

**British Waterways Scotland
Scotland Group**

Minutes of Meeting held on 30th October 2002 at 1000 hours

Held in The Moorings Hotel,

Banavie, Fort William

Present: Susan Achmatowicz
Neil Butler
Campbell Christie, Chairman
Ian Darling
Professor George Fleming
George Greener
Jane Karwoski
Arthur McCourt
Kenneth MacKenzie
Rod Michie
Sandra Purves
Stewart Sim
James Simpson
Jim Stirling

In Attendance: George Ballinger, Engineering Manager, Scotland
Patricia Rettie (minutes)

Minute	Subject
SG 56	CC opened the meeting and welcomed all present. CC gave a special welcome to the new members and invited each of them to say a few words about themselves by way of introduction. All members of the existing Group introduced themselves and gave brief summary of their backgrounds.
SG 57	Apologies Apologies were given for Ken Collins, SEPA
SG 58	Minutes of Previous Meeting Minutes of the meeting held 20 th June were agreed. The minutes of the meeting held 17 th September were tabled for information and those present at that meeting were asked to submit any comments to PR.
SG 59	Matters Arising GG asked about progress on Lowlands Business Development Plan. Jim Stirling stated that this would be covered under 'Update – General' and that Nigel Bell of the BW Scotland Commercial Department will attend the next scheduled BWSG

	<p>meeting, which will be held on the Lowland Canals.</p> <p>ID asked for update on Item SG 46. Jim Stirling also stated that this would be covered later in the meeting.</p>
<p>SG 60</p>	<p>Update</p> <p>General</p> <p>Jim Stirling gave a presentation, providing a short history of the Scotland's canals, together with background on recent activities and information on ongoing and future planned activities.</p> <p>Jim also spoke of the increased numbers this year of fishing boats going through the Caledonian Canal, and how the canal also operates as a linear marina. There are at present 2 hire boat operators. The main market for both transit craft and hire boat customers is the UK, Scandinavia and Germany.</p> <p>On the Crinan Canal regular timber shipments continue and the yachting market remains strong.</p> <p>Issues on the Crinan Canal include complaints about water logged gardens at Glenburn Road. Our technical staff have met with residents and have carried out a survey, following which BW is currently carrying out vegetation management on embankments and are still discussing with residents whether we can assist with solving the problem of wet gardens. However, in our view the problem is more to do with the geography and not due to seepage from the canal.</p> <p>Crinan Road: BW and the Argyll & Bute Council met with George Lyons MSP and the local Community Council on 25th October. The Council has allocated monies over several years, and is carrying out work to a section this winter. BW is de-watering the canal and the opportunity will be taken to carry out a joint full survey of the length exposed when the canal is empty.</p> <p>GG asked if costs for this work are included in current funding, JS replied that since BW sees the road as the responsibility of the Council, no specific funding has been allocated for this. The Council and BW have agreed to work together and BW has requested special funding from the Scottish Executive. Once the full extent of required works is known, assistance from the Local Enterprise Company will be sought.</p> <p>Lowland Canals</p> <p>The number of transits through the Forth & Clyde Canal is up on last year. The new weed cutting boats are having a major impact. Although, there are still some problems with perceived depth, which we believe are due to submerged, floating objects. An exercise to prove depth is being carried out over 29th & 30th October, and representatives of the Yacht Clubs will be accompanying BW.</p> <p>Three new hire craft will be available at start of next season, with an additional three being added shortly after. The partnership with Black Prince will commence in May. A new boat will be on show At The Wheel over the winter to demonstrate what is available for hire and to purchase. This will also be used for journalist visits and for teaching potential users.</p> <p>There is a privately owned day hire boat operating at Lock 16 in Falkirk and consideration is being given to moving this to The Wheel site.</p> <p>SP suggested that lack of success may be due to insufficient marketing by BW up to now.</p>

A strategy for the development of leisure nodes is currently being prepared by BW Scotland. This involves the identification of a number of areas for large and small scale leisure development.

The funding of these is anticipated to be via a combination of Commercial and Operational Capital with assistance from our partners, where possible.

At Kirkintilloch, for example, the Local Authority and Local Enterprise Company, with some funding from BW are carrying out improvements and planning to create a new off-line basin. The basin will be owned and operated by BW. BW plans to operate day boats from Kirkintilloch.

Other nodes may be more commercial in character, such as Auchinstarry.

GG gave an early warning note that anticipated rates of return are not good and a lot of work needs to be carried out before December.

JS recognises that it will be a difficult process to start with, but then will expand once interest develops.

GG accepts this, but feels BW Scotland must have courage to tackle risky projects, but must be clear at Board level what the risks are.

A multi-use development is planned for the former Rosebank Distillery. The scheme comprises flats, office space and a pub/restaurant.

There is also the potential for floating offices at Edinburgh Quay.

GF reminded the Group that he had suggested, at June meeting, that BW should investigate whether or not it would be possible to take on the Rosebank Brand Name. JS does not think this is possible, but still being looked at.

Alongside development of activity nodes BW Scotland has a programme of community involvement and working with volunteers and the new Education Unit, Wild Over Waterways is beginning to be rolled out.

GF asked if BW Scotland have facilities for assisting with de-masting of yachts. JS explained what is in place for this at Bowling, as a BW facility and at Grangemouth, as a private facility. De-masting is also available at Port Edgar Marina.

