

WORCESTER CANAL GROUP

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 6 JUNE 2018

Present: Joy Squires, Jacky Hollis, Matt Jenkins, Peter Moorhouse, Dan Daye, George Squires, David Ritchie, Geoff Williams, Tim Booker, Richard Martin, Graham Fowler

Apologies: Margaret Rowley, Geri Lowman, Caroline Kendall.

1 Minutes to last AGM – to be reviewed at a future meeting

2 Chairs Report – On one level this has been a fairly quiet year for the group. The Wandering Wildlife project has been important and the monthly Litter Pick has continued. There was a lot of work done to try and organise another canal side festival but in the end it was decided against going ahead. Instead the people involved, and others, will constitute themselves as a separate group with a constitution and bank account and try again for next year. There are pieces of work to pick up in the coming year especially the extension of our activities to Perdiswell.

3 Treasurers Report- Since Ivan Smiths resignation the group has had no treasurer. A resolution of this problem to be proposed under the next agenda item. We currently have £311. 39 in the bank and £15 in petty cash. This has remained unchanged throughout the year.

4 Election of Officers

Chair- Joy Squires

Deputy Chair – Geoff Williams

Mailing and website – Matt Jenkins

Minutes secretary- Graham Fowler

Treasurer – George Squires

5 The Wanderer – The Wanderer has been well used by the group this year. It is noticeable that attendance at litter picks is higher when the boat is available than otherwise. So it was submitted as a candidate for a National Living waterways Award and has made it through to the final stages. Judges will visit on 20th June at the Pumphouse 10.30. Graham to attend. Good luck.

6 Wildlife Corridor- Graham gave an outline of the background to and results of the Wandering Wildlife weekend. In 2015 we worked with Jane Sedgley Strachan of the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. She spoke at that years AGM and it was there that our group first became engaged with the idea of the canal as a wildlife corridor. Following that ran a wildlife monitoring weekend with various special events such as a bat walk and a wildflower walk. This was successful and well supported. We then held a number of meetings with representatives of other organisations. These overlapped with the Worcester Canal Corridor Group convened by David Morgan of the CRT to look at issues like anti social behaviour and repairs as well as wildlife. This group includes a wide range of agencies involved with the canal. We contributed a policy document to the group which identified wildlife friendly habitats along the canal and looked at ways we could work together. The most important of these is the idea that we should treat the canal, the river Severn and Barbourne brook as a single linked wildlife habitat forming a ring within the city boundary. Discussing this with Laura Mullholland, the

CRT ecologist for the region it was agreed to run a second monitoring exercise to compare with our first but this time to monitor from Diglis Basin to Six Ways. This was carried out over the Easter

weekend. The centrepiece of the monitoring was bringing the Wanderer from Tibberton down to Diglis, stopping at various points along the way such as Offerton Country Park and Perdiswell Park to look at wildlife not just along the canal side but in related habitats. Almost all of our group took part for some or all of the trip and we were joined by a number of new faces. There were also contributions from narrowboat owners making the journey down the canal, from rangers and volunteers from the city council and members of the public at an Easter Event in Fort Royal Park. The weather was awful and this had a real impact. Nevertheless it was a really useful exercise. Graham distributed the initial findings. There are lots of points for discussion for future work. For example, ultimately the object should be the appointment of an employed bio diversity officer. In the meantime, Richard (manager @worcestermarina.com) suggested that the monitoring form and other information could be given to people hiring boats at the marina and returned initially to him. There was discussion of how we might best work with the Friends of Gheluvelde Park to carry out a similar exercise along the brook. The most glaring gap in wildlife observed and the single biggest barrier to the movement of wildlife between the river and the canal is the short stretch between Diglis basin and the Commandery. There was a lot of discussion with Tim about how the CRT might best tackle this problem. Planted up pontoons seem the best option and this is being actively looked into.

7 Expanding our adopted stretch to Perdiswell – This is something we have discussed and agreed before. When setting up the Canal Group we leafleted widely, used newsletters and so on and set up a gazebo so that we could speak to people directly. We still have quite a few leaflets. It was agreed to try distribution of these into the proposed new area. Also use the noticeboards. Matt to talk to the Friends of Perdiswell Park.

8 Other group Projects for the year – Tim said that he will have four additional benches, two of which could be sited within the city. The plans for redesign of the area of high anti social behaviour at the Blockhouse continue, assistance with this would be appreciated. Discussion of possible locations for art work discussed, these have been on hold as the Arts Ring Project might have gone to the same sites.

9 AOB- i) The Pamela May is a narrowboat used by BDCS and others for events the disabled and other disadvantaged groups. The intention is to get a better adapted boat. To this end there will be a fundraising event at Davids Garden (behind Davids Nursery , same car park) on 1 July. All welcome ii) Food and drink festival Droitwich lido 16. 17 june , details to be put in the noticeboards. Iii) Representation on Waterways users Forum, next week, Tim to attend and report back. Iv) magnetic fishing – has resulted in shopping trollies and bicycle frames left on the towpath and Lansdowne park. This practice is to be discouraged v) The wanderer will be at the litter pick on 30th June, the newly formed Worcestershire Zero Waste Group will be taking part for the first time.

Dates of future meetings

September 26th

November 28th

January 30th

At the Cricketers, £ 17.50 collected to pay for room hire for this meeting