

# BUCKINGHAM CANAL SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1072924

Draft Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting,  
Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014, at Buckingham Community Centre

## **Present:**

**(Trustees)** Athina Beckett (Chairman), Vernon Draper (Treasurer), Terry Cavender, Stuart Cummins, Richard Lewis, Rob Oldham, Anthony Smith-Roberts

**(Minutes):** Lesley Abrams

61 other members attended. Total attendance: 69

- 1) The Meeting opened at 7.20pm with a short video from Buckingham University of the Bourton Meadow Open Day, which was followed by the Chairman's welcome to the meeting.

## **2) Apologies for Absence**

**Invited guests:** Lord Boswell of Aynho, Lord & Lady Scott, Iain Stewart MP, Bryan Weston-Thomas (President U3A), Tim Coghlan (Braunston Marina), James Clifton (CRT), Cllr Mike Smith, Mark Vallance (BBOWT), Miriam Tedder (CRT), Alex Thornton (Parish Clerk), Cllr Sue Renshell, John Highmore (CRT), Simon Henry (CRT), Andrea Leadsom MP

**Members:** Carolyn Cummings, Jeremy Williams, Lynda Payton, Ros & Jeremy Woodford, Anthony Smith, Dianne & Andy Witts, Eric Young

- 3) **Minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> AGM held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2013:** Were confirmed

- 4) **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

## **5) Chairman's Report:**

Before presenting her report the Chairman warmly extended special thanks to the committee, Helen Preston and the Cosgrove Festival team, and all volunteers.

This will be my last report as Chairman as I'm standing down from this position, but shall be remaining on the Committee and continuing in my role as Work Party Leader. I feel it is always a good policy to go out on a 'high' and 2013 must count as that, with the task of re-watering the 400 metres of canal at Bourton Meadow being about the most important achievement since the beginning of the Society! For information I joined the BCS Committee in 1996 and became Chairman in 2006, taking over from the very popular Chairman Tony Collins. In my time as Chairman and Trustee of the Society I feel I have helped progress the Society's work and played a leading part in some of the progress that has taken place, including gaining access to work on the site at Little Hill Farm and persuading BBOWT to allow us to work on their site at Hyde lane and becoming a BBOWT Warden for them and at a still later date helping with the task of taking over the lease from them on this site.

Getting the canal in water at Bourton Meadow was a real milestone in our history and one that the public agreed with as 250 of them came to our Open Day on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October to watch Speaker of the House of Commons and Patron of the Society John Bercow give the opening speech in a very novel way from a canal boat and the scissors to cut the ribbon were brought to him by a canoe! This seemed to go down well with the public who enjoyed this extra piece of entertainment! . The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Buckingham, several Buckingham councillors and the Head of AVDC were also in attendance and as well as our volunteers and BCS members, a great many of the Buckingham public joined us as well.

We are also very grateful to WREN, Aylesbury Vale Community Chest and Buckingham County Council, Local Area Forum for the grants given to the Society without which this work could not have taken place.

I would also like to thank the landowner Nick Hawes for his continued support over the years to the Society

Whilst contractors laid the lining in the canal bed our volunteers have contributed over 1,816 hours of work to the project, and this includes planting over 5,000 aquatic plants along the canal bank and 100 sapling in gaps in the hedge next to the towpath.

### **Cosgrove Festival**

Our annual festival which took place over the weekend of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> July was brought forward a week last year so as not to clash with the IWA National Waterways Festival being held at Cassiobury Park. Here I would like to thank our **Festival Committee** who did such a grand job and organised one of the best ever festivals, so a big thanks goes to them for all their hard work. I would also like to thank all those who came to help on stalls and with the lock ransom, and the volunteers who help set up the festival site on the Friday and most importantly helped take down everything at the end.

The fish and chip supper again proved to be very popular with about fifty people staying on into the evening where a very successful raffle was held and thanks must go to the musicians who provided the evening entertainment. So thanks to Martin and friends and please come again this year! About £1,500 was raised for the Society but almost as important everyone who attended seemed to have enjoyed themselves; perhaps the Buckingham Canal Water beer on sale for the first time helped!

