

British Waterways Scotland Group

Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday 19 May 2005 @ 1000 hours

In The Crinan Hotel, Crinan by Lochgilphead, Argyll

Present: Susan Achmatowicz
Campbell Christie (Chairman)
Ian Darling
Professor George Fleming
George Greener
Guthrie Hutton
Eva McCracken
Kenneth MacKenzie
Rod Michie
Sandra Purves
Jim Simpson
Jim Stirling

In Attendance: Nicola Christie, Legal & Corporate Affairs & Richard Millar, Service & Business Development Manager

Patricia Rettie (Minutes)

Apologies: Richard Millham

Minute	Subject	Action
SG 137	Apologies Apologies were given for Richard Millham.	
SG 138	Minutes of Previous Meeting It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2005 were a true record.	
SG 139	Matters Arising Edinburgh Fountainbridge JS & CC have a meeting arranged with Donald Anderson, the Leader of City of Edinburgh Council for 1 June to continue discussion on BW's position on the development of additional waterspace. SP provided a newspaper article about Councillor Lorna Shiels who has been appointed "Canal Champion" by the City of Edinburgh Council. Councillor Shiels has been a strong supporter of canal restoration and sustainable waterside developments and their benefits to the community.	

	<p>SP suggested that BW should hold a meeting with local Fountainbridge residents to update them on planning and development progress and get their continued support for the inclusion of waterspace in future developments. JS happy to do this, but wishes to wait until Planning Application is submitted for Arnold Clark site.</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">(Text omitted is commercially confidential)</p> <p>Edinburgh Quay/Lochrin Basin Opening Events</p> <p>JS informed the Group that the formal opening of Edinburgh Quay, on 22 March 2005 had been attended by the Minister for Transport, Nicol Stephen MSP. The Minister's office had later commented that the press coverage and photo opportunities had been amongst the best of any event he had attended.</p> <p>The Community Event, which followed on 30 April 2005, was also a great success. The event was well attended by families, with the main attractions for the children being the presence of the cast of Balamory. Boat trips were run throughout the day and they were very popular. Publicity was good and the message is getting out that we are opening up the waterways to all.</p>	
<p>SG 140</p>	<p>General Update – JS/RM/NC</p> <p>Business Plan Embedding</p> <p>Following the Management Restructure in BWS earlier this year, as part of the drive to deliver better service to all our customers, an internal communications exercise has been undertaken.</p> <p>This has taken the form of several roadshows in order to reach all of our people in Scotland and to reinforce the message that Scotland is one Business Unit all working together to deliver the targets and milestones of the Business Plan, through local teams.</p> <p>Mooring Prices</p> <p>BWS has completed the consultation regarding the proposed increase in mooring charges on the Lowland and Highland Canals for the year commencing 1 April 2005.</p> <p>GG noted that the date on the letters was beyond 1 April 2005. JS explained that the BW timetable had been followed for the</p>	

