

# MINUTES

<b>Title</b>	British Waterways Scotland Group Meeting
<b>Date</b>	Thursday 8 June 2006
<b>Venue</b>	The Moorings Hotel, Banavie, Fort William
<b>Attendees</b>	BWSG - Campbell Christie (Chair); Ian Darling; George Fleming; Guthrie Hutton; Eva McCracken; Kenneth MacKenzie; Rod Michie; Sandra Purves;  BWS – Steve Dunlop; John Wallace; Nicola Christie (minutes)  Scottish Executive – David Eaglesham  Facilitator – Jon Barton
<b>Apologies</b>	Susan Achmatowicz; Robin Evans; Tony Hales; Richard Milham; James Simpson;

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## Action

- 1. Introduction**

Campbell Christie welcomed David Eaglesham, Head of Freight and Inland Waterway Branch of the Scottish Executive and Jon Barton of Clarifycommunications, facilitator, to the meeting.

Thanks were also extended to all involved in arranging the enjoyable evening cruise on the Caledonian Canal for David Eaglesham who would be retiring from the Scottish Executive in August 2006.
- 2. Preparation for BWS Submission to Scottish Executive Comprehensive Spending Review**

Jon Barton introduced the aims of the facilitated session to discuss strategy and tactics for a successful submission to the Scottish Executive's comprehensive spending review for 2008-2011.

**Scene Setting and Context**

Steve Dunlop, Director, Scotland set the scene and context for this discussion with an overview of what he had learned since his appointment in February 2006 about BWS' potential to enrich people's lives in Scotland. It was acknowledged that engineering and maintenance of the canals would always underpin all that BWS do but that BWS could also contribute, through partnership

working, to many other aspects of life in Scotland including the environment & heritage, tourism and regeneration in a sustainable way. This potential was demonstrated by an overview of several planned BWS water based regeneration projects as follows:

**Inverness** – The mixed use development of Inverness Harbour to include a marina, with consequent potential increased transits on the Caledonian Canal presented BWS with an opportunity to accommodate an increase in demand for canal-side facilities.

**Ardrishaig** – BWS own substantial land holdings and the regeneration of the town centre around the canal could create a destination similar to Tobermory.

**Bowling** - New boating facilities, car parking and public open space had contributed to an improved amenity which could be further expanded.

**North Glasgow** – The regeneration of a 1000 acres of derelict and vacant land in North Glasgow in partnership with Glasgow City Council and BW's Joint Venture, ISIS Waterside Regeneration was being spearheaded by the near completion of a new canal basin at Port Dundas. The planning decision for Dundas Wharf had been called in by the Scottish Executive for review, a signal that the approach to the built form of this regeneration required to be more community led. The improvements to the public realm and landscape links were being progressed, subject to funding.

**Pub Partnership** – BWS pub partnership with Scottish & Newcastle would create waterside destinations. There were advanced plans for a pub at Auchinstarry with more in the pipeline for The Falkirk Wheel site, Rosebank and elsewhere.

**Tamfourhill Masterplan** – a Joint Venture with Falkirk Council planned to create a high quality, mixed-use destination with waterspace. Plans would be presented to the next BWSG meeting.

**BWS**

**Fountainbridge** – Phase 1 and Phase 2 (currently under construction) demonstrated the economic development success of regenerating waterside areas, triggering development by third parties. A further meeting with City of Edinburgh Council had helped to maintain the momentum for retaining usable waterspace as part of further development of the old brewery site.

**Fort Augustus** – As part of the Caledonian Canal lock

stabilisation programme, BWS had invested significantly in the lock flight at Fort Augustus and owned a lot of canal-side property. Fort Augustus could be an even more appealing tourist destination and BWS planned to re-engage with the community to demonstrate the added value of working with BWS.

**Fort William** – As the outdoor capital of the UK, BWS need to be involved with the planned regeneration of Fort William.

To allow BWS to fully contribute to this much broader agenda, there was a need for BWS to build in capacity and resources.

Comments were invited. The presentation of both strengths and weaknesses allowed for meaningful input to the discussion. There was a need to ensure that visitors stayed for longer on the Union Canal in Edinburgh.

It was recommended that the BW Board be refreshed with this presentation of the breadth of the BWS strategic objectives.

**SD**

It was also recommended that the Scottish Executive and Scottish Ministers be reminded of the spread across several agendas of the BWS strategic objectives, particularly concentrating on environmentally friendly and sustainable objectives and BWS ability to deliver.

**SD**

### **Strategy**

The group discussed whether the 2002 policy document – Scotland's Canals – an asset for the future, matched the scale of the ambitions for BWS' role beyond 2008 to transform vital aspects of the lives of Scottish people.

It was agreed that the policy document was durable. It is one of many owned by the Minister and the Scottish Executive and to ensure that they were not distanced from the policy for Scotland's canals, the onus was on BWS to maintain the momentum and focus on outputs to deliver this policy. To be persuasive, BWS must demonstrate not only what has been achieved with its current base-line funding to show that the asset is being used well now, but also that the potential exists to justify further investment.

BWS must also demonstrate how its core strategic objectives link with and can help deliver the objectives of other Scottish Executive policy documents. In the context of rising energy costs, climate change and the environment BWS needed a focussed statement

on its sustainability strategy. BWS also needed to enhance its ability to work together with other public sector agencies to develop a co-ordinated approach to different Scottish Executive strategies.

