

Committee Meeting Minutes

18:30 – 19th July 2018, Custom House, Exeter Quay

Present:

Ray Alexander (RA), John Monks (JM), Mary Tempest (MT), Peter Kelly (PK), Nick Hawker (NH)

Other members of the Friends: Richard Crisp (RC)

1. Apologies

Peter Nickol. Subsequently, Jack Nott who was unable to gain access to the Custom House.

2. Quick review of activities since the previous meeting (22 May)

The committee thanked NH, MT, RA and Martin Mather for their contributions during the ‘Jazz on the Quay’ event on 8 July. Although no new members were recruited it was an excellent promotion of the canal and the Friends.

MT reported that the Friends’ stall was also on display at the Exeter Regatta the following weekend.

3. Proposed Carnival on the Canal

JM reminded the committee of the application to Exeter Canal and Quay Trust (ECQT) for funding for the proposed canal carnival next year. The Trust was asked for a grant of £20,000 for the bulk of the project costs and had awarded £7,000 to cover the cost of appointing a project manager.

JM reported he had discussed the situation with David Lockwood, who had previously been approached as a potential project manager. David Lockwood now understood that the initial task, should the committee decide to proceed, would be to source additional funding so that a decision could be taken on the carnival’s viability. At this stage the establishment of a carnival committee would not be appropriate.

A very full discussion took place on the feasibility of the project in light of the lack of resources within the Friends together with the lack of success in recruiting new members and difficulty of attracting volunteers for work parties.

It was agreed to take a decision on the future of the carnival project after further discussion of the state of the Friends’ other activities under item 4.

4. Future officers and activities of the society

JM introduced this item by referring to his comment at the recent Friends AGM were faced with a crisis, not of confidence but of personnel, reflected in the shortage of people willing to take on a role. RA pointed out the Friends were not alone in this situation.

a) Membership

The vital role of membership officer that involves not only keeping records but making the Friends' first contact with new members, had been unfilled for well over a year. NH said that he would take on the duties until another person was found. This would be subject to simplifying the current arrangements for enrolling and recording members.

b) Finance

The AGM had failed to produce a treasurer to replace Simon Goddard. JM said it was wrong in terms of governance that the chair should also be the treasurer, which is the current temporary situation. RA said that he would take on the duties of treasurer for a maximum of 12 months or until another person was found.

It was further unanimously resolved that Ray Alexander, the new treasurer, should replace Simon Goddard as an authorised signatory for the Friends bank account subject to the Co-operative Bank's terms and conditions.

c) Events/Outreach

MT advised that she will shortly be moving from Exeter. Despite this she would carry on with the Friends' efforts on social media.

d) Volunteering

MG expressed his disappointment at the lack of progress and commitment around work parties. He said that he would continue in the volunteer co-ordinator's role until October.

e) Press Officer

RA highlighted the importance to publicity of the press officer's role.

Votes were then taken on the above issues, committee members only voting.

Carnival:

Summarising the points made for and against proceeding, JM formulated a proposal that the Friends would accept the £7,000 grant from ECQT with the understanding that the Trust would be fully informed that the project manager would investigate the feasibility of funding the carnival events and a decision on proceeding with the project as a whole will be taken before the end of the current year. David Lockwood would be asked to undertake the work and report to the Friends committee. A dedicated carnival committee would not be appointed at this time.

The proposal was **carried** with no one voting against. It was agreed that a separate vote on not proceeding with the carnival was unnecessary.

Officers and activities of the society

The offers of NH, RA, MT and MG were approved with acclamation.

It was further agreed that an effort should be made to arouse greater interest and participation in the Friends and the work they undertake. An event for members

would be arranged, possibly in September, to gather as many members as possible together for this purpose.

5. Progress on the following

a) Work parties

This had been covered during the earlier discussion.

b) Members' discount scheme

NH noted that had this been an urgent requirement of membership we would surely have delivered it by now. Since we had not, it was a good idea to abandon the planned scheme. MT agreed as did the other committee members.

c) Reports on the Website update, Slipway, and ECC plans for the canal were deferred.

6. Anything else

RA reported contact with a boat owner who intended to navigate the canal between 2nd and 3rd August. RC commented that other boats may wish to take advantage of the opening of the locks and bridges and the dates should be publicised.