	<p>friendly, whilst generating benefits for the communities throughout the Central Belt.</p> <p>Falkirk Wheel Management</p> <p>To add an extra dimension to the focus on our customers we have created a new Customer Service team at The Falkirk Wheel. Carole Keltie, whose background is in Scottish tourism, has been appointed Customer Service Manager. Two Duty Managers, Eleanor Muir and Margaret Hart have also been appointed and will be working with Carole.</p> <p>SA wished to know the main difference that this new team would make to the visitor experience and if they would be there to tell people about other canals and other canal related activities. JS responded that customers would be welcomed on arrival, acknowledged when they leave and there will be people around to talk about where they can go and what they can do. The Falkirk Wheel site should be the shop window for all Scotland's canals.</p> <p>GG suggested that, as an example of best practice, BWS should look at the Tate Modern National Gallery and how they promote and convey information by having people on site who are easy to spot and are very knowledgeable.</p> <p>End to End Review</p> <p>JS explained that BW has been through its five yearly review by Government. The review recognises that the relationship between BWS and the Scottish Executive differs from that of England and Defra, BW was quick to respond to devolution including creating the BWSG.</p> <p>The Scottish Executive will provide BW with a Corporate Governance letter. Working in partnership with BW and Defra they will provide a framework for the best way to implement the recommendations of the review. JS also stated that the Scottish Executive recognises the potential of long-term funding as an aid to planning and securing long-term contracts with suppliers and contractors.</p> <p>Scottish Canals Development Group/Highland Canals Steering Group/Lowland Canals Steering Group</p> <p>NC reported that the meetings are proving to be useful and demonstrating that there is a common agenda between BW and the various organisations whose functions and communities impact on and have the potential to contribute to and benefit the canals. NC also informed the Group that there is no shortage of projects to be put forward. These now require to be prioritised into achievable projects.</p> <p>NC reported that there is some concern over the level of attendance at the SCDG. Representatives are being sent by some of the original invited attendees, but it is important to keep the profile of attendees</p>	<p>Action RM</p> <p>Action JS</p>
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	high from each of the organisations.	
SG 141	<p>Protocol</p> <p>JS reported that BWS were now coming under pressure from 3rd parties who wish to carry out boat operations in close proximity to The Falkirk Wheel. We were initially cautious about this.</p> <p>Following some useful meetings with a number of parties, for example VisitScotland and outside consultants, to gain an understanding of how to link this with our existing operations and the need to differentiate between businesses by setting standards, BWS now has a set of guidelines for operators wishing to establish a boat operation within The Falkirk Wheel Experience.</p> <p>RM gave an example of how BWS is working with a small start up business and how the protocol allows it to operate on a suitable site close to The Wheel by encouraging and assisting improvement by having a Business Plan, approved advertising and an agreed timetable to allow BW to provide turns through The Wheel. The operator will be asked to apply for VisitScotland accreditation in line with the Quality Assurance Scheme. The accreditation will look at the condition of the boat, the experience on the boat, appearance of the operator, advertising, etc.</p> <p>GH asked how BW would control boat operators outwith the area of The Falkirk Wheel. RM responded that these operating procedures would extend beyond The Wheel and that the same accreditation would apply to boat operations at all nodes on the canals.</p>	
SG 142	<p>Group Members' Contributions</p> <p>At the BWSG meeting held on 25 November 2004, the external members of the Group were asked to give short presentations on their impressions and views of the canals.</p> <p>JS had identified recurring themes and observations from the presentations and agreed that points from these would be picked up at a future meeting and demonstrate how BW has taken them on board.</p> <p>JS began with the point about improving relationships with the wider community and BW's stakeholders. He stated that this was being addressed through the Scottish Canals Development Group and the Highland & Lowland Steering Groups.</p> <p>RM is also key in taking this forward. He has formed a number of groups to address various issues, e.g. The Salt Water Group, which is used to spread the word amongst the salt water sailors that the Lowland Canals are open to coast to coast navigation and to identify any problems or issues that may arise. RM also has a strong working relationship with The Waterways Trust Scotland who are taking forward a number of projects in partnership with BW and others including education linked to safety on the water, conservation &</p>	

