



Bradley Canal Restoration Society

Annual General Meeting – 27th April 2022

Chair of Trustees Report

General Update

With the lifting of Covid restrictions the new “normal” is making activities a little easier. We are getting better recognised and generally accepted. The majority of locals seem to be in favour of our objectives. This is good because as matters progress, we will need to rely more on local support.

Whilst most of our management meetings have been held via Zoom this has not stopped us moving forward. Recently Rod Griffin joined our ranks on the committee. Having recently retired from Birmingham City Council, Rod brings with him a wealth of local knowledge and contacts which will be very useful. Welcome Rod. I should also mention that he lives almost adjacent to the existing Bradley canal so has a very local interest in our waterway project. One of the first things Rod has contributed is to organise two management meetings with the aim of identifying our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) to help us focus on our aims and how best to go forward.

As many of you will agree modern life is getting more complicated and involved with rules and regulations. To sort out what to do and when, is time consuming especially when unfamiliar. Realising this the committee decided to appoint Simon Lucas on a small stipend to help us navigate the various rules and regulations. Simon is currently in the employ of Wolverhampton City Council and having reduced his hours pending full retirement is able to help us; this is also proving very useful. Welcome Simon.

Bob, Simon and myself recently attended the Restoration Conference jointly sponsored by CRT (Canal & River Trust) and IWA (Inland waterways Association) in Stroud. Virtual last year and previously in Bilston (maybe next year back to Bilston?) It was good to learn from the presentations and discussions with others that we are generally heading in the right direction.

Helpers are vital in our small organisation and thanks to all who have helped. Especially Emily for keeping us in order and doing the meeting minutes so efficiently; Darren for backing her up and for his unflinching Facebook input. Also, to both for allowing us to use their home for various meetings. Darren appealed for help with running Facebook, and we are very pleased that Tom Pickard has stepped forward to assist. The Arm, our newsletter masterfully collated by

Gavin is well received by members and others who receive it. Keep it up Gavin! John beavers away efficiently looking after our membership matters; we are closing in on 200 members; we need more, please ask your relatives/friends/neighbours/colleagues to support us.

After much Covid delays at last we have got down to some physical work on the remaining section of the canal from Moorcroft Junction to almost the bottom of lock 9. The support from locals was most heartening and despite snow cancelling one work party and CRT paperwork another we have achieved a lot. This has involved cutting back the overhanging boughs and clearing the undergrowth. Now it looks like a canal its existence being clearly visible probably for the first time in nearly 50 years. The birds are now nesting so we will have to take a break for a while but please go and walk the towpath. Whilst we cannot claim it is beautiful it is a pleasant walk as testified by the locals who are increasingly using it to do so. In all this we have been helped greatly by the BCNS (Birmingham Canal Navigation Society) with the loan of tools and especially their pickup truck to remove the rubbish collected. The ladies not wishing to be consigned only to litter picking (a vital job this) took a bow saw to fell overhanging tress and having castigated the men for talking, quickly bought down three saplings. Shall we have a Male/Female competition to see who can cut the most? Thanks also to the ladies for providing cakes & drinks and Bob for keeping me in order and generally helping. The hi-vis jackets that have been donated by Paul and Kathy Niblett have proved very useful.

Hopefully this activity will show the local authorities (Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Walsall) that bringing this little bit of canal back to life will create a small free linear park connecting existing green corridors together for the benefit of all.

Now to the future. Shortly on Saturday May 14th the BCNS are holding their Spring Cruise ending at the Lock Gate Workshops and in conjunction with CRT the workshops will be open, with free admission, from 10-00 to 16-00. We shall also be conducting walks along the route of the infilled locks and on down to Moorcroft Junction.

On 24th/25th/26th of June there will be a cruise of boats from Smethwick to Birmingham to publicise the forthcoming Commonwealth Games. If you would like to join us, please let me know.

In July we are taking our stand to the Gnosall C Fest on 16th/17th/18th. And in September we shall make our regular appearance at the Black Country Boating Festival on September 10th/11th at Bumble Hole Netherton.

For all these events we need help, just for an hour or longer please come and assist. It's good to chat to visitors even if you have not done it before, is good fun and a very good "Flag Waving" exercise for us.

D. Pearson (Chair of Trustees) – 15th April 2022

Membership

Membership currently stands at 189 paid subscriptions with a further 16 individuals are supporting the Society via a personal donation rather than a formal membership.

It is hoped that physical attendance at events in the coming months will enable us to increase our membership significantly. All members should be receiving the newsletters, however if this is not the case, please confirm your email (or postal) address with us.

Social Media

The Facebook page has been active since April 2019, and we have seen a fantastic rise in followers in that period with the number currently standing at 2416 (a rise of some 400 since last year). Our Instagram following is also building with 238 followers.

Our social media following is critical to awareness raising, "friend-making" and keeping all interested parties informed of the progress that we are making. As we undertake a variety of projects, including work parties, public meetings, attendance at festivals, etc. we shall use our social platforms to keep everyone informed and invariably ask for additional support. Please encourage other contacts to follow our Facebook and/or Instagram accounts to continue to grow the following.

Regular viewers of the pages will have seen that support is growing from important sectors of the community and beyond. Local MPs, Local Authorities, CRT, Inland Waterways and the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust are all getting behind this scheme to bring back this bit of canal that holds such historic importance for our area and indeed, this country.



Bradley Canal Restoration Society

Financial Report 2021-22

This report reflects the financial position of the association from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. This is the first set of accounts to span a 12-month period as the previous accounts reflected an 18-month period from the formation of the association to the first AGM. I have included figures from the 2019-21 financial period, however direct comparison is quite difficult due to the initial 18-month period. Next year's accounts will give a more accurate comparison.

Gift Aid is reflected in the accounts for the first time, and we would encourage members, who are UK taxpayers, to indicate as such when they renew as this allows us to benefit from Gift Aid.

The accounts have been externally audited and will be submitted to the Charity Commission in accordance with statutory requirements.

Statement of Accounts: 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022

| | 2021-22 | 2019-21 |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Income | | |
| Opening Balance | £ 4,685.69 | £ 0.00 |
| Subscriptions | £ 1,295.42 | £ 1,751 |
| Donations | £ 3,238.64 | £ 3,865 |
| Gift Aid | £ 118.81 | £ 0.00 |
| Amazon Smile/Paypal Giving | £ 57.15 | £ 121.29 |
| Miscellaneous | £ 42.50 | £ 50.00 |
| Total | £ 9,438.21 | £ 5,787.29 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Equipment | £ 520.60 | £ 239.76 |
| Insurance | £ 105.00 | £ 99.31 |
| Administration | £ 1,563.22 | £ 461.20 |
| Subscriptions | £ 239.00 | £ 276.33 |
| Event Costs | £ 144.00 | £ 25.00 |
| Professional Services | £ 1,320.00 | £ 0.00 |
| Total | £ 3,891.82 | £ 1,101.60 |
| Balance | <u>£ 5,546.39</u> | <u>£ 4,685.69</u> |

G Hawkins (Treasurer) – 5th April 2022