

Draft Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting of the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society held at the Mallard Suite, National Railway Museum, York at 13.30 on Saturday 26th October 2024.

Present: John Allen and 42 others.

1. Welcome

Adrian Sweeney, Chairman of the North of England and North Wales Branch, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave particular thanks to Branch Secretary, Helen Strachan, for making the arrangements for the AGM.

John Allen commended this welcome, and mentioned the raffle would be drawn at the interval, and thanked Duncan Nicholson for bringing along prints by his late father, John, which were gifted for sale for funds for *PS Waverley*.

He then invited the Society President, Douglas McGowan, to say a few words. Douglas welcomed everyone to York, which he said he knew very well due to his 34 year career with Terry's chocolate manufacturers. It had been a rollercoaster season for both paddlers, with a delayed start for *Kingswear Castle*, but she had made up for it in the following weeks, and looked simply gleaming when he saw her on a recent charter sail to Totnes. He noted we are fortunate to have the Dart Company as our caretakers. *Waverley* had an extraordinary record of no technical failures last year, but given the nature of running the ship, we knew that this was unusual and rather lucky. The difficulties that occurred on the south coast this year were matched by the extremely prompt and efficient communication with customers to offer refunds or alternatives and ensured repairs were carried out, and the ship returned to service, as soon as possible. That is the mark of a good organisation, which he applauded. The 8th August 50th anniversary handing over of the famous £1 went well, but the absolute highlight was sailing alongside *Kingswear Castle* up the River Dart, which he admitted brought a lump to the throat; who would imagine all these years on having two paddle steamers still sailing in 2024! He concluded by paying tribute and a huge thank you to all volunteers, in their various roles, for their amazing contribution to the success of the organisation and the steamers.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from 12 members.

3. Minutes of the 36th 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 ended 31st October 2023

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, with income and expenditure clearly shown on the pie charts in the AGM Booklet, where the majority of expenditure was in support of the ships.

A question, raised by Jeremy Gold, querying if all monies due for KC rebuild Phase 1 had been handed over, was answered in the affirmative.

The Chairman then expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to Martin Longhurst for his work on the accounts and for all his other work, and encyclopaedic knowledge, which ensured the Society complied with all legal and other matters.

6. *PS Kingswear Castle* Report

John Megoran was pleased to highlight the key events in *Kingswear Castle's* centenary year. Although there had been a moderately late start to the season, due to work required on other ships taking priority, the Dart Company had since run the business superbly with loadings of 400 per day. When issues arise the young team are able to deal with them. The meeting with *Waverley* at Dartmouth was the first since 2012, and thanks were given for *Waverley's* donation from the evening cruise to the Rebuild Appeal. The occasional trips to Totnes don't seem to attract large numbers to do these sails but if there is shown to be the demand these could be arranged.

Surprise was expressed as to how the 100 year mark had been reached, with the work done on the ship over the years highlighted, including the first rebuild back in 1960. Fundraising was required for Phase 2 work. However, by operating the ship this is the best way of generating revenue.

The 100th Birthday Party celebration on 26th September was enjoyed by many people who had helped with *Kingswear Castle* over the years. Great supporters and helpers were there, including Richard Turner, Keith French, Jimmy Addison, Peter Mole, and totalled 100 friends and associates. Steam engine '*Goliath*', also 100 years old, took part in the celebrations, carrying a large 100 on her smokebox, there was a picnic lunch and free bar, all donated by the Dart Company. A T.V. crew was also aboard to join in the festivities. A 'Star Team' had organised the day and were congratulated for the wonderful running of the event.

The work agenda to complete Phase 2 includes, refurbishing the saloon, work on decks forward of bridge and a steel strake to the bow.

John Megoran concluded by thanking PSPS for the £200k contribution of support, and a big thank you to the Dart Company for the way they run the ship as part of their operations with the railway and other ships. The future of the ship lies with the company and this couldn't be better.

The Chairman noted that he was aware that there that those hadn't yet travelled south to sail on her, but the combination of steam trains, a beautiful paddler and scenery was hard to beat. He thanked the Company for the joyous birthday party, and formally thanked John Megoran, the Paddle Steamer *Kingswear Castle* Trust and the Dartmouth and Steam and River Boat Company for running the ship so well. Work to be done on Phase 2 will commence during the winter 2025.

7. **PS Waverley Report**

Paul Semple reported on work to *Waverley* during 2023/2024 dry docking, where £234k had been spent, which included paddle box works, belting and bow moorings repairs. Other work included steel work in way of the ladies toilets, bow bollards were removed and replacement steel plinths installed, there was varnishing of forward windows, new Edward figureheads and refurbishment of crew cabins.