	<p>environmental programmes, litter campaigns and the Access for All Project.</p> <p>There is now a Customer Service Manager located on the Highland Canals, one on the Lowland Canals and one for The Falkirk Wheel and Visitor Centre. Their priorities are working with the customers on the water and the communities along the canal corridors, getting to know the views of the communities and where appropriate feeding these up through the Canal Steering Groups.</p> <p>This work is helped by the BWSG holding meetings in different parts of the country where canals have an impact on the community and inviting the Community Councillors to join them for the Public Meetings.</p> <p>JS then moved on to the concern about continued development and vibrancy of the canals, whilst ensuring the appropriateness of developments and uses. He made the point that this could be achieved through the involvement of the canalside communities and understanding the impact on them of what we do, ensuring that there is a common agenda. Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Companies have a role to play in nodal development along the canal corridors, e.g. the Glasgow North Project is lead by Glasgow City Council.</p> <p>JS then addressed the issue of progress of development on the Lowland Canals. JS explained that one of the key issues coming out of the LCSG meetings is that it has been agreed that all stakeholders need to work together to market the Lowland Canals. Of particular concern is the perception of the canals as places to visit or navigate. Sub groups will be set up to assist in the delivery of priority projects.</p> <p>Visibility is important, excellent examples of waterside developments are Edinburgh Quay and Port Dundas.</p> <p>Regarding the issue of the possibility of The Falkirk Wheel being a barrier to increasing visitor numbers to other areas of the Lowlands. It attracts many new visitors and the challenge is to utilise these numbers by using The Falkirk Wheel as the shop window for the rest of the canal network. The new Management Team there will ensure that the wider message is sold to all who visit The Wheel site to guard against this happening.</p> <p>JS pointed out that the Scottish Executive's policy document, Scotland's Canals an asset for the future, which sets out their aspirations to unlock all the benefits that can be derived from the canal system, is key to achieving BW's vision for Scotland and that the aspirations of this document are integrated into our Business Plan Summary document.</p> <p>Other points picked up by the members were the need for more secure moorings on the Lowland Canals. This is being addressed by encouraging boaters to tie-up at bridges and locks in the short-term and in the longer term moorings could be developed close to</p>	
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	<p>canalside facilities such as pubs and housing developments.</p> <p>Access for all, the value of the open air and improved towpaths are all being addressed by TWTS project.</p> <p>Weak middle management was raised as an issue. The management restructure was designed to improve co-ordination and to ensure what we aimed to achieve was achieved. We now have Scotland wide plans with local teams charged with delivering local elements. The roadshows, which have been held around Scotland aimed to improve understanding of the targets and objectives of the Business Plan at all levels and that Scotland works as one unit.</p> <p>To achieve this our housekeeping needs to be good so we have separated maintenance from customer service to encourage proper focus on priorities.</p> <p>The River Carron study is now almost complete and is due for internal discussion to ensure that BW as a whole understands how we will take this forward. This will include getting advice from the Health & Safety Executive on the Consultation Zones.</p> <p>JS agreed with the point raised by the members that it would be unthinkable for the canals to be allowed to deteriorate again. He encouraged the BWSG members to champion the canals and to be proactive so that we ensure that this does not happen.</p> <p>As part of keeping them alive and spreading the word that they are open leaflets will be area and subject specific. We will concentrate on getting this right at The Falkirk Wheel and role it out across Scotland. Our education programmes will continue to be developed and carried out by TWTS and we will continue to influence planning wherever we can in the early stages. The canal development and steering groups will underpin this.</p> <p>JS then asked each member in turn if they felt all points they had raised had been addressed.</p> <p>All agreed that they had been, but still a few concerns exist. GH remains concerned about some of the property developments on the canals and feels strongly that the offside should be protected and remain free from development.</p> <p>SA made the point that it is good to know that customer service extends beyond The Falkirk Wheel to all areas of the canals and that using The Falkirk Wheel as the shop window for the canals, together with marketing initiatives, will encourage people to come back and visit other areas.</p> <p>ID agrees that the key is increased traffic on the canals and there is a need for increased moorings. People like to see boats on the canals. The challenge is to be innovative in the way we do this. He is concerned that with time community enthusiasm may weaken and gave the example of how at Westerhailes their community boat has</p>	
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	<p>fallen into disrepair. SP agreed that they need to be encouraged to get the boat back into use and that the Edinburgh Canal Society has taken the group under their wing.</p> <p>GF made the point that there are not many boats going west on the canal, most appear to go east. He feels that Port Dundas is key to developing this market.</p> <p>JS responded that this will be presented to the BW Board by ISIS during their visit to Scotland in June.</p> <p>CC stated that it would be good to see a development plan being worked up with Port Dundas as the catalyst.</p> <p>It was also reported that Clydeport plc are developing a boat yard and marina at Rothesay Dock, Clydebank.</p> <p>Eva McCracken has written a book called 'Fifty Walks on Wheels in Scotland of two to twelve miles'. Six of these walks take advantage of canal towpaths. It is hoped that the book will be available for Christmas this year.</p> <p>GG spoke of how encouraged he is by the quality of the progress that has been made in Scotland over the last year. He acknowledged that JS and his team have gone through a transformation.</p> <p>GG stated that he likes the way the BWSG and the Scottish Development Groups are working. There is a lot happening in Scotland and although his time as Chairman of British Waterways is coming to an end he would be happy to help in the future if required.</p> <p>He stressed the importance of not letting what has been achieved slip back and is confident that there is every prospect for success. GG said he understands the fear and anxiety of it slipping back and we must not be complacent.</p> <p>GG encouraged BWS to have absolute conviction and be confident and demonstrate the model they have. BWS should ensure that all interested parties have a protocol that they can work to and this will improve efficiency. It is important to have good processes and protocols and to be courteous, but clinical in the drive for efficiency. Market value is on future projects not on the past.</p> <p>CC thanked GG for his contribution to the BWSG during his time as Chairman of British Waterways.</p>	
SG 143	<p>Issues Ahead of the Public Meeting</p> <p>A short discussion took place around issues that the Group thought may arise at the Public Meeting.</p>	
SG 144	<p>Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 20 October 2005 in The City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh. The morning meeting will take place in The Dunedin Room and the buffet lunch and Public Meeting will be held in The Council Chamber.</p>	

SG 145	AOB GH invited all members of the Group to attend the naming ceremony of the Forth & Clyde Society's new vessel. The ceremony will take place on 24 June 2005, at Townhead Bridge, Kirkintilloch and will be performed by Jo Swinson MP. Invitations will be sent to all.	Action PR & GH
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