Shropshire Union Canal Society

The Minutes of the 2026 Annual General Meeting of the Shropshire Union Canal Society Limited held on Saturday 24 November at 11 00hrs.

Meeting held via Zoom video conferencing

Council members present online:
David Carter (DC) Chair; Steve Clews (SC) Vice Chair; Clive Robertson (CR) Treasurer; Tom Fulda (TF) Restoration Project Manager; Graham Harris (GH); Richard Feeney (RF)

Ordinary members present online:
John Bannister; Peter Brown; Andrew Greenwell; Ian Hendley; John Myers.

1 Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence received from Councillor Margaret Lewington (Mayor of Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn), John Dodwell, Margaret Powell, David Healey, Jan Johnstone, Sue Ball, Pat and Liz Tolster.

2 Reminder of procedure for the meeting
DC reminded attendees of the protocol for the meeting:
* Only 1 person to speak at any one time
* Mute microphones unless invited to speak by the chair. State your name if called upon to speak
* The chair will call for proposers and seconders when required
* Voting will be by a show of hands. Any member not present will not be able to vote. Voting intentions should be made clear for the chair to see or hear.

3 Adoption of the minutes of the 2025 AGM held on 29 November 2025
The minutes of the 2024 AGM were adopted. Proposed: D Carter. Seconded: Steve Clews. Proposal carried unanimously.

4 Matters arising from the minutes of the 2025 AGM.
There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere.

5 Reports:
a) Chair's report
It is a pleasure to be able to report on a year of substantial progress for the society in this, our 60th anniversary year. Alas one of the downsides of the ten-month reporting period for

this AGM (for reasons that will be explained later) is that I can't give an account of all of them - the concluding and arguably most important anniversary event being in a couple of weeks' time. The success of the anniversary events is due to the hard work of a large number of trustees, members and volunteers who have organised these in addition to their regular activities.

Our Council continues to have a full complement of Trustees to fill the Council roles of Secretary, Treasurer and Chair as set out in our governance documents. I am fortunate to be supported by very competent and hard-working Trustees, some of whom have agreed to seek re-election later in this meeting. As in all voluntary bodies, the major limiting factor in our activities it is the number of trustees/event organisers/supervisors. We are conscious that any so potential expansion of society activities requires more of the above.

The 60th Anniversary events started with a very successful Shroppie walk, a circular walk starting and finishing at Trevor Basin. The second anniversary event at Welshpool was not so lucky and was a direct casualty of the summer's dry weather. The Welshpool Gathering of members of the Wilderness Boat Club had to be cancelled because of low water levels in the Welshpool pound such that even the very shallow draught trailable Wilderness boats could not be launched. A big disappointment and not a fitting reward for the immense amount of hard work put in by the organisers. We had much better fortune with the two cruises back and forth between Ellesmere to Crickheath, our two current operational locations. I can personally testify that they were very pleasant occasions! The winners of a members' raffle were guests of honour on the first boat provided by the Lyneal Trust and this was followed by boats owned by society members. My thanks to Lyneal Trust (and its volunteers), the local CRT staff and volunteers, and to Sue Ball for her organisation. These were followed by two successful walks during September - a conducted tour of the restoration work, followed by a guided walk featuring the canal heritage of the Llanymynech area. All were most fitting events to mark our anniversary.

As part of the anniversary celebrations the society is offering free membership for the subscription year and this has contributed to a modest but steady increase in total numbers – now approaching 600. Over the recent past the society has worked hard to project itself as an organisation potential members would find attractive and has worked hard on recruitment in many ways. This seems to be paying off.

The biggest story on the Shropshire Union system during the year has of course been the Whitchurch breach which happened just after our last AGM. Much has been written about the likely causal factors and the engineering methods presently being employed on the repair. Despite the society having no direct involvement in the breach, such is the level of public interest that we have acquired many of new followers on our social media channels. Also, a number of boaters, including a number of continuous cruisers, who are trapped on the Llangollen and Montgomery Canals have volunteered on our work parties on both waterways. So maybe a few positives to offset the major damage that the breach has caused.

Over the past three years our communications group has been steadily developing our social media channels. Recently we celebrated a milestone in that our most popular

channel, the Facebook public group achieved over 5500 followers. Its companion Facebook page now has over 1500 followers. Our five social media channels cover our events and provides an awareness of the society and its work 'out there'. Increasing numbers of members are recruited via social media and it plays a part in fund-raising efforts too. Well done to the Comms team!

The Cuttings editorial team are to be congratulated on the production four very high-quality editions of the magazine during the year. I am sure that these are appreciated by members old and new. Cuttings is in good hands.