### **Heritage Open Day**

The Heritage Open Day at Bourton Meadow on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September went extremely well, with about 150 people turning up to speak to our volunteers, hear about our future plans and take a stroll along the towpath. This year we also had a stall at the 'Village at War' festival at Stoke Bruerne over the same weekend so extra volunteers were needed to cover both events as the Stoke Bruerne festival is always a good fund raising weekend for us.

### **Committee Membership**

Rob Oldham and Stuart Cummins were co-opted onto the committee and Jim McIlroy has stood down from the Committee but remains as our Archive officer. Our Treasurer for many years Vernon Draper is standing down at the AGM; Vernon will be sadly missed as his knowledge and record keeping and dedication to the Society over the years has been part of our success. Due to pressure of work Richard Lewis has also decided to stand down, but will continue in his role as Navigator Editor for the next few months as well carrying on with his publicity work. I know a lot of you have praised his work on the Navigator and the Committee wishes him well in the future.

### **Proposed Changes to Constitution**

We are proposing to change the structure of the Society to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) which will require us to re-write the constitution. Rob Oldham will be giving a full report and details about how this will affect the Society elsewhere in the Agenda.

### **Buckingham Community Wildlife Project Meeting**

BCS was invited to join this group and I attended their first meeting on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May at the Town Council Chambers, Buckingham. Other members of this group include Ruth Newell, Chair and Mayor of Buckingham, Terry Bloomfield, Derrick Isham and Lee Phillip from Buckingham Council, Ted Farmer of Buckingham Society and Jenny Manning of the Buckingham Railway Conservation Group.

### **Buckingham Table Beer Festival**

This Beer Festival took place over the weekend of 21<sup>st</sup>- 23<sup>rd</sup> June at the Woolpack pub in Buckingham. The festival is run each year to support local and national charities. Last year they selected one National charity and two local ones, Buckingham Railway Walk and the Buckingham Canal Society, as their chosen charities. At the Open Day celebrations on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October they presented BCS with a cheque for £800.

### **Bric a- Brac Stall**

Our bric-a-brac stall has attended:-

- the Railway Walk Conservation day on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March
- the North Buckingham Spring Fair on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April
- Stoke Bruerne Canal Festival 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June
- Lionhearts Cruising Club Festival, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June

- Braunston Historic Boats Festival 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> June
- Village at War festival 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September
- Buckingham Community Fair on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December.

At each festival we have raised funds, promoted BCS and recruited new members.

### **MK Community Foundation Car Raffle**

Following our success in selling more raffles tickets than any other group last year, Milton Keynes Community Foundation asked us to help promote the recent Community Raffle. I was asked to speak to several other groups taking part in the raffle and talk about how we achieved our success, and here I was able to say that the majority of our success was down to our volunteers being prepared to help sell tickets in the City Centre, and to sell them to their families and friends!. We were also invited to attend the launch of the car raffle with three of us dressed in Victorian Boater costumes, a photo of which appeared in the Milton Keynes Citizen.

### **Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan**

We would like to thank Buckingham Town Council along with the residents and various community groups who have contributed to this consultation as it has progressed. The final version of the Plan will go through a local referendum. If more than 50% of votes are positive the plan will be accepted and become the basis for planning development in Buckingham. So with the positive feedback we have been receiving from local residents, particularly after the Open Day, we are hoping for a positive outcome which will further help with the restoration going forward.

#### **Development of a Canal Area:**

- Permission will be considered for development ... only where development would be to benefit the development of the former and current Canal area as a working waterway, tourist attraction, provision of tourist accommodation, or to develop the area for green space, sports provision or leisure.
- Permission will be considered for development as outlined in the policy providing that it adheres to other policies within the Plan.
- Permission will not be considered for any development which would be to the detriment of the existing canal or the former original route of the canal.
- Any development of the canal will also include the provision of a towpath which will be large enough to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users with the aim of creating a cycle / walking route alongside the canal towards Cosgrove.

