

Worcester Canal Group: Minutes of meeting held 12th January 2022, 7pm via Zoom

Present: Graham Fowler; Joy Squires (Chair); George Squires (Treasurer); Clare Harker; Jackie Hollis; Keith Bredin; Cllr Matt Jenkins; Louise Robertson (Worcester City Council community engagement team); Stuart Minchin (Worcester City Council community engagement team); Helen Fairest (Bramblewood); Nicola Winstanley; Rob Amos; Gerri Lowman

Apologies: Cllr Jenny Barnes; Margaret Rowley;

1. Joy welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Minutes** of last meeting and matters arising not on agenda: Minutes approved. No further update on **Matt's bench**. Matt to liaise with Gemma Hessey (CRT). **Training for helms:** Meeting for stakeholders involved with the community boat The Wanderer had been held on Monday 10th January. CRT plan to use The Wanderer for maintenance and community groups. Further meeting planned for February.
3. **Treasurer's Report: Current position** - £504.07 total in the bank account, of which £226.92 is ring fenced for trees. Nothing in petty cash.
4. **RSPB Garden Watch:** Agreed to meet Friday 28th January 10am-2pm at the allotments and Saturday 29th January at Bramblewood, with involvement of WWT. Graham to collate results and send off to RSPB.
5. **Updates:**
 - a. **IWA legacy project – Canal heritage arts trail:** Stuart explained that an historic environment research project is underway. Once results are available, a stakeholder meeting would be held to discuss the arts project and what it might involve. We discussed the possibility of an installation at the site of the former Barkers Brickworks (now Gregory's Bank housing estate). Graham and Nicola to liaise with Stuart and report back.
 - b. **Fruit trees project** – agreed that trees would be planted on Wednesday 19th January, meeting at 10am at the Pocket Park. Long discussion about sourcing protection for the newly planted trees which ended with Helen and Graham agreeing to look into this.
 - c. **Litter picks** – ongoing and well supported.
 - d. **Noticeboards** – no further progress.
 - e. **Wilder Worcester project** – Liz updated the Group on progress so far. Further ideas for joint events were discussed, with a bat walk, a night time safari and Visibility Day being favoured.
6. **City Council update:** Stuart introduced Louise Robertson, a new member of the city council's community engagement team. He explained the changes that had been made to the community engagement team. The team has grown from 3 to 7 and a new approach is being taken, working from the bottom up in local communities, identifying the potential to build more resilient communities. Forms still need to be filled in for events on city council owned land (eg allotments, Lansdowne Park and Pocket Park). Joy said she would do these for the various events the Canal Group has planned. Stuart also said that grants of up to £100 are available for community events linked to the Queen's Jubilee. We pondered an event linked to International Biodiversity Day (22nd May) in Lansdowne Park. To be discussed further at next meeting. Stuart also reminded us that the IWA wants to bring the Festival of Water to Worcester in 2026 and he hopes by then to have achieved the development of a winding hole at Perdiswell to make it easier for boats to navigate the canal.

7. CRT update: None. Agreed that Joy would try to set up a meeting with Gemmahessey.
8. **Any Other Business:** Membership of Worcester Arts Council – agreed that we should renew our membership. Joy to progress with George.
9. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 16th March 7pm venue to be announced