Highlights of the season included the appointment of a full-time engineer, Jamie Shorthouse, being awarded National Flagship of the Year by National Historic Ships UK, first ever sailings to Ullapool, Seacombe, Fowey, Dartmouth and Portland, with returns to Fort William, Holyhead & Eastbourne, and the meeting with *Kingswear Castle* for the first time on the River Dart. There were many sold out sailings (44) and 159,000 passenger journeys, which was better than 2023. There was lots of media coverage, (including front page photographs on *The Scotsman* when the ship moved to dry dock and her first sailing with passengers, something that had been repeated in recent seasons).

Items of note included good weather at the start of the season, a very good welcome at Ullapool, no charge for the tendering supplied at Fort William, the Fishguard sailing abandoned due to much rolling of the ship, the first sailing Bristol Channel to Bideford since the 1980's. Difficulties encountered included the windlass bedplate, the solution was to fit a much thicker plate, this cost 2 days of missed sailings on the Bristol Channel. Notable also was the trip Holyhead to Llandudno which it is thought hasn't been done before. The National Historic Ships UK representative presented the pennant for Flagship of the Year on this sailing. On the Clyde there was the occasional nice day but in the main it was dull, damp and windy. Due to various issues only one trip was taken round Ailsa Craig. The windlass cylinder block was found to have cracks which required it to be removed from the ship and sent to a specialist welding company in Derbyshire for the work to be done, with return by the captain to be back in service as soon as possible. Highlights were the 50th anniversary £1 sailing at Ardrossan, where fencing had to be removed to let passengers through, 18th August sailing past Helensburgh with a high level of support on the pier, and quite a reception at Penzance. At Yarmouth slight damage was done to the pier and it was then out of use. This has since been repaired. At Eastbourne she was front page news, *Waverley's* berth on Ryde Pier was taken out of service due to some fender damage. At Portsmouth the International Port area was put into use which was arranged late in the day; shuttle buses were used.

On departing the South Coast for the Thames *Waverley* had to return to Portsmouth due to a broken radius rod and other damage in the starboard paddle box. Welds had split and the Jenny Nettle Pedestal had moved. To repair this a section of belting was taken off to fix new securing bolts. This was three days work, which was done by the ships crew, with 2 welders assisting. Further welding works were required in the paddlebox on the Thames resulting in two further days cancelled. Although the cost of welders was only £800 for the second repair works, over £100k was lost in revenue. On the plus side there were some good evenings on the Thames, several drones taking and supplying pictures for use by WEL; steaming twice under Tower Bridge proved to be a good selling point. The Steam Tug day (the last on the Thames) proved to be the best revenue day (over £87k) for the season.

On the last sailing weekend back on the Clyde, MSP Paul Sweeney was present to give a framed notice to the crew and WEL where he and 20 MSP's had signed a

Scottish Parliamentary Motion to congratulate WEL on being named Glasgow's Favourite Business 2024. After the final sailings, two days were spent on a filming contract, with over 100 people on board, some crew members complete with costumes and wigs.

This year *Waverley* has had *Waverley* Ale on board, dog and cat items, the 50 Years in Preservation book selling well and going to reprint, the Riverside Museum including some *Waverley* items on display, and the railway style posters have attracted attention.

To conclude the year, after *Waverley* was voted Glasgow's Favourite Business 2024, won by public vote, the office staff were able to celebrate this on 3rd October at the awards ceremony.

In summary, *Waverley* operated for 125 days, with 13 cancelled sailings, 2 due to the weather and 11 caused by technical issues with the windlass and starboard paddle wheel. 159,572 passenger journeys were recorded, compared with 157,402 in 2023. Total revenue was £4.8m (£4.6m 2023), made up of £3.4m fares, £1.1m catering and £273k from the shop. Provisional cost figures (to the end of September) included £673k crew wages and costs, £627k fuel (full season), £356K catering and shop purchases, £114k renewals and repairs, £183k berthing charges, £182k coaches and £153k marketing and printing.

Marketing had again been very strong this year. Social media has a very good pull, along with the press advertising, press releases, email addresses with some 120k addresses held, T.V. adverts, press trips, content marketing with leaflets included in newspapers. Vintage railway-style posters had proved very popular.

Looking to 2024-25 refit work, survey items include the main engine HP, aft hull, and paddle wheels. Other works include replacing the boiler burners, the forward deck shelter roof, aft starboard promenade deck repairs, removing the engine room hatch and work on the starboard paddle box fascia beams. Work had commenced on some initial deck work jobs immediately after the completion of the filming contract this week.

The report concluded with a YouTube video, similar to last year, giving a statistical summary of the season with various highlights, ranging from 9,375 fish and chips sold, 67 ports and piers visited, 1,392 hours steamed, 20 times under Tower Bridge, to finish with... just one seagoing paddle steamer.

On completion of the report a question was asked from the floor concerning the situation at Portsmouth and future usage. Paul Semple replied that there were ongoing discussions on this matter.