We have also ongoing work with Aylesbury Vale and South Northants District Councils to adopt similar planning considerations for the canal.

### **Social Events**

The annual Cosgrove festival is our major social event apart from the AGM but our monthly meeting on the third Friday of each month in the Two Brewers pub in Thornborough is also proving to be very popular, as it the newly formed BCS Craft group which meets on the last Thursday of each month. Thanks to the very generous donation from one of our members we were able to charter, free of charge, the new Bedford & Milton Keynes Community Boat for a very successful day out on the river Great Ouse in Bedford for members and friends on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Future Plans**

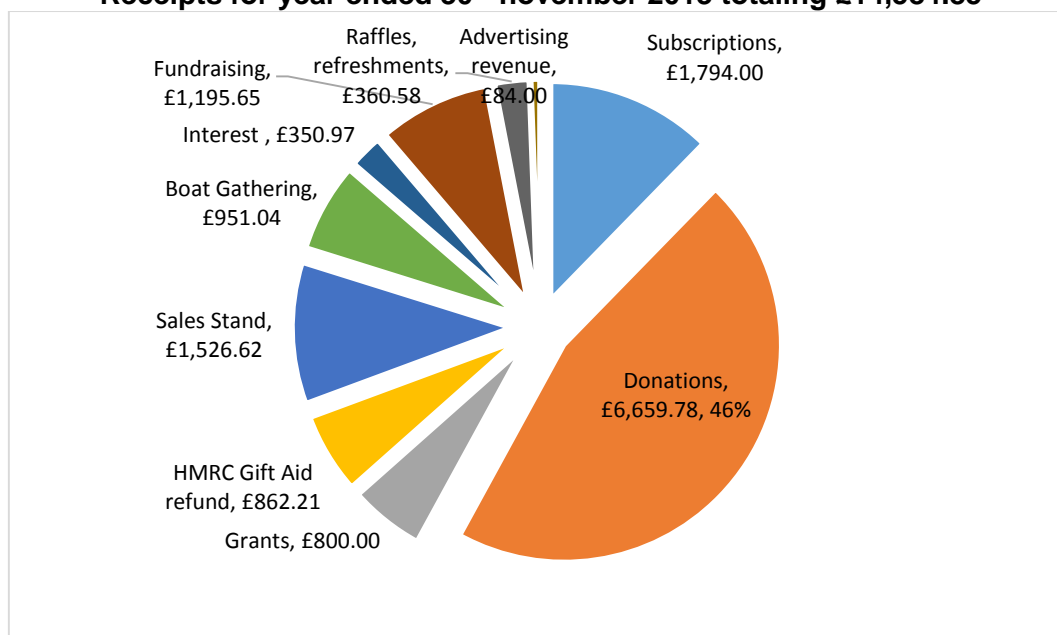
Having restored the Bourton Meadow site we are now embarking on the Cosgrove end. Last year we had a full geotechnical report on a section of canal near the A5 confirming it was safe to restore. We are now preparing to enter into a formal lease with a local landowner to enable us to access the Cosgrove site with our heavier plant. Once this is formally resolved, work will be carried out by our volunteers to re-water this section of canal. Bunds will be created at 150m to 200m intervals and then each section will be re-watered. We had hoped to carry out this work early in 2014 but now feel a more realistic start date will be nearer the middle of the year.

Favourable discussions are ongoing and opportunities continue to emerge regarding the restoration of the rest of the route. This includes provisional agreement with the Highways Agency for crossing under the A5. Also a potential scheme with the EA to make use of the former quarry site as balancing lakes providing headwater for the canal and new canal section providing a replacement to the land lost through development in Deanshanger, which would benefit from the canal restoration as a linear flood store.

