

Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1173704

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on 16th May 2024

Agenda item 1

Norman welcomed those present to the 2024 Annual General Meeting

Agenda item 2 – Apologies for Absence

Present: 23 which included 7 Trustees.

Apologies for absence: 22 apologies which included 2 Trustees.

Agenda item 3 – Agreement of the Minutes of the previous AGM

Yvonne Shattower had been the minuting secretary at the time of the 2023 AGM. Yvonne died in August 2023 and her notes on the AGM were not found. However, officers had submitted reports and Trustees and members recalled the appointment of the external accountants (proposed by Yvonne Shattower and seconded by Judy Berry), the appointment of Trustees and Officers and the approval of the accounts. The minutes are, therefore, as accurate as they can be following Yvonne's death. Norman proposed the minutes of the AGM held on the 15th June 2023 be agreed as a true record. This was carried unanimously.

Agenda item 4 – Report of the Trustees

The Chairman's Report – Norman Cornwell

Norman was very pleased to report on another successful, if very busy year for the Association, although tempered by the sad death on 4th August last year, of the ECP&DA's long serving and much-loved Secretary, Yvonne Shattower.

The Sandiacre Lock Cottages had undergone a major transformation upstairs and continued to impress the many visitors who visit on the regular opening days. In addition, Christmas and Bank Holidays are very popular.

Norman reminded members that, in 2027, the funding provided by the Government to Canal & River Trust is to be substantially reduced which could have a drastic effect on the viability of canals such as the Erewash. Over the past 12 months the ECP&DA has worked increasingly closer with Canal & River Trust, to ensure that "our canal" remains navigable and attractive to those who wish to visit. Training in various disciplines has continued over the year to ensure that the ECP&DA has the skills needed to achieve the above.

Finally, Norman thanked all the Trustees and volunteers for their hard work and efforts over the past year and is very pleased Rhona Henshaw has agreed to stand as a Trustee and will hopefully be elected our Treasurer later in the meeting.

Agenda item 5 - Membership Secretary Report – Shirley Cornwell

The total number of memberships for 2024 is 189 to date.

- Life/Honorary - 81
- Individuals - 8
- Family - 24
- Senior – 72
- Affiliated Clubs - 4.

9 memberships were not renewed and 2 of the affiliated clubs have closed down, a loss of 11 in total.

Club 70 have 55 numbers paid with 15 spare.

There are 19 AWCC subscriptions.

Sue's Garden BBQ was a real success as usual, the weather, the food and the very talented musical entertainment making it a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and evening.

The 55th ECP&DA rally at Langley Mill was a tremendous achievement and a credit to the time and effort given by our volunteers, not forgetting all the people who attended helping to make it so successful.

Shardlow Heritage Port Festival 3rd year proved to be very busy with lots of people attending it was good to give our support and raise our profile particularly for Sandiacre Lock Cottages. Many people were unaware of their existence and that they were open to the public once a month and Bank holidays.

Christmas meal at the Harrington and Christmas lunch at the Great Northern pub were enjoyed by all of those that attended.

Agenda item 6 - Report of the Treasurer – Geri Martin

Holdings to end April 2024:

- HSBC current account: £4,399
- HSBC Savings Account: £14,134
- Mansfield Building Society: £21,435

£5000 transferred from current to savings account.

Total Assets: £39,968

Geri reported that the accounts are in profit, but this is mainly due to the income generated from mooring fees. Much of this money is now in the savings account where it can gain some interest, but it will be used to sustain us through the coming year.

The ECP&DA is expecting a large donation sometime in the future but do need to ensure the ECP&DA's underlying income and outgoings are properly managed as – a rule of thumb – outgoings exceed income and living off savings is never a good way forward. The ECP&DA also needs to ensure that mooring fees, electric charges to moorers and membership costs are properly reviewed each year.

A lot has been spent on Sandiacre cottages this year but – due to grants and diligent housekeeping – this has been within the limits of the budget suggested last year. Income has also risen to £4,821 – approximately £100 a week!