The Chairman remarked that as last year was such a remarkable year for *Waverley* it was highly unlikely that it would be repeated this year, but despite the weather being rather unkind, and various difficulties, it was still another remarkable season. He thanked Paul Semple, the captain, officers and crew and all those involved and employed by *Waverley* Excursions Ltd and *Waverley* Steam Navigation Ltd. for making it happen under very trying circumstances. This year proved that we should never take these things for granted. He looked forward to seeing everyone on board next year.

8. *PS Maid of The Loch*

Iain Robertson, Chairman, Loch Lomond Steamship Company, opened by remarking that he had now been involved with *Maid of the Loch* for twelve years; he originally thought he would be working with her for just a short time.

Despite high hopes of returning the Maid to the loch she has stayed on the slipway in 2024. They have a team of volunteer guides who have continued with the hard hat tours, these remain popular, but it is still a challenge to attract visitors to a static attraction even with the slipway engine in steam once a month. The running costs for this also pose a challenge.

The hard hat tours are a good source of income, and merchandise sales onsite and online are growing steadily, as is the social media presence. However they would welcome tips on how to convert 13,000 facebook page 'likes' into £s. Iain Robertson thanked support by *Waverley*, when good sales were made when Maid volunteers manned a sales table on board. Despite the Company having a team of helpers, more volunteers are required for guiding and public facing activities.

They benefit from having their own operational slipway, unlike other historic ships, but this does come with a cost, requiring a lot of regular maintenance to keep it in good working order.

During the winch house's annual inspection it was noted that the boiler would need re-tubing either this year or next. Given its importance to the Maid Project the Board agreed to commit funding for this and launched a Re-Tube Boiler Appeal with the hope to have this done over the winter, with an approximate cost of £25k.

Progress on the repairs to the hull has been thwarted by a few problems including difficulties securing certified welders for the work. They have been a few false starts but they now have a qualified welder, Calmsail Services, who is local to the site and capable of doing the work to Bureau Veritas (BV) standards. The hull project, which has been funded with a grant from PSPS and Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, is now making good progress and hopefully on budget. With any project there are unknowns, and this includes being told by BV that more mouseholes are needed, to permit continuous welding of adjacent plates (removing the presence of heavy frames which will remove heat during the welding process). The hope is to complete the main section of the hull repair next month. Then an assessment will be done to see what funding is required to repair the bow section and the galley floor. There is optimism that the funds will stretch to this.

Delays to the hull have unfortunately had a knock-on effect on the progress of the paddle wheels and starboard paddle box rebuilding until funding had been clarified and the shortfall sourced. It is estimated that approximately £35k is required to complete the work. In the meantime work on the paddle box has been commissioned and there is a replacement spring beam in stock.

There has also been ongoing restoration of the steering engine. The work has been carried out by VanTech Engineering, with £8k spent to date, and further funding is available for this. Other works carried out by the dedicated team of volunteers include painting the engine room, and other assorted tasks.

Looking forward to 2025, incremental work on repair and restoration will be done, with the aim to gradually work to getting the Maid sailing again, however there seem to be little opportunities for large funding to be made available in the future for major pieces of work.

In answer to a question from Gordon Stewart whether it was correct that £4m was required to get her sailing again, and what the Plan was bearing in mind that an NHLF bid had failed six years ago, Iain Robertson explained the requirement as well as being more community orientated, was about 'capacity'. This meant having a Project management structure with a Project Manager Plan in place. They do now have more idea what NHLF need, but it is rather a chicken and egg situation, with money needed upfront to progress.

(Note: 'Bureau Veritas is a company that provides testing, inspection and certification services for products, people, and systems. Their services help clients ensure that their products, processes, infrastructure and assets meet standards and regulations.')

The Chairman thanked Iain Robertson for his report and recommended a visit to Balloch to see progress achieved to date. He also wished to record his thanks to John Beveridge, who did so much to save the Maid, and has been awarded an MBE.

9 Other Paddlers

The Chairman reported that for most of the other paddlers there was nothing to note in addition what had been said last year.

For **Medway Queen**, he explained that Pam Bathurst attends our online Council meetings, the ship boasts new toilets, part funded by PSPS, and all were encouraged to visit the ship if in the area. Some of *Waverley's* crew visited on an off-service day. She, too, celebrated her centenary this year, and the Chair was pleased to attend the celebrations in April.

10. Archive

David Green reported that it had been another busy year in the archive. As well as receiving donations, cataloguing and scanning it has been a year of seats, premises and liaising with others.

Donations included three seats, one from a River Dart paddler, possibly the first *Kingswear Castle*, (1904), one from possibly the North British Steamer *Waverley* (1899), and a buoyancy seat from *Bournemouth Queen*.

