

**Friends of Exeter Ship Canal – Committee Meeting
12 November 2018
at the Custom House, Exeter Quay, at 6.30pm**

Present

Ray Alexander (RA), Mike Grayshan (MG), Peter Kelly (PK), John Monks (JM), Mary Tempest (MT).

Other members of the Friends: Jane Evans (JE), Guy Parker (GP).

1. Apologies

Richard Crisp, Nick Hawker, Keith Lewis, Peter Nickol.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting on 20 September 2018

These were approved.

3. Matters arising not included elsewhere in the agenda

It was noted that the constitution had not yet been circulated to members.

4 Proposed Carnival on the Canal 2019

David Lockwood, project manager, sent apologies as he was unwell. JM reported that a funding bid had been submitted to the Big Lottery Fund and another to Arts Council England was shortly to be sent. Decisions on both were expected by the end of the year/early January.

5. Composition and remit of the Carnival Steering Group

Consideration was postponed until the next meeting when it will be clear if the carnival has attracted adequate funding.

6. Secretary's report

JM gave apologies from NH who unexpectedly had to attend another meeting. JM reported an email from Nick explaining that the demands on his time often conflicted but stressing that being Secretary to the Friends was something he valued and wished to continue. He would commit one day a week, generally a Tuesday, to the Friends as a minimum. The report was received with gratitude and understanding.

7. Finance

a) Treasurer's report

RA reported that the Co-operative Bank had completed the arrangements for him to become the main contact for the account and a cheque signatory. The other signatories are currently NH and JM. RA also reported a bank balance of £9,090 at the end of October.

RA and JM will arrange to complete the handover of the treasurership as soon as possible. RA agreed to present a short summary of scheduled outgoings and likely income at the next meeting.

b) Insurance

JM reported that the IWA was negotiating with new insurers in the light of rising prices indicated by Royal and Sun Alliance but had warned corporate members to expect "some modest increases" next year. He had submitted the Friends' pre-renewal information and indicated to the IWA that additional insurance required as a result of

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the carnival would be taken out separately. Renewal documents are expected from the IWA early next month.

8. Membership

It was noted that a date was being arranged for the handover of membership arrangements from NH to RC. A pressing issue was the future of the WebCollect account which would attract charges as soon as more members were recruited. JM had drafted a new recruitment leaflet that was being considered by RC. It was agreed to proceed with plans to print and distribute a new leaflet as discussed at September's meeting.

9. Work parties

a) Volunteer Co-ordinator's report

MG reported that the work party at Double Locks on 20 October was well attended and had successfully completed the Friends' programme of repainting at the lock. Colin Acton had contacted the Friends to ask if they would organise willow clearance along the banks in the area around Salmon Pool Bridge as they had done in January 2017. It was agreed JM should say Yes. MG, who is standing down as Volunteer Co-ordinator, agreed to assist with the arrangements for the event to take place in mid to late January 2019.

JM will also contact Mike Slade in Bridgwater about the possibility of IWA volunteers on the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal attending a Friends work party to boost numbers.

b) Offer of a boat for the Friends

At present Friends' work parties are confined to the towpaths but Guy Parker reported he had found a workboat that the Friends could take possession of free of charge. It is a fibre glass Dory-type hull, shallow and stable and ideal for work close to the canal banks. The hull needs restoration but is basically sound. It is currently on the upper reaches of the Tamar near Tavistock. Guy would transport it to Exeter and the Exeter Boat Owners Association would donate £1,000 to the Friends towards the project.

Full discussion followed on practicalities including fitting out, storage and mooring, helmsman training, and insurance. Guy's report and the Boat Owners Association's offer were accepted with acclamation, enthusiasm and thanks and it was decided to take the project forward with JM approaching Colin Acton to ask whether the council will allow storage free of charge.

10. Website and social media

MT reported that events where the Friends could have a presence were fewer as Autumn progressed. She still needed the password to the Friends' Twitter account. She was now completing her move to Teignmouth. JM reported that improvements to the Friends' website were not yet finished. He had arranged a meeting with a web designer recommended by Richard Crisp in Redruth but in the event was not fit enough to attend. He appealed for help with the website. One suggestion was to contact Exeter College whose students might take it on as a project.

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11. Exeter City Council canal strategy

a) Appointment of consultants

JM reported that the council had now appointed two firms of consultants, Arcadis and JLL, to undertake work on a strategy for the future of the canal and David Bartram, Director, had confirmed they will be asked to make contact with the Friends. The email addresses of RA and JM had been given to the firms.

JE said that she was still disappointed that the consultants' brief had not been made public. She reported that David Bartram had agreed to attend the River and Canal User Group on 21 November and said she would raise the matter again there.

b) Kings Arms Swing Bridge

RA reported on a planning application by Exeter City Council to replace the Kings Arms Swing Bridge at the Canal Basin. He welcomed the fact that the design will be similar to the old bridge as it was a site of heritage and visual importance. The part steel construction should bring benefits of greater durability, easier operation and lower maintenance than the previous wooden structure, outweighing in the long run the extra cost. The application referred to the design allowing for maintenance or emergency vehicles to cross and he expressed concern that adequate steps should be taken to make sure that all other vehicles will be suitably excluded.

RA repeated the Friends' call for future replacement and new crossings to be electrically operated and designed for eventual boater/volunteer operation in addition to ECC staff, but for this bridge with its low usage the matter was not critical. It was agreed to submit a letter of support for the application with copies to the principal canal officers at the council.

12. Reports from other groups

River and Canal User Group

RA will attend the next meeting on 21 November. JM will be away.

Inland Waterways Association

JM reported he had asked that Exeter Ship Canal should be included in the IWA's Silver Propeller Challenge scheme.

GP asked about the Red Plaque scheme marking canal heritage locations. JM and GP will investigate.

13. Arrangements for the next meeting

It was agreed to postpone the next meeting scheduled for December to take a decision on the carnival until early January in order to be certain that responses to applications for funding will have been received. NH will arrange a date. The venue will be Exeter Canoe Club as the Custom House will not be available.

14. Any other business

RA reported that the IWA West Country Branch will hold its AGM at Exeter Canoe Club on 6 March 2019, and that on 2 June 2019 the Bridgwater Docks Gala will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the restoration of the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.