. This is the same level of training as Fire and Rescue personnel undertake.
- Tree clearance work at Harvington, Offenham, Trinity and Weir Brake lock.
- Patrol boats for bridge inspection works.
- Flood recovery works including weir barrier clearance, dredging, tree shearing and installation of new control board at Tewkesbury Lock.
- Above water Harvington lock gate failure repair, saving hundreds of thousands of pounds by not needing to dewater the lock.
- New fencing around Weir Brake lock.

CM introduced a new member of staff, Will Fish, who has joined the team as Compliance and Customer Service Officer (CCSO) to enhance enforcement and river safety. Two new patrol boats have been acquired this year to replace the current fleet. Thanks to Peter Underwood for refurbishing 'Vigilant' over the winter. New signs have been installed at Bidford Bridge to highlight the river byelaws to help police enforce this for public safety.

Two benches have been installed in memory of Pat & Guy Johnson and Felicity Scholes. ANT were asked to take part in Michael Amies funeral and provided a river procession with our tug 'City' and trip boat 'Corsair'.

In 2024 ANT supported 3 river festivals, Tewkesbury Big Weekend, Evesham River Festival and Pershore River Festival. The River Avon Welcome Centre (RAWC) and our trip boats 'Corsair' and 'Princess Marina' attended both Evesham and Pershore festivals and we had the most successful year for boat trip activity. The trip boats were run by volunteers and ANT Squad.

CM presented the Volunteering report for 2023:

- The number of volunteers rose to 105
- Number of volunteer activities 12
- Volunteer Hours were increased from last year to 4804
- Volunteering value £80'803

CM presented the 'AVON' projects. ANT Squad has increased in numbers this year with regular meetings every Thursday. They have been involved in multiple activities including Corsair training, powerboat training, river festivals and staffing Tewkesbury Lock. The Volunteer Training Center at Evesham Lock has been refitted to a professional level thanks to Jonathan Goode and his team, Adrian Bailey, Mike Thompson, Geoff Crane, Chris Adeney, Kevan and Sally Humprey and Zak Mellor. External ground works start July 2024. Corsair has been running at Evesham Abbey Park with a new commentary recorded by ANT Patron Timothy West CBE recorded in Evesham Training Center. The volunteer dinner in April 2024 was a great success, attended by volunteers, ANT Squad and Patron Tony Hales CBE. Brian Morgan was awarded a distinguished service award to thank him for his long-standing contribution to the Trust and river.

The Chairman thanked CM and the team for keeping the Trust and the river in good shape through a difficult year and asked if there were any questions from CM presentation.

It was asked if RAWC would ever go back to Stratford. CM commented that it's not likely as CRT have taken back their mooring and Stratford District Council wanted large amounts of money for mooring on the Recreation ground.

MH proposed to adopt the report of Council and Financial Statements of ANT and LANT and commented that the Council of Trustees regularly review the management accounts throughout the year and that the annual accounts accurately reflect the management accounts. The proposal was seconded by RC and a vote was taken AIF.

4. TO ELECT MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT OF ANT AND LANT.

ANT Council members standing for re-election: Jack Hegarty (Chairman, Volunteer Chairman & Evesham Representative) and Lynne Young (Powell) (PR and Communications). Re-election was proposed by Vaughan Welch and seconded by Mark Lyons and a vote was taken AIF.

5. TO APPOINT ACCOUNTANTS.

Bowker Stevens and Co (BS) expressed their willingness to be re-appointed. BS have now become part of Tax Assist Southwest Birmingham. Paul Jackson of BS explained that he would still be creating the annual accounts, but the name would change to Tax Assist to reflect the merge. Roger Clay commented that it is good to have continuity. MH proposed, seconded by RC and a vote was taken AIF.

6. TO TRANSACT ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY BE TRANSACTED AT AN AGM.

John Kellett asked if CM presentation could be added to the Members only section on the website. CM agreed this is a good idea and will investigate. It was also raised that the AGM minutes were not shown in the members' section. CM explained that the website was launched quickly due to the pandemic, however the members section has not been made live properly. AM will be looking into this when he returns.

Alan Purkiss asked what ANT working relationships are like with local communities and Tewkesbury. The Chairman commented that he was on the Evesham place board and MH is on the Pershore place board. RC also commented that he has good relations with Stratford upon Avon. CM explained that generally relations were good across the river with some districts being more active than others. It does help to have a Trustee representative for each town and currently there is not one for Tewkesbury, however the other four towns do.

Ian Fletcher commented that the AGM was a clash with the Braunston Show and whether it would be a good idea to have an ANT representative attend the event. CM replied that it would be noted to discuss when the AGM date is set by The Council.

Alan Purkiss asked if ANT has any responsibility or concerns for the water quality on the river. The Chairman responded that ANT have no responsibility for it but are interested. CM expanded that ALM is working alongside and supporting small groups monitoring the water. Kevan Humphrey commented that while volunteering at Weir Brake Lock, a visiting boater commented how clean the water had been while travelling on the River Avon.

Alan McFarland asked if there was any update on the White-Water Project and whether the Trust was still pursuing it. The Chairman responded that nothing has happened since the application has been withdrawn and it has not been discussed in the Council meetings since the last AGM.

Sally Humphrey commented that they had boaters at the lock ignoring their advice of using fore and aft ropes when locking through and asked whether the CCSO could help with this with boaters. CM confirmed that it is covered by the byelaws so yes, he could and that not taking instruction from a member of the Trust is a criminal offence.

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

Meeting closed at 13.20