
British Waterways Scotland Group

Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday 13th November 2003 @ 1000 hours

In Enterprise House, Southbank Conference Centre, Kirkintilloch

Present: Susan Achmatowicz
Campbell Christie (Chairman)
Ian Darling
Professor George Fleming
George Greener
Jane Karwoski
Rod Michie
Sandra Purves
Stewart Sim
James Simpson
Jim Stirling

Lilian Wright (Minutes)

Minute	Subject	Action
	<p>The Chairman, Campbell Christie, opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. He advised all present that there had been three resignations from the BWSG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sir Ken Collins of SEPA has resigned as he felt that he was unable to input as much to the group as he had anticipated.▪ Neil Butler of UZ Events has resigned as his work commitments have now expanded into the international arena leaving him with less time to devote to the group.▪ Arthur McCourt has resigned. Like the others, he felt that his current business commitments left him with little spare time on his hands to devote to other issues. <p>CC said that he has sent letters thanking Sir Ken Collins and Neil Butler. The Group are now seeking to appoint three new members. This would be discussed at Agenda Item SG 90.</p>	
SG 85	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were given for Kenneth MacKenzie.</p>	
SG 86	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>Minutes of the meeting held in Fort Augustus on 8th May 2003 were</p>	

	agreed.	
SG 87	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>GG referred to paragraph 3 of item SG 79 which outlined the roll-out of BW's Wild Over Water (WOW) initiative and asked if there been any follow up regarding ensuring that the Minister for Education is appraised on the value and success of this programme? JS said that this had not yet been dealt with because of the Summer Recess. GG recommended that this issue be carried forward.</p> <p>CC asked if GG wanted to say anything about the dinner with Government Ministers at Westminster.</p> <p>GG was happy to say that three of the attendees at last Tuesday's dinner were here today (Susan Achmatowicz, George Fleming and himself). Several themes had been addressed bearing in mind that BW is a unique institution which does not fall easily within any Government department. GG said that we did not intend to seek another department for sponsorship and that in useful meetings with Defra Minister, Alun Michael, we had planned to work with Defra to make contact with other Government departments in order to identify benefits and obtain more support.</p> <p>Four main themes were discussed at the dinner chaired by Alun Michael. These were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education: Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills was present. He knew little about British Waterways and was very keen to learn about possibilities. 2. Transport: Kim Howells, Minister of State, Department for Transport was present. Discussion extended beyond simple transport e.g. shipment of aggregates to issues such as the management of waste and how waste can interact with other schemes e.g. in housing and regeneration strategy, Ports, to generate value. George Fleming covers this on the Board and Stewart Sim is involved. 3. Regeneration and Housing: John Prescott talked about affordable housing within context of BW's core area of regeneration. 4. Sport and Tourism: Richard Caborn was present. Susan Achmatowicz covered this theme which led to discussions about how BW could contribute to existing government strategies. <p>Ann Keen (Gordon Brown's PPS) was present and will give feedback to the Chancellor as well as participating in more detailed briefings about the scope and achievements of British Waterways.</p> <p>CC said that the Scotland approach would be different as we do not</p>	Action JS

	<p>have so many canals. However, there was no reason why we should not be looking at a similar sort of gathering with our Ministers in Scotland. We need JS to sit down with George and Simon to work out our target. CC was sure that our Ministers would be keen to get involved.</p> <p>GG raised the issue of museums and The Waterways Trust, which had been discussed under item SG81 at the last BWSG meeting. He also suggested that we need to consider how we can best use the artefacts.</p> <p>James Simpson said that you need to look at what it is that makes a museum appealing. We need to look at the statistics to see which museums were successful and why.</p> <p>JS said that he had followed this up but there was nothing specific yet. Robin Evans had said that we would draw Jonathan Bryant into this discussion. His only concern was whether The Wheel was the right place for this. JS said that The Wheel site is not the place but the South side of the railway line through the tunnel may be the place. It will still be linked in with The Wheel.</p> <p>SP said that there have been discussions among the canal community in general about what was happening at The Wheel. People feel that the area above the tunnel needs to be livened up, e.g. a Marina.</p> <p>SS said that south side of The Wheel through the tunnel had potential plus locations around Auchinstarry and Kirkintilloch.</p>	
SG 88	<p>Reorganisation</p> <p>JS presented a PowerPoint overview of how the reorganisation had developed in Scotland. The Review in Scotland does not quite mirror England but follows the spirit of the reorganisation in England.</p> <p>He explained that, in the past BWS had been split geographically with each location reporting directly to himself but that we had decided to combine the Caledonian and Crinan canals under a single Manager, Highland Canals. Pam Swanson, who spent 25 years with British Airways, has filled this post. She will also be our customer service champion. As the new structure rolls out, we need high calibre people such as Pam Swanson in the Highlands and Richard Millar in the Lowlands to liaise with one another on the service function.</p> <p>James Simpson said that he felt it was crucial that people knew who was in charge of the canal because he felt that there could be issues here. The Service Manager needs to improve service and the Operations Manager needs to deliver.</p> <p>JK said it was about ensuring our customers saw an improvement.</p> <p>JS said that he recognised this and that whilst Scotland is two geographical units we need the Highland Canals Manager and the</p>	