Our restoration work south of Crickheath continues to be as impressive as ever. Physical work has progressed either side of our base at Schoolhouse Bridge. To the north the channel is shaped and lined all the way to Crickheath with only a small gap. Southwards channel clearance has revealed a number of features including a long-forgotten tramway wharf. It is also apparent that Waen Wen Basin will become a major local feature when eventually finished. The work during the early part of the year was funded from the second round of bids to the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund via CRT, and delivered a further section of channel and work on the towpath under toward Schoolhouse Bridge. Work is currently 'self-funded' – actually a 50/50 split between the society and Restore the Montgomery – a partnership which works well.

Forward planning is underway for two future areas of work. These are the Jubilee Bridge (which will fill the 'gap' at Crickheath) and the section of channel from Waen Wen Basin to Pant Basin. For both projects design and funding options are being explored.

The society's enhancement group is now in its fouth year and is quietly getting on with the job of helping to keep the towpaths and canal banks around Ellesmere in good order. WE now have a base in Ellesmere Yard for storage of tools. It is pleasant to be able to report that the group is, like its restoration counterpart, attracting a steady stream of new volunteers.

b) Treasurer's Report

The full society accounts and report for the financial year ending 31 March 2025, approved by council, is available to view on the website and have been registered at Companies House and with the Charity Commission. The society has had neutral year financially but generally the society is in a good financial situation currently.

6 Election of Auditors

The Treasurer proposed the continuation of Morris Cook Accountants (Llangollen) as auditors.

Proposed: C Robertson. Seconded: Ian Hendley. Proposal carried unanimously.

7 Election of Trustees

Three trustees are due for re-election this year: Sue Ball, Pat Tolster and Tom Fulda. Graham Harris (currently co-opted) stands for election. Proposal for re-election/election en bloc: Proposed: D Carter. Seconded: John Bannister. Proposal carried unanimously.

8 Special resolution – proposed changes to M&As

a) To amend article 3 (d) of the Memorandum of Association of the Society by renumbering the existing clauses (2)-(16) as clauses (3)-(17) and inserting a new clause (2) to read:
To deliver positive value to the community and environment as a whole and minimise the prospect of any harmful impact of the operations on the community and environment as a whole.

b) To amend article 7 of the Articles of Association of the Society from:
Husband And Wife Jointly. To:
Any persons residing at the same postal address and this category shall constitute one vote no matter who many persons are included

c) To amend article 8 of the Articles of Association of the Society from:
The amount of the annual subscription may from time to time be varied by Ordinary Resolution of the Society in General Meeting. To:
The amount of the annual subscription may from time to time be varied by the Society Council.

d) To amend Article 9 of the Article of Association of the Society. The number of months grace for unpaid subscription from *Twelve* to *Six*

e) To amend Article 11 of the Article of Association of the Society from:
Any person desirous of becoming a member of the Society shall sign and deliver to the Secretary an application to the following effect: -
"To the Council of the Shropshire Union Canal Society Limited I desire to become a member of The Shropshire Union Canal Society Limited, and I hereby agree, if elected, to be bound by all the provisions of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Society Dated this day of 197
"Name in full:
Address:
Occupation:
To: *Any person desirous of becoming a member of the Society shall complete a membership application form available from the Society.*

f) To amend article 42 of the Articles of Association to remove the requirement for members of Council to be not over the age of 80 years.

g) To amend the Articles of Association of the Society by renumbering existing clauses (59)-(71) as clauses (60)-(72) and inserting a new clause (59) to read:
Each Council Member must act in the manner in which they consider, in good faith, is most likely to promote the objects of the Society by having regard to the following matters:
(1) The likely consequences of any decision long term

(2) *The need to foster the Society's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others*
(3) *The impact of the Society's operations on the community and the environment*
(4) *The desirability of the Society maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct*
(5) *The need to act as fairly as possible between members of the Society*

h) To amend the Articles of Association of the Society by renumbering existing clauses (72)-(76) as clauses (76)-(80) and inserting a new clause (73)-(75) to read:
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
73. At the end of each financial year the Council Members shall prepare an Environmental Report for that financial year.
74. The Environmental Report shall be in addition to, and shall not take the place of, any other report or matter which the Company is required to prepare under the Companies Acts or otherwise.
75. The Environmental Report shall set out, at a minimum, a summary of operations and their impact.

Special resolution proposed by Steve Clews, Seconded Peter Brown. Proposal carried unanimously.

The meeting thanked Steve for his work on the special resolution

9 Any Other Business

None notified. There were no items raised from the floor.