


ASHBY CANAL ASSOCIATION

TRUSTEES REPORT and ANNUAL REVIEW for the YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020

Reference and Administrative Details

Ashby Canal Association is a Registered Charity No 1063566 and a company limited by guarantee No 3396198 Registered in England; registered office: 48 The Ridgeway, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 2NR

Trustees : P. Oakden (chairman) D. Watts C.J. Walker
 C.W. Blackford R. Smith A Smith
 R. Taylor R Dyason M Wooding
 C A Aston
 T.Smith served as a Director from 20th January 2020 until 31st July 2020
 P.Haigh served as a Director from 20th January 2020 until 20th Sept 2020

Co-opted committee members M Dyer till 31st July and from 1st Sept 2020 Arran Jenkins and Anne-Marie Eccles

Advisers: G. Pursglove (Chairman, Ashby Canal Trust); Prof. O.P. Mulka, (President of the Association).

M. Bird (newsletter editor, design adviser and web-master), H Worth, (IWA Honorary Engineer.)

Bankers: HSBC Bank plc, Market Place, Hinckley, LE10 1NU

Solicitors: M & S Solicitors Ltd, 20 Newton Road, Heather Leics. LE67 2RD.

Independent examiner of accounts: Elizabeth Riley ACMA, Babwith Cottages, 17-19 Northgate, Hunmanby, Filey, YO14 0NU

Associated enterprise: Fund-raising trading activities for the Association were undertaken by The Ashby Canal Co. Ltd, whose directors (nominees of ACA) were: J. E. Roddis (Chairman), C.W. Blackford (Secretary), D. Watts, M Wooding, J. Dillon (Non-executive), N. Smith (Non-executive).

Vice Presidents: S.J.Wain; J.C.Beaney **Patron:** A Bridgen MP

Structure, Governance and Management

Ashby Canal Association ("ACA") was incorporated on 2nd July 1997 and is governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 10th June 1997. It took over the activities of the former unincorporated organisation of the same name originally founded in February 1966. The trustees are nominated and elected by the members of the Association from within the membership, serve for a period of three years, and retire by rotation. Along with co-opted members they form the management committee, undertaking the day to day running of ACA's affairs and decision-making. There are no outside appointees. No committee members received remuneration for their services, other than payment of out-of-pocket expenses, such as postage, travelling expenses, etc., most of which was donated back to the Association. A Health & Safety policy is in place and safety issues were reviewed at management committee meetings. Public liability and other major risks are covered by appropriate insurance. Major risks were kept under review. For events and work parties, risk assessments are carried out. Appropriate financial policies are in place, and the accounts are subject to independent examination.

Objects and Activities

- (1) (a) **The principal objectives** of the Association, 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 the public, and to promote and assist the restoration of the derelict northern reaches of the canal.
- (b) **The Trustees declare** that the Association's objectives are not exclusive to any particular interest group, are for public benefit, and that the charity constitutes a public benefit entity under Financial reporting Standard 102.
- All the Association's activities are continuing operations and the Association is a going concern.

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

The Association maintained working relations with The Canal and River Trust [CRT], The Inland Waterways Association [IWA], The Ashby Canal Trust [ACT], Shackerstone Festivals Ltd, Leicestershire County Council [LCC], North West Leics.District Council [NWLDC], Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council [HBBC], Natural England, the Environment Agency, and had dialogue with local district and county councillors and Member of Parliament. The Association is a corporate member of the Inland Waterways Association, a member of the Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs, and is represented on the board of the Ashby Canal Trust.

(3) **Volunteer contributions**

ACA is fortunate to have many volunteers. Volunteer work parties undertook regular maintenance of the Association's canal-side land and buildings at Snarestone Wharf, work on the line of the canal around the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct and at the Illott Wharf site. They also assisted ACT work parties at Moira. A project to refurbish benches along the canal continued. The Moira Canal Festival was cancelled this year due to Covid and will not take place next year. Shackerstone Family Festival Ltd, a major fundraiser for the Association, did not take place this year and has been wound up after 25 successful years. Administrative, membership, secretarial and accountancy work was done voluntarily. The organization of social events, newsletter editing, database, publicity design and web-site management were also undertaken entirely by volunteers or as gifts in kind. The oversight of Heritage Lottery Funded archeological survey work and public events related thereto, was done by volunteers, as was planning for the next phases of canal restoration. ACA's sales and information kiosk at Snarestone was available for visiting boaters and walkers, thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers and our volunteer site caretakers. In total, well over 5076 hours of voluntary work were contributed to the Association during the year, equivalent in monetary terms to almost £89,900 The trustees record their thanks to all those involved.

