

## IWA Guildford and Reading Branch

### Minutes of AGM held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 via Zoom

Verna Smith opened the meeting by introducing herself as Acting Chair and welcomed IWA CEO David Pearce, Volunteer Manager Jenny Hodson and all attendees.

1. Apologies were received from Sue O'Hare.
2. Present: Verna Smith (Acting Chairman), Mike Lewis (Treasurer), Chris Jones (Secretary), John Jones (co-opted committee member), IWA CEO David Pearce, Jenny Hodson (Volunteer Manager), Mike Haig (Zoom Champion) and 11 members.
3. Minutes of the AGM of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were approved after one spelling mistake was rectified. Proposed by Chris Jones, Seconded by David Habersham.
4. Acting Branch Chair's Report  
This has not been a good year for the branch. We did not manage to attend any events due to various reasons including lack of volunteers and the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. There is room for improvement in the branch. We are grateful for the efforts of Ben Scott, our events coordinator.  
Verna stepped down as Region Chair at the last meeting, due to time restraints and health problems.  
Although the branch wasn't very active during 2022, the canals and rivers were well looked after by the individual Wonderful Waterway Groups.
5. Branch Treasurer's Report:  
The interest this year was £35.61 and there was a donation of £1 to test the new system after Barclays unilaterally closed our branch account. The branch account is now part of the Head Office account. We can make deposits but have to ask Paula at HO to make payments. A new mandate had to be completed for our deposit account. It took a long time to transfer our money from a dormant account with Barclays to Chesham's account. Verna thanked Mike for his report. Proposed by John Gunner. Seconded by Ian Moore.
6. Cargoes: Cargoes has been reduced to 3 times a year due to cost. Spring, Summer and Autumn (every 4 months).
7. Sales Report:  
The branch is looking to attend 2 events this year: Reading Water Fest (Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June) and the Wey River Festival (Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September).

### **Support**

Banbury: Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September & Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October

Please contact Verna, Ben Scott or Chris Jones if you can help.

8. **Election of Committee**  
The existing committee is continuing in its present format. Members are always welcome to join. We are looking at holding more Branch meetings on-line which it is hoped will encourage more members to become involved.

Acting Chair: Verna Smith  
Acting Treasurer: Mike Lewis  
Secretary: Chris Jones  
John Jones (co-opted committee member)

9. AOB. The committee will consider having a hybrid AGM in 2024 subject to a suitable venue being found with a good internet connection, etc.  
Public Right of Navigation – Kevin East a volunteer with British Canoeing advised us of a conflict with The Thames over Public Rights of Navigation. Amy Tilson is aware and David Pearce will look into it too.

The AGM finished at 7.30pm and was followed by a talk by IWA's CEO David Pearce.

David gave us an insight into his vision for IWA's future. A new structure is in place and several new members of staff have joined in a short time with a new Assistant Marketing Manager still required.

All costs have been reviewed with membership fees being increased for the first time in 10 years. Fees will now be reviewed yearly. The IT system has been changed and Head Office is moving into new offices by the end of April which will save £20,000.

New Campaigns have started i.e. "Only IWA" and "Waterways for Today".

There is an APPGW tomorrow where funding for CRT and other waterways will be discussed. "Protect our Waterways" is the newest campaign.

There is need to improve communication with Regions and Branches, led by Jenny Hodson.

One of the successful campaigns was Red Diesel.

A new Environment Committee is to be set up to attract new and younger members.

There will be a new publication for Electric boating.

WRG is a great asset involved in restoring and maintaining waterways.

We need to continue Aickman and Rolt's campaigning with new marketing and toolkits.

A "march" to Parliament or Downing Street is being considered to promote funding for waterways.

Verna Smith finished by thanking everyone for attending, especially Mike Haig of IWA for being our Zoom Champion and IWA's CEO David Pearce for being our speaker.