For 2024-25 a suggested budget plan is:

Reserve budget of £5,500

£3,000 to cover expected losses.

£5,000 for Sandiacre Lock Cottages – this seems high but is to allow for any roof repairs that may be required – a back covering exercise!

£3,000 for future proofing the Association to be used by the Strategic Planning committee.

£2,000 for Langley Mill but it is expected that some of the strategic planning money will be spent there.

In response to a question from David Pinney on whether the Charity Commission offers guidance relating to the reserves which can be held, he was advised that it does not provide a single level or range of levels for reserves for any given charity. The level of reserves is determined by the Trustees of each individual charity. The ECP&DA keeps a reserve of approximately £7,000 to pay for utilities etc should the need arise. The only stipulation given by the Charity Commission is that income of over £25,000 in any given year, requires an independent external examiner check.

Agenda item 7 - Adoption of the Accounts

Geri Martin advised there were two mistakes in the published accounts: Langley Mill unrestricted funds had not been added and 67 had been mistakenly transcribed as 76. Nevertheless, the final figures were correct.

Subject to verification from the external accountants Community Accounting Plus, Geri Martin proposed the approval of the accounts. This was seconded by Doug Swain and carried unanimously. Community Accounting Plus is to begin work on the ECP&DA accounts on 19th August 2024.

Agenda item 8 - Appointment of the External Accountants

Community Accounting Plus (CA+) offers their services at half the price paid to the previously employed ECP&DA external examiner. It was proposed by Geri Martin and seconded by Rhona Henshaw that CA+ be engaged as external accountants for the 2024/2025 financial year. This was carried unanimously.

Agenda item 9 – Working Party Report to 31st March 2024

The first job of the financial year and certainly the first for CRT was replacing a spear rod and rack at Shipley Lock assisted by Steve one of their operatives. The bolt connecting the spear rod to the paddle board hanger had gone missing but was easily replaced. We followed this up with various jobs for CRT. One that we have come back to a few times is the swing bridge at Langley Mill which needs frequent attention because its bearings get clogged up with mud and its balance affected by the rain.

Small jobs included clearing vegetation from every one of the bottom gates on the canal; reattaching two handrails at Hallam Fields Lock; changing a couple of anti-vandal (AV) locks that were not operating properly. Incidentally we strip, repair and reassemble any AV locks that develop faults. We fitted modified versions to Hallam Fields and Stanton Locks, which appears to have discouraged whoever drained the canal several times at that location. We have removed a couple of fallen trees from across the canal and cleared weed obstructing the paddle holes at Dock Holme Lock.

One of the ground paddles at Hallam Fields was incorrectly fitted with a larger size spindle - a nuisance for those of us who do not carry a double headed windlass. Ten minutes with an angle grinder and it was re-profiled to match the rest. It took a little longer to cut the hedges at Langley Mill. Back at Hallam Fields we replaced one of the windlass posts, the fifth on the canal since Covid struck.

At a meeting at Hallam Fields Lock Oli the Operations Manager introduced us to Lucy our new link to CRT. Unfortunately, she left CRT's employment at the end of 2023 and we await a replacement. She did however inform us of a grant available from CRT and helped with

our application. The result was £2,910 to help us set up for the vegetation work we are doing for them.

Our main job for the navigation authority this winter has undoubtedly been cutting back off-side vegetation. Starting a bit late in the year after a delayed finish to our work with the anti-vandal locks there was not time for all that was in Oli's work plan but he did accept the compromise of our tackling the priority area on the northern half of the Erewash. In the event we achieved this and a bit more besides and hope to do just as well or better next winter.