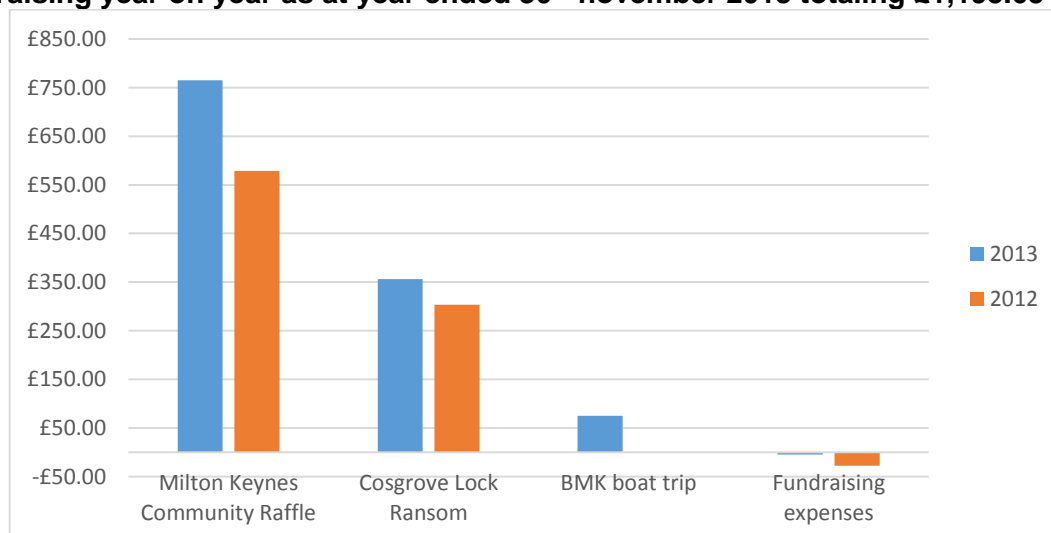
## 6) Treasurer's Report Year ending 30.11.2013:

With the achievements the Society has made this year it shouldn't come as any great surprise that, for the first time ever, our reserves have shown a fall. But what I think is impressive is that they've only fallen by less than £1200, which does point to another successful year of fundraising and for donations and grants. These are all listed in the annual accounts on the pages following this report, but it is worth mentioning the effort that has gone into achieving some of these including Athina & Jonathan's bric-a-brac stall, the Cosgrove Festival and the selling of MK Community Foundation raffle tickets - again led by Athina. Many members have played their part in helping to raise funds and our thanks go to them. Members have also been generous in their donations, and these donations are normally boosted by Gift Aid, which increases their value by 25%.

