

**Minutes of LUCS Committee Meeting
Manse Road Basin
2nd May 2023**

1. **Chairman** welcomed those present: Doug Scott, David Shirres (Chair), Andy Eaglesfield, Ronnie Reis, Peter Lewis, Mike Smith. Apologies for absence were received from Lynne Nelson.

2. **Minutes** of the previous meeting were accepted.

It was agreed that future Agenda should be amended to raise H&S issues earlier in the order of business.

The Secretary shall attach reports to the minutes and forward them to Douglas for archiving.

3. **Boat Operations**

3.1 **BML Meeting.**

Agreed that it was useful, with the following issues resulting:

3.1.1 a need for First Aid refresher courses for BMLs and Crew.

Action: Ian W / PtP

3.1.2 The need for an additional defibrillator was discussed, and accepted

Action:

3.1.3 It was agreed that whilst not legally mandatory, two life-jackets should be on board the big boats when sailing, to enable last-ditch rescue if shouting, reaching or throwing had failed.

Action: all BMLs

3.1.4 The need to up-skill rope handling was raised, and MJS reminded to issue a training schedule covering boat-handling, mooring and rescue, in collaboration with Ian Walker.

Action : MJS

3.1.5 **LKR** have requested that we keep the area by the slip clear on Saturday Mornings and Monday evenings. A reminder to all to be posted on the MGC Notice Board?

Action:

3.1.6 Bollards / rings review: the consensus was that (apart from replacing the rotting wooden posts, there was no real need for additional strong-points. As long as Leamington is moored with her stern square alongside the ring above the slip, which can be shared with St Magdalene's bow line, there is room for normal operations without boat clashes. Where there is need for two-way operation of either of the big boats, it would be better to re-locate the other, and possibly Leamingto as well, depending on Skipper's preference.

(It would be useful to remind operators that Victoria's bow line should be attached overnight to the most Notherly ring (the one that dangles over the edge), to permit St Michael's stern to swing clear on departure).

Circulate this to Drivers, Crew and Black-handers. **Action: MJS**

3.2 **Battery Boats**

3.2.1 See Note 3.1.5 above.

RR has modified drain-plug fitting to make setup easier, quicker and less nerve-racking.

3.2.2 The need to balance availability of knowledgeable shore staff with the low frequency of demand, such that availability can be safely advertised to the public is not yet resolved.

3.2.3 Questions to be resolved:

Fitting / exchanging batteries being a hefty task, will a boat operate all day without battery-change? **Action RR**

- If so, does despatch and recovery require dedicated staff, or is it something that can be done by the Duty Receptionist - with training?
- 3.2.4 If they become known, and people come to LUCS with the specific aim of Leckyboating, should we make them pre-bookable...?

3.3 Dry Docking Report

- 3.3.1 Victoria's hull thickness gauged, and found to be very little eroded, except to starboard, where abrasion against the canal bank had worn away the bottom-plate overlap such that any future wear would affect the weld between side and bottom. (This had already been noted on her port side, - which gets more wear because of mooring port-side-to - when she was last out of the water). As had been done previously to port side, an angled wear strip was welded along the starboard edge to absorb future wear.
Corrosion was not an issue: the anodes, having sacrificed themselves to full effect, were replaced.
- 3.3.2 Leamington's rudder post bearings were amended to prevent excessive water being driven up to deck level. The known drip at the stern tube was studied at length, and remedies applied, but out of water, it was not possible to verify their effect.
It was noticeable that Leamington was much more electrolytically active than Victoria, with anodes virtually exhausted, particularly aft.

3.4 Accidents and Incidents

- 3.4.1 Reports reviewed and accepted. There was discussion about wording with reference to the case where passenger fell backwards while exiting the boat. Our booking info to be clear about the need for those with mobility issues to be aware of the the responsibility of themselves and their carers while entering / exiting. Whilst LUCS crew will offer support and advice, and supervise whenever possible both ends of the stairs, the risk remains with the client..

3.5 Technical Status

- 3.5.1 St Michael exhaust lagging requires repair.
- 3.5.2 Debate about the safety chains on afterdecks of the big boats. There had been comment that they might inhibit egress of crew in emergency, as a result of which it was agreed to make their release as easy as possible with use of shackles, and easing the holes in fixing points as appropriate.

4.0 Basin Operations

4.1 Tea Room personnel, availability.

- 4.1.1 Confirm status with Anne Mackie. Recruiting to be encouraged,

Action: PtP

4.2 Facilities Status Issues

- 4.2.1 Toilet radiators replacement approved
4.2.2 Tea Room floor: re-work after season

Action: Alister M

5.0 Promoting Heritage

5.1 Museum Initiatives

- 5.1.1 New, less dense, layout approved, with detail accessible via QR codes.
- 5.1.2 Decisions to be made as to best physical exhibits to retain, and whether to dispose of, or store second level artefacts: Is a direct Canal link essential, or are 19th century objects, tools, etc., to be retained?

5.2 Education

A suitable convener to be sought: any active contacts with those in education? **Action: PtP**

6.0 Projects

6.1 Victoria Lottery Funding.

- 6.1.1 First attempt unsuccessful, but a revised proposal might be acceptable. A potential alternative source of the electrification equipment has been identified: to be progressed to a quotation asap. **Action: MJS**
- 6.1.2 The proposed cost of the other tasks involved in Victoria's Mid-life Update to be reviewed to see if it can be reduced, effort re-allocated, LUCS contribution possibly increased — so that a more attractively-priced bid can be put forward. **Action: MJS / DSh**
- 6.1.3 Discussions to be had to emphasise more clearly that our ability to convey the significance of the Canal to Scotland's industrial heritage - and Linlithgow Basin's part therein - will be greatly enhanced by the on-board silence permitting free communication between driver and passengers, which is currently severely limited by engine noise. **Action: MJS / D Sh, et al.**

7.0 Events

7.1 Fun Day

- 7.1.1 All arrangements with Council, etc., in hand. Advert placed in Round Table Marches Magazine. Stalls mostly confirmed, though some responses still awaited.
- 7.1.2 Fiona Hyslop MSP to be approached as Opener **Action: PtP**

7.2 Marches and Deacons' Night.

- 7.2.1 Deacon Stewart Liddle and MyLord Graeme Harvey confirmed in post.
- 7.2.2 Catering discussed, and to follow traditional lines. Approvals to be confirmed.

8.0 Marketing

8.1 Current Initiatives

- 8.1.1 New leaflets are in process of distribution.

8.2 Future Initiatives

- 8.2.1 Greater use of Mailchimp as publicity vector to be explored.

8.3 Basin Banter Topics

Dry Dock notes; Canal Obstructions; Education report and search for new Education Convener; Customer feedback; Key topics from BML Meeting; Victoria's run the the Wheel and back; visitation from Forth & Clyde Canal Society...etc.

9.0 General Management

9.1 Treasurer's Report

Current status reviewed. Still financially secure, but concerns about future rise in energy costs - new electricity contract price set to rise about four-fold. Income reflecting large fluctuations in footfall.

9.2 Bookings

There are still some issues with the payments system: David S and John Aitken are scheduled to meet with Blue 2 by end May to agree how and when they will fix these.

Action: DS / JA

10.0 Other Competent Business

10.1 Secretary to amend future Agenda headings to incorporate **Health and Safety** as a permanent topic, rather than it appearing only in Matters Arising, as in this issue.

Action: MJS

10.2 Secretary to liaise with John A to arrange that 'info@lucs' goes to "secretary@lucs" instead of to John A. (To whom thanks for fielding it so far)!

Action: MJS/JA

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6th June 2023