

# ASHBY CANAL ASSOCIATION



Registered Charity No 1063566 Company No 339619 Reg. office: 48 The Ridgeway, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 2NR

## TRUSTEES REPORT and ANNUAL REVIEW YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2011

### SECTION A Reference and Administrative Details

The trustees managing the Association during the year were:

J.A. Boston (Chairman)	D. Bews	L. Wright
C.W. Blackford (Secretary)	R. Smith	P. Oakden
J.E. Roddis (Treasurer)	T.G. Wright	D. Billings
C. Aston (Membership sec.)	R. Grimsley (Database)	I. L. Reid (Social sec.)

All trustees acted for the whole year.

Advisers: T. Henshaw (President of the Association, 5 Chapel St, Newhall DE11 0JU); G. Pursglove (Ashby Canal Restoration Project Officer for Leicestershire County Council, Measham Community Office, Measham DE12 7HZ); M. Bird (Newsletter editor and web-master, 24 Jeffcoats Lane, Swannington LE67 8QE)

The Association's bankers are HSBC Bank plc, Market Place, Hinckley, LE10 1NU; The Association's solicitors are GS Solicitors, 23 Station Rd., Hinckley, LE10 1AW.

Directors of the trading company, The Ashby Canal Co. Ltd, were: J. E. Roddis (Chairman), C.W. Blackford (Secretary), T.G. Wright, J. Dillon (Non-executive), N. Smith (Non-executive).

### SECTION B Structure, Governance and Management

The Association is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 2nd July 1997 and governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 10th June 1997. The trustees are nominated and elected from within the membership. They form the management committee, with responsibility for the management of the Association's affairs and decision-making. Trustees serve for a period of three years and retire by rotation. There are no outside appointees. The management committee met 11 times throughout the year.

No committee member received any remuneration for their services, other than payment of out-of-pocket expenses, such as postage, stationery, materials, travelling expenses, etc. This year, such payments amounted to £101, most of which was donated back to the Association. A written expenses policy is in place.

Major risks facing the Association are kept under review. For events and work parties, risk assessment procedures are carried out. Appropriate financial controls and policies are in place to prevent financial irregularities, and the accounts have been subject to independent examination. Work-party safety issues have been considered, with a safety policy in place. Public liability and other major risks are covered by appropriate insurance.

### SECTION C Objects and Activities

(1) (a) The principal objectives of the Association, which are set out in full in its Memorandum of Association, are to improve the condition of, preserve, and enhance the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal for the benefit of all, and to promote and assist the restoration of the northern reaches of the canal. All the Association's objectives are intended for the public benefit. Fund raising is undertaken for its charitable aims. A trading company, The Ashby Canal Company Limited, also generates income through trading activities, with all its profits being paid to the Association under the Gift Aid scheme.

(b) The Trustees declare that the Association's objectives are not exclusive to any particular interest group, and that the objects of the charity are for public benefit.

#### (2) Relationships with other organisations and charities

The Association maintained working relations and dialogue with British Waterways, The Inland Waterways Association, The Ashby Canal Trust, Shackerstone Festivals Ltd, Measham Parish Council, Leicestershire County Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and other local District Councils. The Association is a corporate member of the Inland Waterways Association, a member of the Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs, and has two seats on the board of the Ashby Canal Trust.

#### (3) Volunteer contributions

Volunteers undertook grass-cutting and tidying of the Association's site at Snarestone. They also attended work parties on the restored Moira section, where workboat "Firefly" is based. Volunteers also helped with the repair of the workboat and its hydraulic system to enable it to be re-launched in Spring 2011. The navigable length of the Ashby Canal was monitored by a newly-recruited team of volunteer tow-path wardens reporting to British Waterways. Volunteers staffed the Association's publicity/sales stand at several events throughout the year including the Moira Canal Festival, Heart of the Forest Festival, IWA National Waterways Festival at Burton, Shackerstone Family Festival and Foxton Canal Festival. All administrative, membership, secretarial and accountancy work was done by volunteers. The Association's social events organisation, newsletter, database, publicity design and web-site maintenance were also undertaken by volunteers. The value of this voluntary effort to the Association amounts to several thousands of pounds.

### SECTION D Achievements and Performance

During the year Leics. County Council contractors completed work on the restoration of a 110m length of the canal at Snarestone. The Association completed payment for the installation of swing-bridge No 61A with monies specifically donated by Mrs. J. A. Boston and installed number plates on the bridge. The management committee had meetings with the County Council's engineer responsible for the works, and with officials from County Hall, and offered advice and suggestions concerning the plans for further restoration work towards the pumping station, the contract for which was due to start in the early autumn of 2011. Plans were also drawn up for a series of autumn/winter work parties to clear the

line of the canal to aid restoration. A successful volunteer recruitment drive enabled a team of waterway wardens to be established. Plans were drawn up for further volunteer work in the coming year. Restoration of the canal north of Snarestone remained a priority, with fund-raising for the next phase continuing throughout the year (see financial review below).