### Receipts for year ended 30<sup>th</sup> november 2013 totaling £14,584.85

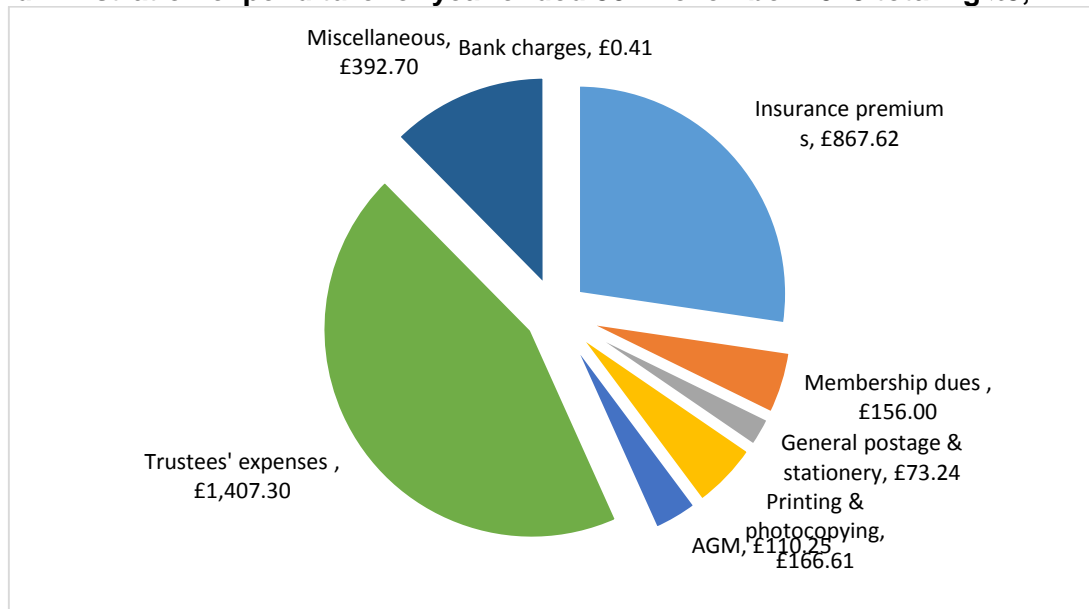


### Fundraising year on year as at year ended 30<sup>th</sup> november 2013 totaling £1,195.65 in 2013



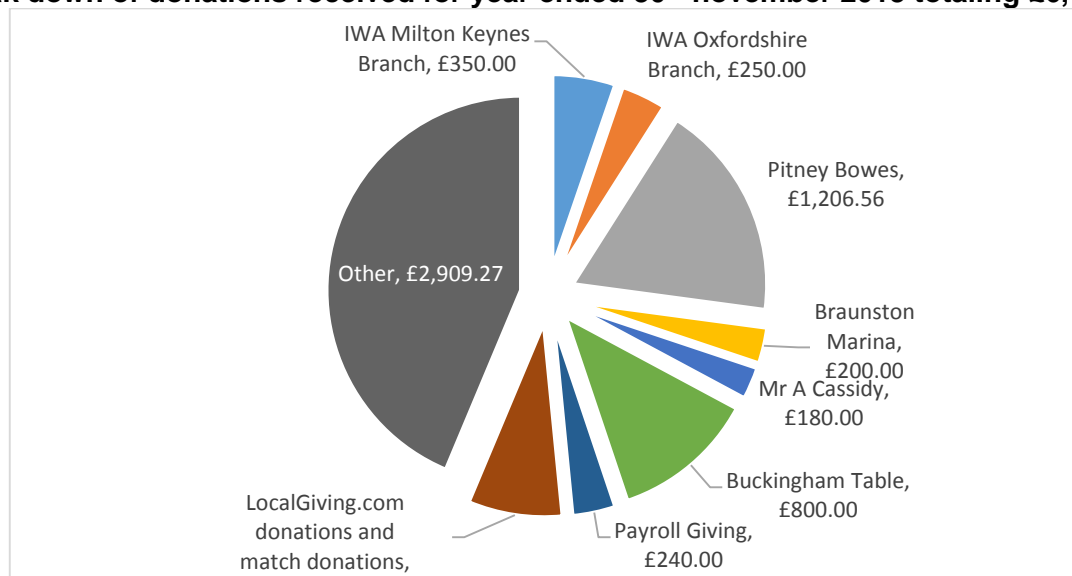
There has also been a large increase in the payment of trustee expenses this year, but I can report that these have all been donated back to the Society in the form of gift aided donations, which helps to explain the substantial increase in the Gift Aid refund from HMRC this year.