	<p>Lowland Canals Manager to behave as partners.</p> <p>GG asked if JS had recruited Pam Swanson because of her particular skill set and JS confirmed that this was the case.</p> <p>Our external affairs will now be under the remit of our new Legal & Corporate Affairs Manager, Nicola Christie who is joining us on Monday, 24th November. Nicola will be dealing with Scottish Executive and other external bodies. She will handle external relations rather than marketing relations.</p> <p>We have also recruited a Commercial Manager, Jonathan Bryant, who joined us on Friday, 31st October.</p> <p>JS said that we were also recruiting to fill two new positions below Richard Millar: a Customer Service Manager and an Engineering Ops Manager. A Customer Service Manager would also be recruited for Pam Swanson's team in Inverness.</p>	
<p>SG 89</p>	<p>Scottish Business Plan</p> <p>The current business planning round has just started. JS went through the slide presentation seeking input from the Group: specific views and areas where members could be of assistance. The slides presented are included as Appendix 1 of these minutes.</p> <p>The appointment of the new Commercial manager, Jonathan Bryant is obviously key in the area of growing income. Jonathan's overall responsibilities include the Visitor Experience at The Falkirk Wheel.</p> <p>We are making progress with our stakeholders appreciating the canals as an asset post Millennium Link. Following the Board dinner in Glasgow, Glasgow City Council and Strathclyde European Partnership have backed the reconnection of Port Dundas.</p> <p>The Group discussed priorities surrounding the River Carron and the River Leven. We need partners to move these projects forward. We have a direct involvement at Grangemouth/River Carron, where BW needs to show leadership, but no direct involvement on River Leven.</p> <p>The Group went on to discuss the challenges at Grangemouth.</p> <p>CC said that the HSE are currently engaged in a project with Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley. CC suggested that there was an opportunity here for us to link up with Forth Valley Enterprise. CC said that there was a lot of work going on at the moment concerning this review and that there were plenty of ways in which we could get involved.</p> <p>GG suggested talking to HSE and Forth Ports but we need to think things through and be clear about our objectives.</p> <p>GF advised that the HSE would ask for an analysis of the uses of the land because of the blast zone restrictions around Grangemouth. JS asked if the blast zones extend to Bo'ness. RM suspected that it did</p>	<p>Action JS</p>

and that we would need to obtain clarification on this.

GG asked if we had a clear idea about a solution to the River Carron at Grangemouth and RM felt that there was now a definite desire to move ahead. He felt that we now need a group who were focussed on pushing this forward.

JS moved on to the issue of Loch Lomond and the river Leven. The issue here was whether or not we should get involved, as we have no remit on the Leven. The Scottish Executive has made it clear to us that we should not spend money on projects outwith the canals.

GG asked what the economic case was for getting involved in the river Leven. JS said that the Vale of Leven is an economically disadvantaged area badly in need of regeneration.

CC mentioned The Scottish Executive's document "**SCOTLAND'S CANALS an asset for the future**" and went on to say that from Scotland plc's point of view, developing Loch Lomond is an issue. British Waterways can make an impact on the economic activity in the Vale of Leven if the River Leven can be developed for use.

JS agreed that it would be great to open up a route to Loch Lomond but questioned whether it was BW Scotland's role to promote economic development. He felt that it would be difficult to take a leading role and that the top priority at the present time was to get the Forth & Clyde Canal working. We must not be distracted from this.

GF said that the planned Marina at Dumbarton Rock could create some interest. GF went on to suggest that we should approach Ministers and say that if that is their priority we can deliver it.

GG said that if JS felt a strong commitment to developing a route to Loch Lomond then we need to review all of our priorities. GG went on to say that we need a clear perspective and that Loch Lomond was a big issue. He asked JS what his timescale was for opening up Loch Lomond and JS said 2010. JS went on to say that the issue for the BWSG would be how we become a party to any discussion as we are never invited to the table.

J Simpson said that we are in great danger over Loch Lomond. He felt that Loch Lomond was for 2020 - we need to walk before we can run. We should not be worrying about Loch Lomond at this stage. We should be delivering our own commitments. J Simpson went on to say that he saw parallels with Bedford/Milton Keynes here and that there was a need to be careful.

