

Worcester Canal Group meeting

6th December 2023, Worcester Guildhall

Minutes

1. **Present:** Alex Mace (co-Chair), Karen Lewing (co-Chair), George Squires (Treasurer), Matthew Jenkins (Secretary), Graham Fowler, Clare Harker (ARA) and Jenny Barnes.
2. **Apologies and Distribution:** Margaret Rowley, Joy Squires, Gemma Hessey, Ian Mackey (CCAG), Mel Roxby-Mackey, Hannah Cooper (City Councillor), Jacky Hollis, Paul Wilkinson (Canal and River Trust), Ruth Corral (Sustainability Team Leader, City Council)
3. **Wilder Worcester Project:** Liz Yorke has left WWT. The Wilder Worcester Project will be finished by Heather Pullin and we need to contact Nick Packham like before for WWT. Plan to invite Bramblewood to the meeting with CRT in January. (Graham has done this).
4. **Worcester Arts Council:** George has applied to Worcester Arts Council for membership and will confirm when we are accepted as we can apply for funding 3 months after this.
5. **Trees (TCV):** Confirmed as 29th January, 9.30am meet at the Museum and Art Gallery for a pre-meeting and subsequent walk along the canal. Will be with Ruth Corral, Paul Wilkinson from CRT and the city council tree officer to improve coordination of work.
6. **Industrial heritage:** Potential sites for interpretation boards, e.g., Barker's Wharf, Roman settlement in Lansdowne Park. Heritage sub-group to be formed. **Ian, Graham, Karen or Alex** to take this project forward with Sheena from the city council.
7. **Mural painting:** Kate Cox from the Worcester Paint Festival had promised an extra mural on the Bilford Road bridge. **Matt to chase.** Other possible sites for future murals along the canal include the "concrete corridor" in Diglis.
8. **Damage and graffiti:** The bridge at Gregory's Bank Bottom Lock is due to be repaired soon. Offensive graffiti has been reported and the mural is gradually being reinstated by Karen.
9. **Executive committee:** We have signed up to the Worcester Community Lottery. When you buy a ticket, you can ask to support us. **Matt to promote on the website, etc.** Sub-groups can be set up for certain projects, such as the heritage project (above). It was agreed that one member of the executive committee should be on a sub-group to reduce delays.
10. **Treasurer's report:** (See separate report). We paid £30 to Worcester Arts Council. We have £80 left and the money reserved for litter picking equipment.
11. **Events:** How do we get people further up the canal involved? Possibly some events here, e.g., tree planting in Gregory's Bank estate. **Alex to action.**
 - a. **4th February 2024:** Hedge planting in Lansdowne Park (from 10am).
 - b. **18th February 2024:** New fruit Tree planting in Lansdowne Park (from 10am).

Alex to produce images for the promotion of events on social media

12. **Swift boxes:** Eleven swift boxes have been installed in the Arboretum. Next time we will have to pay for the boxes. Approx. £25 each. ARA. We have around ten more people interested. And there is interest beyond the Arboretum which can be organised through the WEG.
13. **Allotment:** A plot on the Lansdowne Road allotment has been maintained as a wildlife/wildflower area. The plot is paid for by Graham. It has been used for various events. This needs formalising. The city council have a limit of 25% per plot reserved for biodiversity, and Graham cannot own more than one plot. We need to get the city council to support the idea of local groups, such as us and the ARA, being allowed to carry this on. Karen has

spoken to Doug Henderson (Bereavement & Greenspaces Manager) at the city council about this.

14. **Noticeboards:** Bob from the ARA has the keys to the two noticeboards in the Arboretum.
15. **Mission statement:** We need a new mission statement to cover our values and vision. **Karen to draft and share.** We could then produce some new leaflets/flyers to promote us.
16. AOB
 - a. Could we invite the biodiversity officer for planning (Chris Dobbs) to our next meeting? He could give a talk about biodiversity net gain. **Karen to invite him.**
 - b. Gritting: The canal towpath can get very slippery in icy conditions. E.g., by Bilford Road lock. Noted that this has been raised with the CRT.
17. **Date of next meeting** – 6th March, 7pm. Worcester Guildhall.