Fund raising efforts proved successful, with several important initiatives including the 'Buy a Pile Appeal' (which was very well supported) and a Restoration Prize Draw (continuing into the next financial year), and Vodafone's 'Just Text Giving' Scheme.

The Association's representatives attended British Waterways User Group meetings during the year.

The trustees reached agreement with Leics. County Council regarding a strategy for managing and controlling the slipway and moorings at Snarestone, which are owned by the County Council, but managed by the ACA. Working through the Ashby Canal Co. Ltd, a scale of charges has been introduced, together with regulations, which will be implemented to raise revenue, whilst providing a service to the public.

Development proposals and planning applications affecting the canal and its environment have been scrutinized, and comments made where appropriate to local authorities. A planning application by UK Coal, for a surface mine near Measham, was approved by Leics. County Council in June 2011. The Association was represented at the planning meeting. Conditions of the approval included a phased contribution of £1.28m towards the restoration of part of the Ashby Canal, plus the supply of clay, construction of a winter storage lake, and the raising of Gallows Lane road junction which will allow navigable headroom. Work is expected to start in 2012

In March, ownership of the workboat "Firefly" was formally transferred to the Ashby Canal Trust who thereafter accepted responsibility for its maintenance and use.

Members' meetings, open to the public, were held throughout the winter and spring months to promote interest in the canal and its historic and social environment. A new sound system was purchased for use by speakers at meetings.

In May, the Association provided support at the Moira Canal Festival, which was well attended and generated much useful publicity. In September 2011, the Shackerstone Family Festival was held, with a large number of historic working boats attending, together with many pleasure craft. The large gathering of working boats, as well as being of historical importance, and a visitor attraction, also helps ensure the canal channel is kept clear for deep-drafted boats. The event drew a large public attendance. Association members were on the organizing committee, and members also provided much voluntary assistance at the Festival.

Our newsletter, 'Spout', was published, to communicate with members and the public. The Association's web-site was updated regularly to provide restoration news, and also dealt with many e-mail enquiries from the public. Publicity materials, stands, display boards, etc were renewed and updated to enhance the public profile of the Association. A membership policy was adopted by the management committee, together with the creation of a computerised membership database. This has proved useful to analyse the geographical base of the membership and identify potential volunteers. Increasing use was made of e-mail as a means of communicating with members.

## **SECTION E Financial review**

### **Policy on reserves**

The management committee's policy is to maintain general reserves at a prudent level, sufficient in their view to meet anticipated revenue expenditure in the short term, and also to create a designated reserve fund to enable the Association to make worthwhile financial contributions to the canal restoration scheme over the long term.

### **Other financial information**

As well as subscriptions from members, a large part of the Association's revenue this year came from donations. As well as the "Buy a Pile" appeal, general donations also showed an increase, an encouraging development during a period of economic uncertainty. The Ashby Canal Co. Ltd. also raised income for the Association through various fund-raising activities, including a sales shop, which this year included a separate bric-a-brac stall. These were very successful, with total sales well up on the previous year. The Association records its thanks to all who have supported it with cash or in kind, and to the volunteers who have helped in various ways.

Low bank interest rates throughout the year impacted on the returns we earned on our deposit balances. Subscription income, including life memberships, showed an increase over last year. The trustees have endeavoured to keep running costs down, but several inflationary trends in the UK have meant that administration, postage and insurance costs have risen. An unsecured three-year loan from the Chairman, Mrs. J. A. Boston together with the appeal funds, has enabled the management committee to allocated £51,500 as a "designated fund" towards the restoration, having entered into a commitment to contribute £50,000 towards the Leics. County Council's next phase of restoration in the autumn of 2011. The committee is confident that the loan can be repaid without difficulty. The detailed financial results are set out in the statement of accounts for the year. No funds were held on behalf of others. All funds are deposited in a UK bank. There were no funds in deficit.

## **SECTION F Membership**

A joint-life class of Membership was introduced this year, after a review of subscription rates at the last AGM.

There has been a net increase in membership during the year.

At 30th September 2011 there were 413 members (comprising 362 ordinary members, 48 life members, 3 group members) *At 30th September 2010 there were 399 members (comprising 355 ordinary members, 39 life members, 5 group members)*

## **THE TRUSTEES DECLARE THAT THEY HAVE APPROVED THE REPORT ABOVE**

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

**Mrs. J. A. Boston** ..... Chairman, 1st November 2011