



# THE KENNET & AVON CANAL TRUST

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## **The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust**

### **59th Annual General Meeting held on 22 May 2021 at 11 am at Devizes Wharf, Couch Lane, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1EB and by Zoom.**

Eight members were present in the room, and 17 members attended by Zoom. The Chairman, Chris Sims, welcomed all those attending and declared the meeting quorate.

#### **Item 1: To receive and adopt the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020**

The Treasurer, Chris Bolt, summarised the Trust's achievements in 2020 and the financial results for the year. Activities had been significantly curtailed as a result of the pandemic, which particularly affected revenue in Enterprise (trip boats and Bruce Boats) and at Crofton. As a consequence, Enterprise had recorded a loss of around £150K, and had been supported by a loan from Trust to be repaid over a five year period. However, the Trust had secured a number of grants, both from Wiltshire Council and from the Wolfson Foundation, and with careful costs control had still achieved a cash surplus.

At the end of the year, cash balances for the Group had fallen by just over £100K to £457K, which was still well above the target level of reserves set by the Trustees.

There were no questions on the Report and Accounts.

#### **Item 2: To elect Directors:**

##### **Mike Bailey, Chris Bolt and David Copley retire in accordance with Articles 32 and 33 of the Trust's Articles of Association and are recommended by the Directors for re-election**

Mike Bailey: proposed by Chris Bolt, seconded by Peter Turvey - agreed on a show of hands.

Chris Bolt: proposed by Ann Snook, seconded by Graham Snook - agreed on a show of hands.

David Copley: proposed by Peter Turvey, seconded by Graham Snook - agreed on a show of hands.

#### **Item 3: To transact any other business which may properly be conducted at an Annual General Meeting**

There was no other business, and the Chairman declared the AGM closed at 11.20 am.



The formal meeting was followed by a question and answer session, introduced by the Chairman summarising Trust priorities in 2021.

Questions raised by members included the following:

- The future of the Devizes wharf building: It was explained that significant expenditure will be required to bring the building up to required standards, for example in respect of electrical safety. A building survey is being commissioned to identify structural issues. Once there is a clearer view of likely costs, Trustees will take a view on future options. One option will be to move the Archive from Caen Hill (where CRT is closing its office) and develop a visitor centre at Devizes Wharf. But before committing to the likely scale of expenditure, Trustees will need to have discussions with Wiltshire Council on a new lease. But surrender of the lease cannot be ruled out.
- Future membership arrangements: Trustees have approved new Membership Rules, which will come into effect after the AGM. The membership rates are being simplified, and all membership records moved onto a new system to allow easier updating and communication. Trustees recognise the need to increase the number of members, and this was one of the priorities for 2021. But giving this more priority will require some refreshing of Trust Council membership, which is another 2021 priority.
- Crofton boiler repairs: A full boiler survey is being carried out shortly to identify all the works likely to be required to keep the boiler operational for a further ten years. A notional £50K has been budgeted for this work, which will require targeted fund-raising. If the costs are significantly more than this, other options will need to be considered.
- Boat replacement: Although there is currently no formal programme for replacement of boats owned by Enterprise, this is being developed by Enterprise as part of the current update of its medium term plan. At its next meeting, Trust Council will consider all current projects, including restoration of the Aldermaston Wash House and development of a new building at Bedwyn Wharf, as well as boat replacement, Crofton projects and Devizes Wharf projects, and will take a view on priorities and affordability.
- Fundraising: Fundraising is generally undertaken on a project basis, through individual branches. The Treasurer plays a coordinating role to ensure that approaches to grant-making trusts and similar bodies are not duplicated, and are focused on the most appropriate projects.

After the Q&A session, the Trust President, Rob Dean, thanked staff, volunteers and Trustees for helping ensure that the Trust survived the pandemic. He also paid tribute to two Trust stalwarts who had died in the last year: John Webb, a Trust Vice President who had been a key player in the restoration of the canal and securing an appropriate mooring policy, more recently focusing on projects in the Bath area; and Simon Eveleigh, Chairman of Devizes Branch and Boat Master of Kenavon Venture until the end of last year, as well as providing general oversight of the Trust's buildings.

The Chairman thanked all those attending, and closed the informal meeting at 12.07.