### Administration expenditure for year ended 30<sup>th</sup> november 2013 totaling £3,174.13



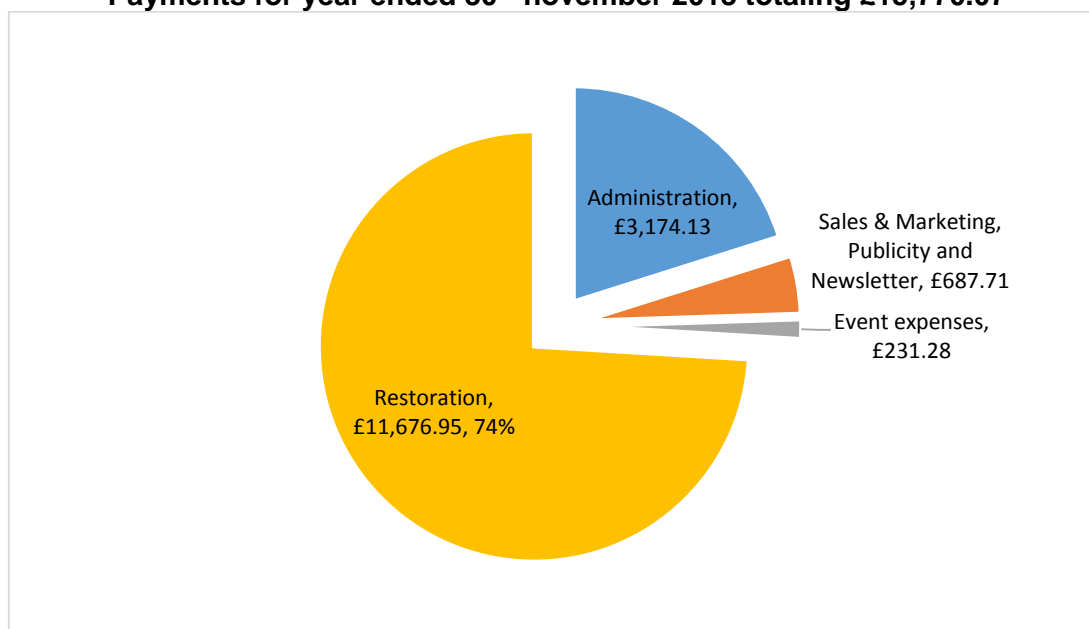
Donations from outside the Society include those from the MK and Oxford branches of the IWA, Pitney Bowes, Braunston Marina and Buckingham Table. We are most grateful to these organisations, and for grants received from Santander UK and DHL UK Foundation.

