

## The Kennet & Avon Canal Trust

**TRUST COUNCIL MEETING: Monday 30 October 2023, 0930 by Zoom**

### Minutes

**Trustees present:** Chris Sims (Chairman), Mike Bailey, Chris Bolt, Alison Cannon, Rob Dunton, Terry Mundy, Graham Snook

**In attendance:** Darren Bone, Rob Dean, Susan Hill, David Tucker (item 4)

**1. Welcome and apologies** There were no apologies.

### **2. Declarations of interest**

CS and CB - Directors of Enterprise

### **3. Introduction of Susan Hill**

Susan Hill was introduced to Trustees. She will be co-opted as a Trustee on 27 November, and replace Chris Bolt (who will be standing down as a Trustee) as Treasurer.

### **4. Presentation on Crofton 2030**

David Tucker gave a presentation on the issues arising from his work to develop a forward strategy and business plan for Crofton Beam Engines, and the challenges to be addressed by Trustees. His conclusion was that the Trust cannot resolve its long-term challenges without making a series of charity-wide, strategic decisions; but that at the same time the Trust cannot give Crofton the best chance of a thriving future without acting. The Crofton Branch Management Committee will now consider the recommended course of action and identify next steps to be discussed and agreed by Trustees.

### **5. Approval of minutes of meeting on 25 September 2023**

These were approved.

### **6. Future of Bruce Boats**

AC gave a presentation of the work and charitable impact of the Bruce boats and introduced the paper prepared by CS and her as directed by trustees on 25 September. The paper recommended 2 decisions for Trustees:

1. to confirm their agreement from 31 July to support the charitable aims of the Bruce Boats operation and the continued provision of holiday hire and day trips for elderly, disabled, disadvantaged and youth users.
2. to agree to accept the running of the Bruce Boats as a Trust branch on a charitable basis with immediate effect, noting that this did not preclude exploring transferring the boats outside the Trust later.

To enable this, a new branch committee had been established and a 5-year plan prepared setting out proposals for rebuilding utilisation of the boats to 2017 levels and managing operating costs and fundraising to enable the boats to continue.

The paper noted that the change would require Trust to be registered for VAT, and GS asked about the implications of this for Crofton. SH commented that work would need to be done to examine how VAT would be managed across the Trust and noted that we would

have some time to do this with professional support. There was also discussion of the income and cost projections and the impact of inflation.

Trustees confirmed their support of the Bruce boats operation and agreed that it should be transferred to Trust and that bookings for 2024 which had been suspended by Enterprise should begin immediately. Trustees also agreed that close monitoring of operations and finances would be essential, with a review of the operation after 12 months.

DB noted that the Enterprise Board was meeting on 2 November and would be informed of Trustees decision at that meeting.

## **7. Conservation Policy**

RD introduced this item and explained the background to the draft policy. The policy was agreed. It was noted that the future use of coal by Crofton Beam Engines would be covered in the environmental action plan being developed in accordance with the Trust's Environmental Policy agreed in September.

## **8. Future meetings**

The next meeting of Trust Council will be at 0930 on Monday 27 November, by Zoom. Meeting dates for 2024 will be reviewed and moved to another day of the week (probably Thursday).

## **9. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.