A late rash of jobs arrived from CRT as the financial yearend loomed. We tried very hard to sort them all before the 31st March and very nearly succeeded. They included filling a wash out (hole) in the bank at the end of the piling by the Erewash feeder below Langley Bridge Lock. A second washout nearby was not included but we fixed it anyway. Clearing an obstruction from the top cill at Stenson's Lock was one we did on a Monday after transporting three tonnes of ballast and sand from Cotmanhay to Bennerley Viaduct for its preservation society. A hedge on Gadesby's Bridge (the one above Eastwood Lock) had to be cut and a replacement 'warning to anglers' sign post planted at Anchor Bridge. We loaded a tonne of clay into Pentland our work boat and transported it up from Shipley to Eastwood Lock for CRT to fix a leak. We took delivery of a load of anti-slip matting to replace worn bits on balance beams at Langley Mill although we managed two a third did not get done until after the year end. One other job is a spear rod for Stenson's Lock that we have repaired but not yet refitted.

For ourselves we have done a fair bit of grass mowing especially as this was the year of our rally. It encouraged us to repaint inside the Toll house and clean up the swing bridge and lock paintwork. We also made a major contribution to the rally itself.

The cottage stove was showing its age and needed a major overall. A new top donated by Dan at the boatyard finished it off nicely. Several pieces of our equipment needed looking at including the chipper which had done quite a lot of work over the preceding winter. We were also needed to help repair the boat yard's car park after it was churned up by the WRG excavator. A little more encouraging was fashioning and installing a replacement hand rail post and part of the intermediate rail on the swing bridge. Even better was accompanying Julie Sharman on a trip down the canal on Norman & Shirley's boat. She was not with us for a pleasure cruise but the serious matter of finding out all she could about our canal and assessing what we might be able to help with. Our off-side and towpath veg work is the result.

With four compounds and three buildings to store things in at Langley Mill it might be thought strange we are often short of space. But one of the jobs we tackle when we have a bit of free time is to sort out our stores and, sometimes, we discover things that are no longer of use. We also create space by using what we have got such as when we re-decked the mooring jetty last summer. Every week the three rubbish bins around the basin at the Mill are emptied and this amounts to a barrow full every time. Thank goodness CRT has provided us with a 'Biffa' bin. Cleaning the facilities block is also one of our regular jobs.

One or two things keep bubbling away in the background. The 3RB excavator would need a complete set of new hoses if we were to work it again. Unfortunately, the Ermeto threads used on the machine are now obsolete and we have not so far found a solution to this problem. We have had better luck with the gardening which had brightened up the mooring area. Some of the other jobs have been brush cutting both alongside the access track and

inside our two compounds beyond the boat yard; upgrading the mooring security lights to LEDs and planting a tree in memory of John Baylis.

The heavy winter rain fall caused us a certain amount of problems. The water in the basin overtopped the bank and flooded the Pump House. For those who do not realise, the Pump House is on three levels and the entrance doors on the top floor are below the canal level even during normal times. The lowest storey flooded completely and the water on the middle floor was two feet deep, this middle floor houses the electric motors of the sump and back pumps, both had to be taken out and stripped down to dry out but luckily were undamaged. Concurrent problems with the back pump did not help and it was several weeks later when we finally found its outlet into the canal complete with valve. With the valve closed a defective section of pipe was quickly replaced.

Across in the Great Northern Basin the floods lifted one of the ex-working boats partially onto the bank. Thanks to Tom at Langley Mill Boat-Yard it was soon afloat again but the short jetty across the far side took several of us to lift back into place. But the greatest problem was the eight feet length of concrete coping lifted off the canal wall and found dangling in the canal. We have retrieved it but are still waiting for the water level to go back down to normal before we get busy with a concrete mixer. However, we have already constructed rise & fall moorings to prevent a boat being lifted onto the bank again. Various doors needed adjusting after the wet winter but compared with what else we have had to deal with this was a minor problem.

Looking north rather than south we have not totally neglected the Cromford team. We have not spent as much time on tree work for them as we did during the previous winter but have still contributed with some stump removals and have loaned various items of equipment particularly for the WRG special long weekend work parties. Our, or to be correct Mick & Carole's scaffolding tower, some of our scaffolding, Heras fencing and our long drain rods were the main items.

Dave Turner – WPO

Judy Berry commented that Dave Turner's report showed just how much work goes into keeping the Erewash Canal maintained.