CC said that we should view the Lowland canals as work in progress whilst Loch Lomond was about Vision, just as we had vision when we developed The Falkirk Wheel.

SS said that in his view the focus needs to be on Grangemouth. It is clear that BW needs to show leadership, particularly on the Carron/Grangemouth issues.

	<p>JS summed up by saying that ‘the River Carron and Grangemouth is now, whilst the River Leven and Loch Lomond is our vision for the future’.</p> <p>Banavie Hydro</p> <p>JS said that fishing issues on the River Lochy are holding up planning. He went on to ask if anyone on the BWSG had any ideas about how we could release the ‘log jam’. GF said that we needed to push the planners. He said that he would be happy to get involved in the Loch Lochy issue.</p> <p>CC asked about the income stream and JS confirmed that we were still on track for £200,000.</p> <p>Spending Review</p> <p>Government is entering a Spending Review period. Our currently announced grant is £8.9 million for 2004/05 and £8.9 million for 2005/06. Our position re grant will remain consistent with that presented to the Scottish Executive in October 2002. JS presented a slide containing figures. These figures show an unfunded shortfall of over £4.5 million, between income and the level of expenditure required to maintain the canals at an adequate level and to provide only an adequate service. BW works hard to earn more income to reduce this gap, but that takes time to develop. We will be seeking additional grant from the Executive.</p> <p>GG asked JS if the River Leven would appear in the 10-year plan to be presented to the Board and JS confirmed that it would be.</p>	
<p>SG 90</p>	<p>BWSG Resignations</p> <p>CC said that we needed to move forward on this, replacing the three members who have left. CC took the view that we could fill the posts by advertising in the press and that our advert could be tailored to indicate the three areas of expertise we were seeking. If this was unsuccessful we would need to think of other ways of finding new members.</p> <p>J Simpson thought that finding a candidate with the necessary Local Authority expertise would be more difficult. GF asked if there was a strategic case for the Local Authority candidate to come from around Glasgow but CC thought that every Local Authority along the length of the canal would feel that their input was of strategic importance. CC suggested that someone recently retired from a senior position within a Local Authority (in a canal-related area) would be ideal. GF suggested rotating the Local Authority candidate as there were seven local councils along the length of the Lowland canals.</p> <p>SA said that we either have to get the ads in during November or in the first week in January. It would be best to avoid placing the ads too close to the run up to Christmas. CC said that we should be</p>	<p>Action JS&PR</p>

	looking to appoint someone by Feb or Mar 2004.	
SG 91	<p>SG91 Steering Committee</p> <p>JS said that this had fallen dormant, but CC said that he had spoken to the Minister on the subject. JS thought that the Minister was considering whether or not he would chair what would be known as 'The Scottish Canals Development Committee'. JS went on to say that he would meet with Kenneth McKenzie to get things moving and CC thought that this would be a good idea.</p>	Action JS&KMck
SG 92	<p>Fees – Looking Ahead</p> <p>Caledonian Canal Operators</p> <p>JS advised that this issue had not yet been concluded, but that a further meeting had taken place in Inverness on 23 October. Robin Evans was at the meeting and had been involved in framing proposals. CC said that from a BWSG point of view it was important to continue to work with the operators on the Caledonian and that we needed to take their views into account.</p> <p>JS said he had asked Robin Evans to become involved for two main reasons: for an intellectual check and because of the wider implications for the UK network. At each meeting on the Caledonian there had been representatives from BMF and APCO.</p> <p>The paper will be more detailed than we had envisaged earlier in the summer as a result of our discussions at the Inverness meeting. It will provide information in a way that will be clear to both existing operators and to those wishing to start a new business. A detailed set of proposals will be sent to the Operators next week.</p> <p>GG said that we had tolerated short-term agreements to tide us over. He went on to say that he and the Board he would be interested to hear about the proposals. He felt that accountability was a key issue. CC suggested that JS' paper should be presented to the Board.</p> <p>RM asked if the agreement would apply to all Scottish canals and JS confirmed that this was the intention. It may also be viewed as a framework to be applied to the system in England.</p> <p>ID asked if an outside observer would see a relationship between the schemes in Scotland and England and GG said we would need to talk about this at Board Meeting. JS said that this why Robin had been involved.</p> <p>JS went on to say that there was merit in exploring the turnover relationship.</p> <p>GG asked about pricing scale and JS advised that his paper will have a series of thresholds.</p>	Action JS

