

Minutes of the LUCS Committee Meeting

10th October 2023

1.0 Chairman's Welcome.

Present: Chairman David Shirres welcomed Andy Eaglesfield, Peter Lewis, Ronnie Reis, Doug Scott, Mike Smith

2.0 Approval of previous Minutes: Approved, (AE, PL)

3.0 Boat Operations

3.1 *BML Issues*: Candidates progressing, but need still high. Ian Walker requested to supply latest status monthly. **Action: IAW**

3.1.1 MCA General Office has been approached to schedule examination slots for three BML Candidates.

Training outline syllabus to be developed (see 7.2 below). **Action D Sh/ IAW**
Create Training Whatsapp group, to ease co-ordination. **Action: PtP**

Ancillary training courses scheduled for 16th / 17th October.

3.2 *Battery Boats: no action*

3.3 *Dry Docking / MCA Inspection*

3.3.1 *St Michael 5-Yearly*

3.3.1.1 *Propeller/ Cutlass Bearing*. MCA declared wear on the cutlass bearing assembly was unacceptable, even though there was no free play when the bearing itself (considered a sacrificial part, which would be expected to be replaced every few years) was replaced. Unquantifiable uncertainty of shaft alignment, with potential gear-box wear, was cited. (Neither issue puts the boat at risk).

MCA demanded that the assembly be repaired and certificated by the original equipment installers before a Passenger Certificate would be issued..

Urgent consultation with Designer MDI and manufacturers have managed to achieve availability of qualified effort and availability of Dry Dock to fit. Dates to be confirmed.

(The operating environment of shallow canal boat propellers is extreme, and will inevitably lead to wear patterns never seen on sea-going vessels - but this is not recognised by MCA regulations).

3.3.1.2 *Fire Alarm System*. The reliability of the system has become poor, and a complete refurbishment by the original suppliers is required to satisfy MCA. Simplification of the system to meet the actual requirements for a vessel of this design - and thus improve reliability - was not seen as an option. Post-installation certification from the supplier is required. Plans to refit are in hand.

3.3.1.3 After much examination of the depth markings to confirm they had not moved, it was determined that the load-line should be painted in a contrasting colour.

3.3.1.4 It not being possible to examine the inside of the fuel tank by endoscope (an anti-syphon fitting prevents), and it not being feasible to drain the tank to access via the inspection hatch while in dry dock, it was agreed that the hatch should be removed at Linlithgow, and photographs of the interior be forwarded to MCA for approval.

3.3.2 *St Magdalene*

3.3.2.1 A full ultra-sound survey of the hull was carried out by a specialist contractor, which raised no concerns.

3.3.2.2 The ropes fitted to life-rings were considered inadequate. New encapsulated lines have been fitted, and MCA so advised. Passenger certificate being issued.

3.4 Technical Status: (non-MCA boats).

3.4.1 **Colin G's** leak continues to be monitored. Not causing concern.

Ac-

tion:RR

3.4.2 **Victoria's** bilges: The pump-out to be used every black-hand day. Some concern this leaves bilges wet, encouraging internal corrosion. To be reviewed.

Action: PtP, RR, MJS

4.4.3 *Galvanic Isolation* Requires research into benefits, use and cost.

(Continuing) **Action: MJ**

3.5 *Bookings and Driver Allocation:* system to be reviewed to ensure that crises (both perceived and actual) are avoided. Continuing...

Action: All, D Sh to distil.

3.6 *Future Targeted Cruises*

A list of proposed Cruises targeted at events like Mothers' Day, etc., to be developed for discussion in time for Key Facts Sheet.

Action: LN

The Committee was encouraged to think towards the development of next year's Key Facts.

4.0 Basin Operations

4.1 *Recruitment of Tea Room personnel:*

The possibility of using Receptionists doubling as Tea Room staff still being considered, bearing in mind any resultant training requirements.

4.1.1 Active recruiting required: single staffing makes the job seem lonely unless it's busy, which it often isn't. The sociability and voluntary aspects should be highlighted over as wide an audience as possible.

What vehicles can we use to convey the upsides of the job?

Its Voluntary status may help recruitment, and posters are in preparation.

Action: D Sh, LN, PtP, CMD

4.2 *Facilities Status Issues:*

4.2.1 Tea Room floor to be repaired after Christmas.

Resultant TeaRoom unavailability to be broadcast across LUCS to ensure that all affected areas can cope.

Action:

AM/AE

4.2.2 Yard divider fence restoration. Allister M devising solution **Action: AM**

4.2.3 Rationalisation of storage, repair of sheds, etc to be carried out over the down season: a degree of consultation will be required to ensure that the baby survives the the removal of the bathwater.

Repair of the Black Shed roof requires careful planning and expert help, and should not be approached until all factors are in place. Can TMcP advise?

All projects to be costed before commitment.

4.3 *Mooring protocols, boat positioning,*

Mooring of St Michael pointing West successful in creating clearance.

Mooring layout plan to be promulgated.

Action DSh

The need to replace rotten posts remains.

Action: AM

4.3.1 *Training in rope-management:* initial plan for training shore parties and crew is in place

Action: MJS, DSh, IAW, KD

4.3.2 Signage to discourage visiting boats from mooring on South side of Basin to be developed. (Firm, but not unfriendly).

4.3.2 SC to be reminded (Jo Spragg) of need for quayside repairs. An agreed plan to be published.

Action: DSh

4.4 *Fuel storage and supply management.* The closeness of the maximum capacity and minimum delivery volumes of heating oil caused a brief outage while the resultant airlocks were removed from the supply pipes. Revision of supply tankage to be considered. **Action:**

AE

4.5 *Links between LUCS Scottish Canals*

Following last month's exploratory meeting, collaborative ventures are being discussed, and feasibilities examined. The full economics of Leamington's operations are being analysed. Possible involvement in weed management and occasional Wheel-based operations are under consideration..

Discussions will continue over coming months as plans crystallise.

5.0 Promoting Heritage

5.1 *Museum Initiatives:* Proposals in development: hats etc., for sale.. possibility of collaboration with SC's Archivist, Chris O'Connell was discussed. Meeting postponed, to be re-convened.

5.1.1 Questionnaire re Museum re-vamp to be distributed more widely.

Action: DSh

5.2 *Education:* The lack of an Education Convener continues to be a major issue. Contacts with youth movements and local schools need to develop, but momentum not yet established.

5.2.1 The possibility of advertising for both Education Convenor and IT Support to be considered. DSh has a spec for the latter to be copied round.

DSh to maintain contacts.

Action: DSh

5.3 Re-vamp *Membership* Application Form emphasising sociability as a key element.

Action:AE

6.0 Projects

6.1 *Victoria Re-fit.* A list of potential sponsors is to hand. Tailoring our requests to meet a wide range of favoured criteria will require concentrated consultative effort and the need to crystallise costs..

Action: DSh to co-ordinate

6.2 The three potential suppliers of electric propulsion have been asked to re fresh their quotations, which had lapsed.

Action:

MJS

6.3 *Cashless Donations.* With the decline in the everyday use of cash, the acquisition of a machine to accept donations by card was discussed - it has been found successful in other heritage sites. It was agreed to purchase such a system for LUCS.

Action:

DSh

7.0 Health and Safety

7.1 *Accidents and Incidents.* One report agreed, the other is still under consideration.

7.1.1 MCA highlighted the need for a process which includes the formal closure of such reports.

7.1.2 *As a consequence of a previous report, AE and GH to collaborate on an entry in Basin Banter re proper use of poles.*

Action AE / GH

7.1.3 There was discussion as to whether being stopped by weed-bergs, even on non-passenger-carrying trips should be a reportable incident. It was agreed to add Leamington becoming weed-bound to her accident book.

7.2 *Training:* Ken Duerden has produced a contextual addition to the course notes. Content and delivery to be finalised.

Action: DSh, IAW, KD,

SBraes

Mentoring to be actively continued.

Action AE

7.3 Two missing (misaid) RYA Certificates are being replaced.
"Sorted"s intentions re continued membership to be clarified. **Action:DSH**

8.0 Events

8.1 *Fun Day*

A "Wash-up Meeting" to be convened: Peter collating information in preparation for meeting on 4th November. **Action: PtP**

8.2 Halloween Cruises

21/22 and 28/29th October. St Michael will not be available.

Planning to be progressed, using St Magdalene, and Story-Teller..

Price £14ph (tbc)

Action DSh

8.3 Volunteers Cruise

A social cruise for new members fixed for 11th November. **Action: AE**

8.4 Chairman's BBQ. Social cruise and BBQ 14th Oct. **Action:DSH, PtP**

8.5 Winter Talks - It was agreed to re-establish this old tradition: volunteers being sought. **Ac-**

tion:AE

9.0 Marketing

9.1 Peter in contact with One Linlithgow to help publicity spread via town web site.

9.2 Soundings regarding Pride Flag or Pride cruises continue. **Action: DSh**

9.3 Basin Banter ever-hungry for copy. New Members to be given a mention.

Is Social Media help needed?

Action PtP

9.4 Halloween Cruises to be advertised via Basin Banter.

Action PtP

10.0 General Management

10.1 *Treasurer's Report.* Nothing of concern: noted.

10.2 *Bookings.* . Arisings of any time-out problems to be monitored.

10.3 Potential commercial collaborations, which don't conflict with LUCS interests, remain to be discussed, on a case-by-case basis.

10.4 Collation of information allowing the creation of next year's Key Facts Sheet before the AGM, and potential candidates for committee posts to be brought under active consideration. **Ac-**

tion:All

10.5 After discusaion, it was agreed that the **AGM would be held on 12th December, and would be a hybrid live/zoom event** to enable as wide-spread an attendance as possible, regardless of mobility or distance.

11.0 AOCB

11.1 It was mooted that a FAQ element in our Website might resolve some of the difficulties experienced by some potential bookers. (The system and its supporting explanations might benefit from a 'daft laddie" review, by someone who doesn't know how it's supposed to work).

- 11.2 Judicious use of off-peak vouchers for support of local charitable ventures was generally agreed, with case-by case review beforehand.
- 11.3 **Date of Next Meeting 7th November 2023.**