Agenda item 10 – Sandiacre Lock Cottages Report

Another busy year for the Sandiacre Lock Cottages and our small team of volunteers and helpers.

- We continue to attract new visitors who have particularly enjoyed our outdoor offering of a range of dance and music: Greenwood Clogg Dancers, Sullivan's Swords, Erewash Belly Dancers have provided dancing and the Red Lion Band, Tim Ollie, Rachel and Rosemarie have provided music. Refreshments on our extended outdoor furniture has also been very welcome.
- Although we continue to welcome new visitors, we also have regulars who simply come to enjoy a chat with a familiar face.
- Schools and Guides/Brownies continue to ask to visit the cottages during the week. Each group requests different input from our volunteers eg. Industrial Revolution, history and science etc. Our aim is to encourage future custodians of the cottages and some children have returned after their school visit with parents/grandparents, which is very positive.
- Christmas Sunday openings and Saturday Santa continues to be a hit and over 70 children visited Santa.

- The core cottage team are delighted that we have almost completed and achieved our 3 year strategic plan and upstairs has now been sensitively renovated by preserving the old and introducing new ideas.
- Once again, we have been supported by local organisations which include the Erewash Voluntary Action and Sandiacre Community Network who have provided some funding for publicity materials and children's resources. We have also received some financial help with upgrading the cottages upstairs, through the Erewash Borough Council, Long Eaton Rotary and also a private benefactor.
- We continue to reach out to the local community by attending local events eg. Sandiacre Library, Sandiacre Community Forum at Sandiacre Football Club and Christmas Tree events at both St Laurence in Long Eaton and St Giles, Sandiacre.
- Social media which includes Facebook has helped to raise the profile of the visitor experience at the cottages and ECP&DA. We also have a monthly, free, full page advert with a calendar of opening dates in a local community magazine.
- Finally, a big thank you to the cottages band of volunteers and helpers and I look forward once again to another, busy, exciting year.

Glyn

Agenda item 11 - Appointment of Trustees and Officers

Three Trustee posts stood down, as set out in the ECP&DA constitution, and put themselves forward for re-election. The posts are nominations were as follows:

Membership Secretary – Shirley Cornwell.

Proposed by Alan Brown and seconded by Dan Caudwell.

Carried unanimously.

Publicity – Paul King.

Proposed by Doug Swain and seconded by Mike Harrison.

Carried unanimously.

Lock Cottage Team Leader – Glyn Stenson

Proposed by Geri Martin and seconded by Dot Stenson.

Carried unanimously.

There was one new candidate standing for election as a Trustee.

Trustee – Rhona Henshaw.

Proposed by Shirley Cornwell and seconded by Jean Muir.

Carried Unanimously.

Officer Appointments.

Appointment of Vice Chair

There was one nomination for Vice Chair – Judy Berry

Proposed by Allan Hickling

Seconded by Malc Chisnell

Carried unanimously.

Appointment of Secretary

There was one nomination for Secretary – Geri Martin

Proposed by Judy Berry

Seconded by Glyn Stenson

Carried unanimously.

Appointment of Treasurer

There was one nomination for Treasurer – Rhona Henshaw.

Proposed by Shirley Cornwell

Seconded by Jean Muir

Carried unanimously.

Rhona provided a brief statement about herself. Rhona is Finance Credit Manager at Ezi-Dock Systems Limited and has been a book-keeper and treasurer for 3 different groups. She lives in Ilkeston and she and her husband are motor bikers.

With Geri Martin being away next week and Rhona being away for 2 weeks after that, the handover of Treasurer responsibility will not take place until the end of June 2024.

Agenda item 12 – Date and Venue of 2025 AGM

It is proposed that the 2025 AGM will be held on 15th May 2025 at Sandiacre Lock Cottages at 7.30pm.

Agenda item 13 – Any Other Business

David Pinney thanked all volunteers and Trustees for the work they had undertaken for the Erewash Canal and the Association.

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Signed:

Dated: