DRAFT Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting of the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society held at the Viridor Theatre, SS Great Britain, Bristol at 13:30 on Saturday 21st October 2023.

Present: John Allen (Chairman) and 52 other members.

1 Welcome

Noel Kemp, Chairman of the Bristol Channel Branch, welcomed members to the meeting.

John Allen reiterated the welcome. He said he was touched by all of the messages of support he had received after his wife, Myra, had died. He had appreciated the warmth and support of members when sailing on *Waverley* and *Kingswear Castle* this year.

The Chairman read a message from Douglas McGowan, Society President, who could not be present. He noted that it had been a splendid year for the Society and its steamers. He had been pleased to meet Sir Timothy Laurence, *Waverley*'s new Patron on a Thames sailing. He was delighted that the first stage of *Kingswear Castle*'s rebuild had been successfully completed. It had been an incredibly successful season for Waverley. There had been luck with the weather, but clever use of social media and a skilfully compiled timetable had contributed to the success, as had the amazing reliability of the ship. Thanks were due to all concerned for their very hard work. The President hoped that crew accommodation on Waverley could be improved, but understood that this is planned for the coming winter. He concluded by acknowledging the continuing support of the Society's Patrons, Timothy West and Prunella Scales

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from 16 members.

3 Minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting

The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

5 Reports of the Council of Management and Reporting Accountants and the Society's financial statements for the period ending 31st October 2022

The Report of the Council of Management had been published on the Society's website and was taken as read. National Treasurer, Martin Longhurst, highlighted the principal features of the accounts, particularly the sources of income and areas of expenditure. He outlined the reasons for changing the financial year end and for presenting consolidated group accounts.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation for the work of Martin Longhurst, not just as National Treasurer, but in making sure the Society complied with company and charity law and other applicable regulations.

6 PS *Kingswear Castle* Report

John Megoran summarised the work undertaken on the first phase of rebuilding *Kingswear Castle*. He noted that funding had come from the trading surplus from operation on the Medway, from a PSPS grant and from PSKCT's own fund-raising. However, there had been a tremendous contribution in kind from the Dart Company, who had undertaken the work on their own slipway to a very high standard. Phase 1 cost £510K, but it would have been £2M to £3M if the work had been undertaken in a commercial shipyard. A great debt of gratitude was owed to the Dart Company, as well as to all those who had made donations.

Phase 2 will include work to the forward part of the ship and to the engine, particularly the condenser, at a cost about £250K. Fund raising is continuing for that.

The Marine and Coastguard Agency had certified *Kingswear Castle* to return to service following phase 1 and had been complimentary about the work.

New legislation requires greater subdivision of vessels to comply with Class V passenger certificate requirements, but it is possible to apply for exemptions. It is hoped that a safety case can be made for an exemption for *Kingswear Castle*, but in absence of that she could continue in service with a Class VI certificate. That would limit her to daylight operation during the summer, but would not significantly impact her current operations.

John Megoran was very pleased to report that *Kingswear Castle* remains central to the Dart Company's operation and features prominently in their publicity. The core business is a trip on a steam train and on a paddle steamer. For this reason *Kingswear Castle* is normally used on one-hour harbour cruises, rather than longer trips, such as to Totnes. However, this does not rule out occasional trips to Totnes. It remains a high priority to maintain a good relationship with the Dart Company, as it would not be possible to operate *Kingswear Castle* at Dartmouth without them. An extended charter agreement, for a period of 25 years, has been entered into with them.

John Megoran reported that special arrangements are being made to mark *Kingswear Castle*'s centenary in 2024. He concluded by thanking the PSPS and its members for their past support and appealing for more donations to cover the phase 2 rebuild and work to the condenser.

The Chairman formally thanked John Megoran, the Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle Trust and the Dartmouth Steam Railway & River Boat Company for continuing to look after *Kingswear Castle* and urged members to support the rebuild appeal.

7 PS *Waverley* Report

Paul Semple reported on work to *Waverley* during the 2021/22 refit and dry docking, which had included replacing the starboard spring beam and significant steelwork repairs to the port paddlebox. An appeal had been necessary to meet the cost of dry docking. That had raised £180K within two months.

Highlights of the season had included the appointment of Sir Timothy Laurence as Patron of Waverley Steam Navigation Company Limited, first ever sailings from Warrenpoint and Shoreham and the return to the Bristol Channel, Liverpool and Llandudno. Passenger journeys increased by 55% compared to 2022 and over 30% of the season sold out or had part of the day fully booked. There had been exceptional loadings from Oban and the Hebrides and on the Bristol Channel. The Warrenpoint and Liverpool sailings sold out very quickly.

There had been doubt that *Waverley* could return to Tower Pier in London, because it is so intensively used by river buses and sight-seeing trips. It had taken considerable research and negotiation to establish a way in which *Waverley* could call at Tower Pier, without obstructing three of the four available berths. The Thames season had started with a special sailing from Southend, to mark the pier being designated Pier of the Year. Both the Mayor of Southend and the local Member of Parliament had come on board. On her way back to Glasgow from

the Thames, *Waverley* had undertaken a trial berthing at Plymouth, in anticipation of public sailings from the city in 2024.

The crew had worked exceptionally hard over the season, with the engineers having to replace most of the plastic bushes in the paddle wheels, which were wearing much faster than expected. This had involved overnight work on occasion. Bushes to a revised specification were now being used. A noteworthy occasion at Rothesay was *Waverley* being berthed entirely by a female crew, on the bridge and in the engine room, for the first time.

In summary, *Waverley* operated for 124 days, with just three days cancelled due to bad weather. No days were lost for technical reasons. There were 157,401 passenger journeys, compared with 101K in 2022. Total revenue was £4.6M, made up of £3.2M fares, £1.1M catering and £274K from the shop. Provisional cost figures included £624K crew wages and costs, £569K fuel, £343K catering and shop purchases, £135K repairs (operating season only), £122K berthing charges, £160K coaches and £145K marketing and printing. It was good to note that, unlike in 2022, the cost of fuel was less than the cost of the crew.

Marketing had been improved, with stronger emphasis on consistency of brand and on the experience of sailing on *Waverley*, using customer testimonials. As well as traditional brochures, posters and newspaper adverts, marketing had included two TV adverts, use of social media, e-newsletters and press releases. There had been 250 pieces of editorial coverage in local and national newspapers and news websites. A 16 page Waverley supplement had been distributed with many newspapers in the West of Scotland, with copies also sold on board. A schools competition in Scotland, requiring pupils to make a *Waverley* model using household objects, attracted much interest. There were over a hundred entries, with five schools winning a trip on *Waverley*.

Waverley had been voted 'Best Visitor Attraction Experience' by readers of Best of Scotland and had been Gold Status by Visit Wales. The Times newspaper had included *Waverley* in Seven of the UK's Best Boat Trips and Condé Nast Traveler (*sic*) had listed *Waverley* in the best things to do in Glasgow.

Looking forward to winter work, surveys will include the main engine bearings. Other work will include refreshing the crew cabins, recaulking the upper deck, more repairs to the promenade deck and replacing the flooring in the deck shelters.

The report concluded with a YouTube video issued by Waverley Excursions, giving a statistical summary of the season, ranging from four countries visited through 10,431 fish and chips served and five times round the Isle of Wight, but concluding with just one seagoing paddle steamer.

The report was received with acclaim and the Chairman thanked Paul Semple and all those involved with and employed by Waverley Excursions Ltd and Waverley Steam Navigation Ltd, not forgetting the captains, officers and crew, for an extraordinarily good season.

8 PS *Maid of the Loch* Report

No representative of Maid of the Loch was present, but a written report was circulated.

9 Other Paddlers

The Chairman reported on other paddle steamers.

Medway Queen: The Chairman continues to attend Medway Queen board meetings. It is hoped to have toilets available on board when the ship opens in 2024.

Monarch was reportedly sold to an Irish owner. Chris Warren said he thought the vessel was now at Gloucester.

John H Amos: Contact is maintained with the owner of this paddle tug, with the intention of helping him secure a long-term future for her.

Wingfield Castle: Hartlepool Council has announced a three-phase plan to restore the paddler.

Tattershall Castle remains open as a pub on the Thames, much altered but with her engines intact. The Chairman recommended a visit.

Ryde: It was not known whether dismantling had started, but it is hoped that her machinery can be salvaged.

Compton Castle: Richard Clammer reported that the vessel had sunk. The engine is owned by PS Kingswear Castle Trust.

10 Archive

David Green opened his report by announcing that the knitted *Waverley* post box cover from Southend Pier, illustrated in Paul Semple's report, had been donated to the Archive.

Donations during the year had included a large number of items from Richard Clammer and Nigel Coombs, further items from Chris Collard's collection and drawings and surveys relating to PS *Wingfield Castle*.

A half model of PS Dartmouth Castle has been placed on loan to Dartmouth Museum and an oil painting of PS Galatea is being loaned to Trinity House in London.

Purchases have included various collections of negatives and slides, an engine and boiler drawing of PS Redgauntlet of 1894 and a Red Funnel Bristol Channel coupon book.

Richard Clammer and Mike Tedstone continue cataloguing work. With the main part of the drawings collection electronically scanned, attention has turned to the handbill collection. There are about 12,000 of these and nearly half have been scanned.

Storage space has become an increasing problem, for additional premises would come at significant cost. It is planned that scanned items will be placed with a dedicated archival storage company, as the cheapest option that would free up storage space.

Investigations have shown that becoming an accredited archive or museum is impractical, particularly because of the need to provide public access on at least twenty days annually. The Chatham premises are not suitable for this. Advice has been taken from both South East Museums Development and the National Archive, both of whom have said that the Society is implementing good practice. Partnership with a suitable museum has been suggested, but the sector is struggling financially, so this may not be viable.

David Green expressed thanks to Richard Clammer, Jon Joliffe, David Lawrence, Mike Tedstone and Richard Turner for their assistance with the Archive.

The Chairman thanked David Green and his team for their efforts.

11 Receipt of Reports

Noel Kemp proposed and David Haddleton seconded that the Reports of the Council of Management and Reporting Accountant and the Society's Financial Statements for the period ended 31 October 2022 be accepted. This was approved unanimously.

12 Membership of the Council of Management

It was noted that John Allen, Richard Clammer and Paul Semple had been re-elected unopposed to the Council of Management.

13 Auditors

Peter Morley proposed and Nigel Coombs seconded the appointment of Henderson & Co as auditors of the company until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting and authorisation of the Council of Management to determine their remuneration. This was approved unanimously.

14 Conclusion and thanks

David Haddleton proposed a vote of thanks to the Council of Management and Branch Committees for their work on the Society's behalf. This was agreed nem com.

The Chairman paid tribute to the hard work of the Council of Management and thanked them for their support, particularly those of the Executive Sub-Committee. Council meetings have been held using Microsoft Teams, with thanks to Peter Morley for hosting these.

The Chairman also thanked his late wife, Myra Allen, who edited the first of the last four issues of *Paddle Wheels*. In the short-term, at least, he had taken over. He thanked Gordon Wilson, who continues to arrange dispatch.

The Chairman thanked Richard Clammer for organising the AGM on behalf of the Bristol Channel Branch, and everyone for attending. He also thanked SS Great Britain for their hospitality. He concluded by noting that good things have continued to happen in the world of paddle steamers and the Society has continued to progress. This has only been possible with the support of members and with continuing support goods things will continue to happen well into the future.

Following the closure of the formal meeting there was an Open Forum:

John Boxall asked if plans of paddle steamers could be made available for online modellers. Could information also be made available to YouTube documentary makers.

David Green said making plans available would not be easy. File size is very large and there are not many ships for which there is a full set of drawings. About 6,000 drawings have been scanned and it takes two or three minutes to post one on the website. He added that he will be meeting a railway society that makes historic plans available to find out how they do this, but understands that they charge.

Peter Morley said that there is already a PSPS YouTube channel, to which people can refer.

No other matters were raised.