### **Funding**

The group discussed how best to position BWS to compete for adequate, secure funding.

It was agreed that although BWS was a small, marginal part of Transport, it had been successful in achieving its current funding arrangement and was well placed to pick up under-spends from large capital projects. It also provided Transport with good news stories. A move to another portfolio such as Environment or Tourism created a risk of increased competition for funding and may jeopardise the security the relationship with Transport has provided.

Nevertheless BWS needed to become more extrovert and raise its profile with other public agencies and Scottish Executive sponsors of those agencies by working in partnership to show the added value of working with BWS. BWS also needed to become more forward looking and entrepreneurial by partnering private sector businesses, by becoming more internationally aware and connecting into the changing European funding agenda.

### **Public Value**

The group discussed what BWS can promise the Scottish people it can add to the quality of their lives. BWS must guard against falling into the “desirable but not essential” category with the Scottish Executive and other funders.

The impact of the regeneration of the canals should not be underestimated. There were several examples – Falkirk, Kirkintilloch, Linlithgow where the benefits of the canal had been maximised and the majority of the community now uses the canal and its towpaths. The economic impact and outputs of improved areas needed to be well documented to show that active canals can provide the stimulus for wider change and have a dramatic beneficial impact to be repeated in areas which had not experienced such benefits yet such as Maryhill and North Glasgow. Successful regeneration was community driven and BWS was not resourced to relationship manage canal-side communities.

The cost of past neglect of the canals in terms of decline, low aspirations and negative land values was substantial and any reversion to this state must be avoided.

Recreation, leisure and health giving benefits of the canals and towpaths to local communities ought to be promoted more as part of BWS core business. Currently The Waterways Trust for Scotland are under resourced to coordinate a bigger drive to involve communities. The impetus with volunteers has also been lost.

BWS must be the catalyst to develop a product that will attract tourists both from home and abroad and encourage return visits. This offering needed to be well understood by VisitScotland. Marketing of BWS was concentrated on the Falkirk Wheel. More information leaflets expanding on the culture and heritage of the canals needed to be made more widely available. The new marketing strategy of BW national must connect into BWS. BWS could be holding back growth of the canals by not catering for the current demand for moorings to stimulate a tourist business and facilitating the use of the canal by the private sector. The BWS web-site was not a marketing tool and needed to be improved. The licensing system for BWS was not on the web-site and this ought to be addressed, generally commercial operators ought to be helped to market. BWS has a series of platforms for events on both a local and national level which were not being exploited.

### **Hearts and Minds**

The group discussed how to win over Scotland's people, government and business community.

The BWS product and enthusiasm within BWS to take it to the next level must be conveyed to all partners and stakeholders. BWS would continue to raise its profile through pr, lobbying and the press and media.

Conveying the attraction of Scotland's canals to children as an education tool via schools and youth groups must be progressed. All schoolchildren in the central belt ought to go through The Falkirk Wheel. A lack of resource currently prevented the Wild over Waterways education package being applied to Scotland and this needed to be addressed.

Communication with canal societies, volunteers and "people on the ground" required more resource in the form of community

developers facilitating canal-based activities.

More productive engagement with MSPs and MPs was required to raise political awareness. The setting up of an MSP Canal Group at Holyrood in addition to the MP Canal Group at Westminster should be considered to ensure more targeted consideration of constituency based issues. It was agreed that further discussion with BW Corporate Affairs would be helpful.

Ahead of the Holyrood elections in May 2007, communication of what BWS are about and what they aspire to do to all major parties would be timely this autumn, with particular emphasis on sustainability credentials. Comparison of BWS strategy with party manifestos should also be actioned.

### **The Way Forward**

The timetable was urgent. A draft BWS submission for the comprehensive spending review should be available by the end of September 2006.

The BWSG could help by lobbying to build up momentum behind the submission. A sub-group may be a helpful structure to help the process to produce the draft submission.

### **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2006 were a true record.

### **Matters Arising**

#### **Auchinstarry**

The berths at Auchinstarry were full. More berths to come on line at Bowling soon.

#### **Port Dundas**

An opening event to mark the completion of the canal basin was planned for August 2006. The funding discussions for landscaping to link Port Dundas to the City Centre were ongoing.

#### **River Carron**

A presentation of the Helix – Living connections, incorporating plans for the canal channel by BWS, Falkirk Council and also involving David Eaglesham from the Scottish Executive, to representatives of the Big Lottery Fund Living Landmarks took

place on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> May. It is expected to be advised in August 2006 whether this project has been selected from the current 75 projects under consideration to go through to the next round of 25.

**River Leven**

BWS were continuing work on technical studies to form a navigable link between the Forth & Clyde and Loch Lomond.

**Issues ahead of the Public Meeting**

Russell Thomson, Customer Services Manager, Highlands joined the meeting for a short discussion of issues that may arise at the Public Meeting.

**Ian Darling**

Ian Darling would be retiring from the British Waterways board in September 2006 and hence this would be his last BWSG meeting. The group thanked Ian for his valuable contribution.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 19 October 2006, Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire.  
Venue to be advised.