Achievements and Performance

- **Covid-19 Restrictions:** The lockdown restrictions came at the end of our social program for the year but forced the closure of our sales Kiosk for 3 months and restricted our work party operations. These now operate under the latest guidelines and are restricted in numbers. The committee has been unable to meet since March but has conducted the management business by e-mail and telephone.
 - **Canal Restoration:** Restoration plans are in place for the canal northwards from Bridge 62. Leicestershire County Council agreed to transfer the 2005 Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) to ACA since they no longer wished to continue with their involvement in the canal restoration scheme. The implementation of this transfer is progressing and upon completion when ACA are the land-owners we will be in a position to apply for a substantial HLF Grant. The precursor to this was that we first carried out a HLF funded Industrial Archaeological investigation at Ilott Wharf which was completed and the formal report issued by Leicester University in April 2019. Rules for Lottery Grant Applications changed significantly early in 2019. Previously a grant for canal restoration could only be applied for where works remained on the original route. This is no longer the case where the emphasis is now more on features including benefits to the public and local community. Thus, when the TWAO transfer is complete we may apply for a grant from Bridge 62 to Measham or Bridge 62 to Gallows Lane. The timing of this has also been affected by Covid restrictions but the application for transfer is now with DEFRA.
 - **Fund Raising:** The Restoration Appeal continued, with the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct appeal continuing to attract donations. A successful fund-raising Quiz Night was held in November. Donations from the Moira Canal Festival, and ACA's share of the surplus from the Shackerstone Family Festival also added to the restoration funds. Profit from The Ashby Canal Co. Ltd. (ACA's trading company) amounting to £10,859 was donated under covenant to the Association. A remarkable result considering the shorter season we had with boat movements also being restricted.
 - **Publicity:** We provided information for visitors through leaflets, free maps, notice boards, as well as the information kiosk at Snarestone..
 - **Public Events:** The popular Moira Canal Festival did not take place in May 2020 due to the Covid restrictions
 - **General** ACA representatives attended CRT Waterway User Group meetings during the year. Development proposals and planning applications affecting the whole length of the canal and its environment were scrutinized by the management committee, and comments made where appropriate to local authorities. ACA continued to manage the use of the slipway and moorings at Snarestone, which are owned by LCC. This arrangement provided a valued service to trail-boater, canoeists and visiting boaters. The off-line nature reserve at Snarestone, on ACA land, provided a valuable thriving habitat for wildlife. Maintenance work on the reserve was carried out by volunteers. Social meetings with speakers, which were open to members and the general public, were held during the winter and spring months to promote interest in the canal and its historic and social environment.
- ACA's newsletter, 'Spout', was published quarterly, to communicate with members and the public. ACA's web-site [ashbycanal.org.uk] provided news and information, and also facilitated many e-mail enquiries from the public. The Facebook Group 'Ashby Canal Association Friends' continued to be popular.
- **Major Risks** The major risks are (a) that ACA would not have sufficient funds to carry out its day to day objectives, (b) that volunteer input would not continue at its present level, as all its activities are performed by volunteers. Both these issues are regularly reviewed by the management committee and policies put in place to help mitigate the risks.

Financial review

Policy on reserves

The management committee's policy is to maintain a general reserve at a prudent level, sufficient in their view to meet anticipated revenue expenditure in the short term (up to one year). ACA also holds designated reserve funds to enable the Association to make substantial financial contributions towards the canal restoration scheme over the next five years; this includes specific funds designated for bricks for the construction of the Gilwiskaw aqueduct.

Other financial information

Subscriptions and generous donations from members and the public continued to form a large part of ACA's revenue, most of which were gift-aided. Specific donations were received towards the restoration of the canal's northern reaches. The Ashby Canal Co. Ltd. raised funds for ACA through its sales shop, and a bric-a-brac stall. A card payment system was installed. The company also sold advertising, collected mooring and slipway fees, and received a final share of the proceeds of the Shackerstone Festival. All of the company's profits, amounting to £10,859 were donated to ACA.. The Association records its thanks to all who have supported it with cash or in kind, and to all the volunteers.

Interest rates remained low during the year. Some reserve balances were placed in short term HSBC Money Market accounts. A conservative low-risk approach is taken to investing funds. Life memberships are recorded in a separate fund and written back into revenue over a period of ten years. The detailed financial results are set out in the statement of accounts showing a net surplus of £26,275 for the year. The accounts show details of the designated funds allocated to the restoration scheme. No funds were held on behalf of others. All funds are deposited in a UK bank. There were no funds in deficit. The accounts have been independently examined and certified.

Membership

Membership figures continued to grow. At 30th September 2020 there were 588 members, including 114 life members..
(2019 : total membership 542)

THE TRUSTEES DECLARE THAT THEY HAVE APPROVED THE ABOVE REPORT

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

PETER OAKDEN Chairman, 5th February 2021