

WORCESTER CANAL GROUP

MINUTES 4 MARCH 2020 at the PAUL PRY

1. **Present:** Joy, Paul, Alison, Helen, Graham, Stuart, Matt, Richard, Mr Smith, Jenny, Mark, George

Apologies: Geri, Tim, Jacky, Margaret, David

2. **Canal Corridor Group** – Joy reported back on the last meeting which was also attended by Helen and Paul. Nick Packham from WWT and the new CRT ecologist also attended the meeting. So although the Wilder Worcester project has not yet officially started a lot of progress is being made. Especially encouraging are the links between all the different organisations and volunteer groups which are now working together on a regular basis.
3. **Inland Waterways Festival of Water:** Stuart Minchin attended the meeting to tell about this. It will take place in Perdiswell Park from Saturday 29th August to Monday 31. It is an annual festival which is held in a different part of the country each year so for it to be coming to Worcester is quite an event. Something like 150 narrow boats are expected and 3000 visitors each day. There will be a small fun fair, food, stalls and all sorts of other entertainments. Stuart's role is to be a link between this festival and the city. Parking will be a problem and so going to the site along the canal by walking or cycling will be encouraged and the possibility of a canal shuttle boat which would take about one hour to travel from Wickes/pizza hut to the festival site. Stuart is talking to all organisations with an interest. So the Commandary may put on a linked event. Diglis Island will be open to visitors. The ARA is involved and some of the lanterns from the Love the Arboretum event will be used. Suggestions for other links were made such as contacting the Fold where an arts project exists that works at events like this. In Lansdowne Park it is hoped that events can be organised. Joy stressed that these should be to support the IWA festival rather than be an alternative to it. Discussion of how we might best be involved in this, for instance a presence on the shuttle boat or a stall in Lansdowne Park. We will return to this in future meetings. Stuart invited anyone interested to attend a meeting at the Guildhall, 10.30- 1 on 21st March. **ACTION: Matt to attend on our behalf.**
4. **Helm Training:** Richard said that the boats are still shut down for the winter. Mark said that he is ready to go ahead with the helm training at any time, just give him a call. It is important to reengage those people who have shown an interest in the past some of these belonged to the St Pauls creative group. **ACTION: Graham to email Geri, copies to Richard and Mark.**
5. **Arboretum Arboretum:** Helen said that Wild and Rooted have been given 30 trees by the Woodland Trust. The idea is that they will be planted by the parents of children who have attended Forest School. The Woodland Trust can also supply 45 trees for £100 in different mixes. Graham said that with the drive to plant more trees the idea of an arboretum in the arboretum is looking more like a realistic proposal. Support of the city council would be helpful. Joy said that this not be difficult. It was agreed that a good first step would be to contact Nick McGowan, the city council tree specialist. Alison said that she would email him to let him know about the idea and copy in Graham and Joy. Jenny said that another idea would be to plant apple and other fruit trees on the other side of the same stretch of canal.

This was considered by Transition some years ago and in the most recent Canal Corridor meeting the CRT ecologist had described doing exactly that in Birmingham. **ACTION: Alison to email Nick McGowan about that also.**

6. **Warndon VEG:** Alison, Helen, Paul and Graham gave a brief account of the walk they recently took around Offerton. The pond is silting up. The city council have done quite a lot of work there since our visit. Once the Wilder Worcester project is up and running the wildlife here should be a priority. Also, at the last meeting they had talked about ways of setting up information posts and using QR codes or geo fencing. They are now looking at numbered points with a website address giving access to audio files. Colour coding in the same way as used at Knap and Paper Mill is a possibility.
7. **Website Map:** Matt said that the website for photographs is now up and running. Invitation to all group members to send photographs for inclusion. Discussion about how this could develop. Adding text would make a big difference. In the past work on the Civil War connections has been talked about. A major inclusion could be to do with the industrial heritage.
8. **Worcester's Big Parade:** Jenny explained that this follows on from the giraffes which everyone remembers being placed for the summer at various places around the city. They were a big success. The theme for 2021 is elephants and artists are being primed to take part. It would be a good thing for the canal side to be one of the sites. The pocket park in the arboretum for instance. Agreed. We might also encourage a further £1000 in sponsorship as this would go to a local school.
9. **Litter picks:** Matt reported that these are going well. There will be another attempt at the end of March to move some of the bigger litter that has been thrown over the wall along Lansdowne Crescent on the allotments and Bramble Wood.
10. **Canal side walk:** The plan is that Paul, Helen, Alison and Graham, together with Alistair the new head ranger from DWT who is enthusiastic about wildlife work along the canal take a walk along a stretch of the canal to see what work is needed and where we can make a difference. There will be further walks, for instance at the Six Ways end of our stretch of canal and a walk with whoever takes on the Wilder Worcester project. All welcome to join in. **NOTE this has now been arranged for 11am on Thursday 19th March.**
11. **AOB**
 - a. We have rejoined WBDCS.
 - b. Matt's divisional fund has run out so the benches that will be installed by Bilford bottom lock will have to wait until May.
12. **Date of next meeting:** AGM 7.15 Wednesday 27th May at the Paul Pry