	<p>CC raised the issue of licence fees and JS said that licence fees would remain fixed for three years. Moorings charges are to be fixed in line with market forces.</p> <p>SP asked about the Lowlands and JS said that we already had different customer prices for moorings on the Lowland canals. Market rates mean that prices will rise over time. However, we have committed to an arrangement so that if mooring prices rise at a particular location, we will seek to provide an alternative mooring elsewhere at the lower price.</p> <p>J Simpson asked how the process would fit with the timing of BWSG meetings and GG suggested that J Stirling could send information out to the BWSG members.</p>	Action JS
SG 93	<p>Lowland Canals- Progress</p> <p>JS covered a number of points:</p> <p>Canal users:</p> <p>We sold 40 'Wanderers' licences last year but only two this year. The sale of short-term transit licences has risen. We are now looking at updating the Lowland Canals Passport and BW is planning to approach the Yacht Clubs over the winter period to encourage them to transit through the canal. Part of this process will be to involve them in a 'sail through', in the early spring, as we did last year to prove the depth and suitability of the canal for this type of craft.</p> <p>Towpath use has doubled in two years.</p> <p>This year we had 6 hire boats operating on the Lowland Canals, next year we are expect to have between 12 and 15.</p> <p>There are 130 boats moored on the canal at the moment, with a waiting list for a further 100.</p> <p>The Falkirk Wheel</p> <p>The Scottish Boat Show at The Falkirk Wheel generated more sales than anticipated by the exhibitors - £250k in sales over the weekend. This figure has doubled since the show. This was a good starting point for the setting up of the Lowland Canals Brokerage in partnership with Sawley Marina. Sawley bring the boats up to Scotland for sale. This has been a successful year.</p> <p>New facilities have been built at The Wheel. The tunnel is now lit.</p> <p>The Corporate Launch Event at The Falkirk Wheel, in October, with 300 guests in attendance, has resulted in a number of bookings and has generated a great deal of interest.</p> <p>Auchinstarry Moorings</p>	

	<p>We have received Board approval for Auchinstarry moorings. We have received £75k towards cost of Auchinstarry from South Lanarkshire Council.</p> <p>Edinburgh Quay</p> <p>Progress is complicated because of 'Project Experience'. We are looking to see if an existing building could be used instead of building a new one. JS explained that this was a national initiative being rolled out by Watford. We have 'MAD' money from SS and this will have impact on the provision of moorings.</p> <p>SP said that the whole of Edinburgh needs to be looked at. As far as Edinburgh Quay was concerned she said that people were looking at running trip boats and that they wanted to know what was happening there. JS observed that the main issue at Edinburgh Quay was the lack of water space but went on to say that Richard Millar was reviewing the issue of trip boats and had discussed plans with users.</p> <p>Security: There have been 21 reported incidents.</p> <p>Weed cutting: We have undertaken 1400 hrs of weed cutting.</p> <p>Edinburgh Rowers: Consultation is ongoing.</p> <p>Business Development: JS passed around a map depicting nodal development along the Lowland canals. JS then presented the information in slide format and went on to explain that the node at Kirkintilloch will be developed by the Kirkintilloch Initiative (the KI is a partnership between Dunbartonshire Council and the NHS Primary Care Trust). BWS will sell the land to the KI at commercial value. The Kirkintilloch Initiative will then build a mooring basin with capacity for up to twenty boats.</p> <p>JK asked if Auchinstarry was a node and JS confirmed that it was. He went on to say that there would be moorings for up to 50 boats at Auchinstarry and that BWS owned the land. It was envisaged that Auchinstarry would grow as other leisure facilities, such as a pub and restaurant, are provided.</p> <p>GF asked about the Glasgow node and JS said that the Glasgow branch is a node which is a major long-term project.</p> <p>SP asked about Harrison Park in Edinburgh and JS responded that Harrison Park had potential as a node. He went on to say that there was an issue here for the BWSG to facilitate development and that the Local Authority has to be willing to see 'water space' in the same terms as 'green space'</p> <p>SP said that the Planning Department in Edinburgh is beginning to positively consider the canal.</p> <p>CC said that we should have nodal development on our Agenda for all future meetings.</p>	<p>Action JS</p>
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SG 95	<p>AOB</p> <p>J Simpson asked when the report on Openness and Accountability would be issued to the Group. See attached.</p>	Action PR
SG 96	<p>Date of next Meeting</p> <p>The date of the next BWSG meeting will be Thursday 4 March 2004 in Glasgow, venue to be confirmed.</p> <p>There will be a further meeting of the BWSG in Inverness on 20 May 2004 and one on 25 November at The Falkirk Wheel.</p> <p>The date and time of the next BWSG Conference Call is Monday 8th December at 1600 hours. A list of dates for Conference Calls throughout 2004 was issued to the Group.</p>	