

AWCC North West Region

Minutes of the Meeting 14TH March 2024

1. **Apologies from:** John Hicks in Canada

2. **Minutes of the last Meeting** – The toilet facility at Worsley is still locked. Macclesfield Canal is now open. Other items can be discussed as necessary.

3. **Election of Officers.**

The following delegates have offered themselves for election –

The current President, Bryan Pollard has been elected for another year.

The current Chairman, Malcolm Holbrook is happy to continue.

The current Vice Chairman, John Suggitt will continue as the sole Vice Chair.

The Secretary, Nick Culliford, will continue as Regional Secretary.

The Treasurer Robin Telkman has decided to pass on the task of AWCC NW Region. Robin received an applaud for all his work by the members in the meeting.

Mike Williams has agreed to take on the task of Treasurer.

John Hicks has decided to step down as a Vice Chair.

4. **Meeting Dates for 2024/25.**

It was agreed that the meetings will be held in Watch House Club by agreement of the Club.

The dates will be the 2nd Thursday evenings on

Thursday 9 May at 19.30 hrs

Thursday 12 September at 19.30 hrs

Thursday 14 November at 19.30 hrs.

5. **Chairman's Report (Malcolm Holbrook)**

North-West Chairman's Report for AWCC N-W AGM March 14th 2024

N-W AWCC:

The last year has been a fairly busy one for AWCC North-West with 5 Regional meetings. The Regional Executive has remained much the same except that John Hicks (Vice-Chairman (N)) has retired, and Robin Telkman (Treasurer) has also retired after many years of service to the AWCC.

Mark Williams has offered to take over the post of Treasurer and has been duly elected.

The AWCC N-W senior Executive met with N-W CRT senior Staff at Anderton on the 13th of October 2023 where we were able to bring up the ten most important topics that we wished to raise. Some of which have been accepted and many of which remain. We have approached CRT for a follow-up meeting to be held on 19th April 2024, we are planning a list of matters to be discussed. A further meeting has been arranged for October 18th 2024. Both at Anderton.

N-W Canal Network

The last year has produced many similar problems to those that have arisen over the last few years: mainly failures of the canal infrastructure and water shortages, leading to navigation closures, and resulting in problems with weed and vegetation overgrowth.

Wigan and Marple flights have been closed over long periods. There have been four cases of blown cills resulting in emergency shutdowns. It seems that as soon as one lock reopens after repairs another fails and has to be closed.

Swing bridges have a poor record of reliability, either mechanical failures or electrical supply problems. Swing bridges often lock out as boaters find pressing the button on the control panel hurts and changing fingers results in release of the button and the bridge locking out when the button is pressed with the other hand.

There have been many instances of closure of boater's facilities in the Region. The conversion of pump-outs to touchless card reading seems to have been a success.

For the last ten years we have been campaigning to get canoes banned from two tunnels: Barnton and Saltersford, where there is no clear line of sight. We feel that this is a Health and Safety matter.

CRT have, at long last, acknowledged this is a problem but despite this no action had been taken, but I have just been informed that canoes are going to be banned from these tunnels.

There have been a number of boat fires and generally the culprits are solid fuel stoves and electrical faults. Some insurance companies are now asking for an advanced electrical survey (i.e. more than boat safety certificate standard) before insuring a boat. Other insurance companies may follow suit. Kennet : 'Kennet' is a Leeds-Liverpool Short boat that is run in our Region as an education charity. Covid shutdown seriously reduced the charity's income. For the last two years it has been stranded because of lock failures and has not been able to undertake its usual programme. Because of another blown cill it is stranded yet again! Questions are now being asked if the charity is still both financially viable and because of its ageing crew. A meeting has been called to discuss its future.

Malcolm Holbrook,
Chairman N-W AWCC

6. Boating Buddies, Clare Matthews C&RT (John Suggitt)

For those in attendance who were not familiar with it, this initiative was briefly reviewed and past experiences of it discussed. C&RT Club representatives were invited to contact Claire Matthews via email in order to participate themselves.

7. Treasurer's Report

£5k in funds

8. Regional Club Subscriptions set at £10 per year.

9. Secretary's Report (Nick Culliford)

Anderton should be working fully soon but the visitor's waterbus to Northwich may involve the number of boats which can pass down or up from the Weaver. The locks on the Weaver will be opening at 08.00 with a last lock at 15.30 as it suits C&RT. This will make a trip down to the Weaver less interested. A meeting was held with a C&RT water engineer to ensure that the senior managers are aware of the potential impact. The Weaver User Group is seeking a meeting with Jon Horsfall soon. The safety booms across the entrances to the Weaver Sluices have yet to be installed having waited nearly a year. It was good to see that Calor are re-instating the availability of the 3.9kg Propane and 4.5KG Butane gas bottles. The bridge over the entrance to the WMBC Dock was removed last Autumn and a temporary scaffold bridge put in its place. As to Montgomery Canal, Schoolhouse Bridge has been replaced with a new bridge. However the canal is closed but there is restoration progress to ultimacy, that is reaching the Welsh Border.

10. C&RT Boat Licence Fee Consultation Survey April 2024 (Malcolm Holbrook).

11. Customer Forums – C&RT are believed to select persons to participate (Malcolm Holbrook).

12. Planning a meeting with C&RT NW to discuss regional issues (Malcolm Holbrook).

13. Guest Speaker, Jack Kershaw concerning the effort by the local Council to substantially raise the valuation for mooring on the canal bank. (John Suggitt).

The Lymm Cruising Club Treasurer explained how over a two-year period he successfully challenged the Valuation Office Agency's demand for a substantial increase in rates payable on the canal side land abutting the L.C.C. Headquarters.

14. Distributing the new AWCC Handbooks for 2024

Distributed by Robin Telkman.

15. AWCC Club Magazine.

Due to the confusion as to which club officers would be judging, it ended up too late for the NW Region clubs.

16. Any other business

A club member from Worsley C.C. currently on the Lancaster Canal, is finding the pump outs etc out of action.

The Federation Rally has drawn in 124 boats registered to attend the Rally, a very good task.

The Meeting was closed after the Buffet.