Other donations included engine control levers from *Consul*, a collection of drawings of *Caledonia*, from Douglas McGowan, and various other small items.

As reported before, storage has become an increasing problem, with various options looked at for additional storage premises as capacity has now been reached. All the options come with major cost implications. In recent months negotiations have been entered into with Chatham Dockyard and the decision has been made to take on an additional storage area in the dockyard. However, doubling the storage capacity means doubling the costs. The additional costs will be taken from the Archive Development Fund, thought to be in the region of £8k per annum required.

In the current premises there has been one very large electricity bill (about £1,200 for a quarter) and David Green reported that he had done some investigations and negotiated with the dockyard regarding the old night storage heaters. They agreed with his findings and have installed some new

programmable heaters, which hopefully will reduce the heating costs. The existing premises lease comes up for renewal in May next year and negotiations have begun regarding these.

A visit to a steam festival at Hollycombe Steam Museum, near Liphook, in June was a chance to view and discuss a possible collaboration regarding *Caledonia's* engine which they have in storage. The aim is to make it accessible to visitors. It seems the Museum are keen to pursue this, and this will be helped with the aid of the drawing plans provided by Douglas McGowan.

The museum loans agreements are currently being updated. An oil painting of *Galatea* by George Mears has recently been placed on loan to Trinity House.

There have been various purchases during the year, including collections of old negatives and Clyde sailing handbills from the Williamson White Funnel fleet.

Richard Clammer and Mike Tedstone continue with cataloguing work. Nearly three quarters of the catalogued handbill collection has been scanned, and the majority of the P&A Campbell collection and the south coast collections have been completed.

Email enquires continue to be answered as and when they arise.

David Green concluded by giving thanks to Richard Clammer, Mike Tedstone, Richard Turner and David Lawrence for their invaluable help with the Archive.

The Chairman formally thanked David Green, and his dedicated team (including David's long suffering wife, Heather), who have ensured the archive continues to develop. It is a tribute to David and the team that people continue to entrust us with safe keeping their precious heirlooms.

11 Receipt of Reports

Helen Strachan proposed and Douglas McGowan seconded that the Reports of the Council of Management and Reporting Accountant and the Society's Financial Statements for the period ended 31 October 2023 be accepted. This was approved unanimously.

12. Membership of the Council of Management

It was noted that Peter Morley had been re-elected unopposed to the Council of Management.

13. Auditors

Paul Semple proposed and John Beveridge 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 Chairman and the Council of Management, and Branch Committees for their work for the Society.

The Chairman gave thanks to Council members for their hard work, particularly the Executive Sub-Committee, including Peter Morley for hosting the Council meetings held by Teams. On a subject close to his heart, the Chair thanked the kind comments he continues to receive about *Paddle Wheels*, and thanked Gordon Wilson for making all the arrangements for inserts and its dispatch.

The Chairman also thanked Helen Strachan for organising the AGM on behalf of the North of England and North Wales Branch, the National Railway Museum for their hospitality and everyone for attending. He concluded by noting that good things continue in the world of paddle steamers and the Society has continued to progress. This has only been possible because of your support, donations and continued membership, and with your continued support, good things will continue to happen well into the future.

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

The Chairman read out a message that had been sent by Victor Gray, which he had requested be read out:

In a few day's time the Society will be 65 years old. Three months after that, I will have been a member for 65 years. I have formed the view that the PSPS is now better managed at both national and branch level than it has ever been and I would like to express my thanks to all those who have made this possible. Both KC and Waverley were acquired when I was an officer of the society and we have good reason to be proud of what has been achieved.

The happy atmosphere on board both ships is often remarked upon but I would like to commend the atmosphere ashore. This has been the worst summer for weather post-Covid and staff have had to deal with breakdowns, refunds, amendments, and sudden unavailability of piers. They have done so with cheerfulness and courtesy and I would like us to publicly recognise the great work done by those in the background.

Finally, the staff on ship and ashore came together to provide us with a memorable day on 26 September to celebrate the centenary of KC. A splendid way to end the year.

Thank you and best wishes to you all.

There was also a question sent in by Philip Cade:

What actions are proposed to encourage more members to stand for Council and Branch Committees? It is now very obvious that the age profile of the Council members is unsustainable for any long term future and probably even worse for some Branches. This needs to be addressed promptly.

The Chairman asked those Council members that could, without using sticks, to stand up! The Chair now addressed the matter seriously and said he thought the PSPS Council is at full strength, and that in reality it is retired people who have the time to devote to activities such as ours, and in the short to medium term there is not going to be a shortage of people. The best way to attract younger

people into active participation is to get them sailing on *Waverley* as children, and WEL has initiatives to do that. He said he hoped he didn't sound complacent but experience shows that parachuting people in rarely works.

No other matters were raised.