JS informed the Group that during the maintenance period for The Wheel, the Visitor Centre was kept open and that visitor numbers were still high during down-time. However, if the same practice is to be used during the next maintenance period greater consideration will have to be given to site signage where areas are closed and to advertising closure to prevent disappointment for anyone travelling long distances. General improvements to the site and Visitor Centre are under review.

GG asked if a Risk Assessment was in place for The Falkirk Wheel and Visitor Centre should the Fire Fighters Strike go ahead. JS explained that there was.

GF asked what progress there was on his suggestion of investigating the possibility of railway access and additional road access from the south.

On the Railway Station JS explained that discussion had been held with Railtrack in the early stages without success. However, now that the Wheel has become a success we may revisit.

As far as additional road access from the south is concerned, the route in question would still join up with the High Bonnybridge Road and would therefore have the same attendant traffic problems.

The Park & Ride facility is now well advanced, and obviously we will be monitoring the effect of this on traffic flow.

At Edinburgh Quay Iain Gray, Minister for Environment, Transport and Lifelong learning will be performing a ceremony at 'The Start On Site' on 14th November 2002.

JS gave brief update on Lochrin Breach, but there is still concern that residents not directly affected are not getting enough information. SP agrees that this is also the case with the local Community Council, although, it is BW's understanding that representatives of the Community Council have attended meetings with BW, the local MSP and residents.

GG asked who is meeting expenses. JS answered Edinburgh Quay, in the first instance and Insurance Companies are still discussing.

Craft Licences

BW Scotland will shortly go through consultation process on new licence structure with a view to implementation of final scheme in April 2003. Essentially the proposal is to separate licences from moorings, possible with flat rate licence fee.

On the Crinan and Caledonian Canals the charges will be neutral to customers. It will allow differential mooring prices in the future.

On the Lowland Canals the proposed charge could encourage the development of moorings by the private sector. It will also allow transparent differential pricing of moorings. It is proposed that a full licence includes passage through The Falkirk Wheel.

SG 61

Scottish Executive – Policy Document

Discussion & Agenda For The Future

A paper was distributed to all present outlining the implications for BW of the Scottish Executive's Policy document 'Scotland's Canals : An Asset For The Future.

The paper draws out from the document what BW is expected to do.

Jim Stirling gave a presentation, which demonstrated the challenge BW Scotland has been given and how it will tackle it. The presentation was also designed to highlight how members of the Group can assist BW Scotland to take these issues forward.

To take matters forward BW has a strategy, based on 5 main principles:

- Increasing awareness of canals in general and encouraging more private sector investment
- Encouraging all public bodies sponsored by the Executive and local authorities to continue to work together and support the sustainable development and regeneration of canals and their surrounding areas
- Promoting voluntary sector and community involvement in canals, with particular regard to their educational value and their positive impact on quality of life
- Promoting the need for other public policy decisions to take account of sustainable development and regeneration aims for our canals
- BW will continue to receive Scottish Executive grant to meet its statutory duties and help progress new initiatives, but are encouraged to develop new and existing earned income streams

CC made the point that The Millennium Link Project is an important area where Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Companies have come together and the Lowlands Steering Committee should be encouraged to continue.

Further discussion followed on the way forward for the Steering Committee. Within this discussion, GG informed the Group that he had written to Sir Ian Robinson of Scottish Enterprise requesting a meeting with him to discuss key issues from the Policy Document and suggested that another key point could be his views on the future role of the Steering Committee. Further discussion took place about how the Steering Committee might move forward the roles of the various parties, including potential involvement of the Scottish Executive.

Group to suggest actions for the way forward.

NB suggested using the World Canals Conference in 2003 as a platform for potential resources BW has to sell. Examples of this are Engineering expertise and Fund Raising expertise.

JK spoke of her experience of a group formed informally to drive entrepreneurship and enterprise development forward. Should look at group of 5 or 6 people who would do this for BW.

GG said we must look at which markets we should serve and have appropriate guests (Captains of Industry) at The Falkirk Wheel to get them interested. This requires background work in the first instance to maximise opportunity. Start by working up nodes then decide on players, take them to a node and then to The Wheel show them how and where money making opportunity exists.

	<p>Some initial starting points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must get boats – BW to share risk • Train our own people to deal with potential partners • NB still suggests Falkirk Council could be used to maximise opportunities at The Wheel • A water festival could be a way of raising awareness <p>GF made reference to the role Scottish Export forum may be able to play and agrees with JK suggestion for group, need connection between developments and canals.</p>
SG 62	<p>Financial Figures – 3 Year Requirements</p> <p>JS referred the Group to Appendix A of the paper outlining Implications of The Scottish Executive's Policy document together with tables issued prior to meeting and took the Group through this highlighting what had already been included in funding request and items which had not.</p>
SG 63	<p>Caledonian Canal Briefing</p> <p>George Ballinger gave a presentation on the Caledonian Canal. This gave an overview of the construction of the canal and showed the split of assets and the cost of maintenance and repair of these assets. The presentation also showed excellent examples of improvement works, with before and after pictures.</p>
SG 64	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested and agreed that Robin Evans should be invited to the next meeting of the Group. • It was agreed round the table that the monthly conference calls are beneficial and should continue. <p>The future dates for conference calls for 2002 are:</p> <p>Monday 18th November @ 1600 hrs Monday 16th December @ 1600 hrs</p>
SG 65	<p>Meeting Dates 2003</p> <p>Thursday 6th February – This meeting will be held at a location on Lowland Canals Thursday 8th May – Location TBC Thursday 4th September – Also probable date of BW Scotland Annual Meeting Thursday 13th November – Location TBC</p>