



OXFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Minutes of 48th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 15th March 2023

Held online via Zoom

Chairman Ian Lindsay taking the chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Present & Apologies – The following members were present

Paul Rodgers, Ian Lindsay, Dave Wedd, Rodger Badger, Mark Davies Brian Roberts Jenny Hodson, Tim Armstrong

2. The minutes of the Branch AGM on 5th April 2022 were available to all attendees. and were agreed by members present with the correction to the typo of the date being 2022.

3. No matters were raised from the 2022 minutes.

4. Branch Chairman's Report.

Ian Lindsay read the chairman's report to the meeting as follows.

Start with some thanks – to Robin Williams who has been secretary of the Branch for all of the time that I have been involved in the branch and has helped me hugely to keep the branch running. Robin has decided he is not able to continue in the role but I am still very grateful for all his help over the years. It would be great if someone would consider standing for the role of Secretary to help run the branch.

Rodger Badger – who has undertaken the work of branch treasurer for which I am very grateful. We will look to approve the accounts shortly, Rodger has indicated that his is kindly willing to continue as treasurer but that he is not able to continue as branch planning officer keeping an eye on planning applications that may impact the waterways in the branch area. It would be great if someone would consider standing for this key role.

I also need to thank Verna Smith who has recently stood down and IWA regional chair. She twisted my arm to take on the chair of Oxfordshire Branch a few years ago and has been hugely supportive ever since.

The Oxfordshire branch successfully manned a stand at the Oxford Canal Festival 17th September. The festival has almost a neighbourhood fete feel to it held on a small recreation field beside the canal. We engaged with lots of visitors to the festival, many of whom

seemed to regard the canal as a towpath to walk and cycle from their area of North Oxford into the centre of the city, without a great appreciation of the wider purpose and benefits of a canal. We will hopefully do that again this year.

Two weeks later we put the stand up again and manned it at the Banbury Canal Festival. That was a much bigger undertaking 2 long days, huge numbers of visitors

We spoke to lots of visitors trying to get over the campaign message of what the IWA stands for, what it is trying to achieve and the benefits of being a member.

A huge personal thank you to the 6 stalwart volunteers who helped to man the stand over the 3 days of these 2 festivals.

There have been a lot of staff and organisational changes at IWA head office and a great deal of work has been done to start to support volunteers and the branches with lots of regular online briefing meetings all led by Jenny Hodson – who is helping out with this meeting this evening too. The IWA is also starting a significant piece of work to look at its purpose and relevance and how to rejuvenate membership numbers and its campaigning message.

5. Branch Treasurer's Report

Copies were available to all those present and were agreed by members present. There was a discussion about the sum of £2000 earmarked in the accounts for the Oxford Canal Basin. The IWA auditors require earmarked funds to have a clear purpose and timescale for being spent. The research undertaken so far, and the helpful memories of members present at the zoom meeting suggest that the funds were raised from general fund raising rather than a legacy with specific instructions and that the funds were to contribute to the restoration of the basin which was the original terminus of the canal in Oxford if the carpark that currently occupies the site is ever returned to the canal. The chances of this happening look very remote except as part of a wider redevelopment of the area in which case £2000 isn't going to achieve much. It was suggested that contact was made with Brian Sanders a former branch secretary from the time the funds were raised for his knowledge. Consideration will then be given to using the funds for other IWA purposes.

6. Election of committee members

Ian Lindsay, Rodger Badger were elected to the committee.

7. Any Other Business

There was a wide ranging discussion on how to try to recruit more active members to the branch and return to organising branch activities, social media was discussed and Jenny Hodson as the new national volunteering manager talked about using volunteer bureaux locally to try to recruit people.

Mention was made that the Jericho Wharf development is likely to proceed now that the developers have won planning permission on appeal.

It is intended to have a stand at the Oxford and Banbury canal festivals in 2023.

8. A fascinating Talk was then given by Marcus Nurton the Chair of Lowland Rescue Oxfordshire (OxSAR) on the work of Lowland Rescue Oxfordshire..