### Break down of donations received for year ended 30<sup>th</sup> november 2013 totaling £6,659.78

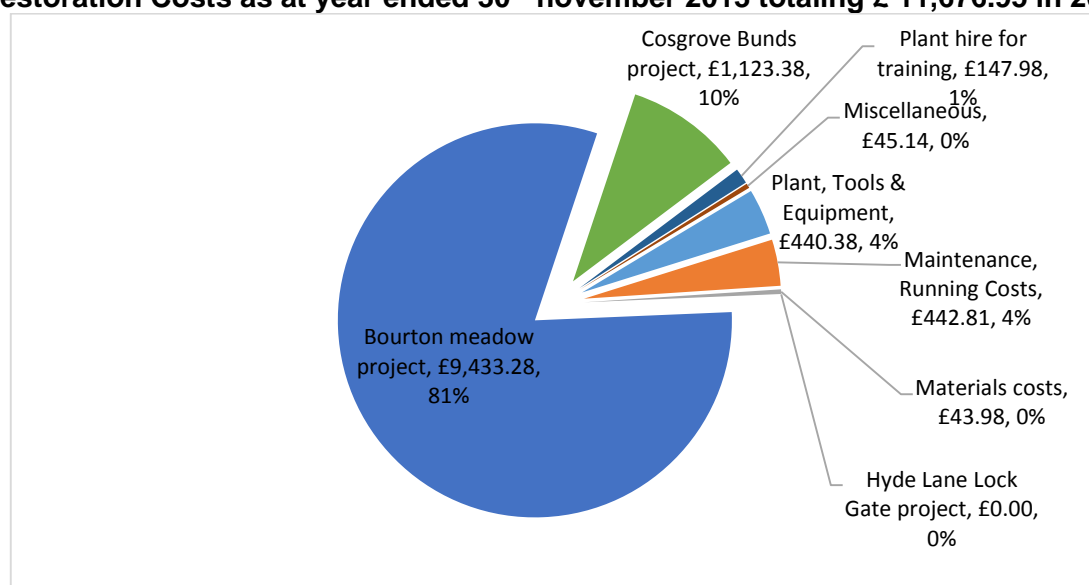


The accounts do not tell the whole story of the Bourton Meadow re-watering project. We received a substantial grant of around £70,000 from WREN, with seed funding from Aylesbury Vale Community Chest. Payment was made by WREN direct to our contractor, Water Lines Solutions, and so did not pass through our books. This has advantages when it comes to accounting rules set by the Charities Commission. For those who don't know, to qualify for a grant from WREN it is necessary for a third party to fund 10% of the value of the grant, and we are not allowed to use our own funds for this purpose. This is where we are indebted to Aylesbury Vale Community Chest without whose support we would have been unable to unlock the grant from WREN. We also received a grant from Buckinghamshire County Council Local Area Forum to extend the footpath leading up to the restored section of canal, but as this wasn't received until December it will appear in next year's accounts.

### Payments for year ended 30<sup>th</sup> november 2013 totaling £15,770.07



### Restoration Costs as at year ended 30<sup>th</sup> november 2013 totaling £ 11,676.95 in 2013



We have now set aside £20,000 for the re-watering project at Cosgrove which we are hopeful will be carried out in 2014 and which we are anticipating will be funded from our own reserves.

I also wish to record the following donations in kind, from organisations that have provided us with valuable services rather than direct financial contributions:-

H&R ChemPharm UK	TerraSeal for lining Cosgrove bunds	£ 3,500
Canal & River Trust	Soil testing at Cosgrove	£ 456
Aylesbury Vale DC	Map data for canal route	£10,000
Salesforce.com	Project Management software	£10,200
ServiceMax	Project Management software	£ 5,000
Graham Smith	Materials storage	£ 600

Finally, I wish to extend the Society's thanks and appreciation to Alan Cooper of New Bradwell Heritage Association for carrying out an external scrutiny of the accounts.

Vernon Draper, Treasurer 2 January 2014

## **7) Adoption of Accounts:**

**Proposal:** That the accounts for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013 be adopted

**Proposer:** Geoff Wood      **Seconder:** Bernard Morton

The proposal was accepted unanimously

## **8) Work Party and Project Management Group Report:**

Having announced the details of the WREN grant at last year's AGM, 2013 has been an exciting time for the BCS work parties. The grant allowed us to go ahead with plans to re-water part of the canal at Bourton Meadow, near Buckingham. One of the reason we gained the WREN grant was the input by our volunteers and here I can tell you that last year our volunteers worked over 4,400 hours on our four site, with most of the work being carried out at Bourton Meadow because of the WREN grant

At Bourton Meadow our volunteers prepared the site so that our contractor could start work. On 24<sup>th</sup> June the contractor, Water-Lines Solutions, moved onto site to start the work of preparing the canal bed so that it could be re-lined with Bentomat. This work went even better than expected with the contractor finishing early. The re-lining work wasn't expected to be completed until August but was finished in early July, which allowed us to go ahead with our plans to re-water this section of canal. After the contractor had finished our volunteers installed coir mats along the canal bank to give a soft edge to the canal bed and then 5,000 non-invasive aquatic water plants were planted.

We have also re-planted the gaps in the hedge on the towpath side, filling them in with over 100 hawthorn saplings; the canal banks have been seeded and the grass is growing well; and on the far bank a wild flower mix was used as well which should make the whole area look great in spring and summer this year.

I hope a good many of you were able to attend our Open Day on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October when you would have seen for yourselves the progress. So far this year over 1,816 volunteer hours have been worked on this site and as stated earlier with over 4,400 hours worked altogether on all our sites last year. A lot of extra work was carried out along the footpath to get it into a suitable state for the Open Day and this has included working with dumper trucks, tracked wheelbarrows and then the old fashioned way with ordinary wheelbarrows. As usual some volunteers enjoyed trying out the tracked ones and others felt it worked better with the basic wheelbarrow.

Lee Phillip, Buckingham Green Spaces Officer, arranged for Community Service Volunteers to join us on several occasions and they helped with the footpath work allowing our volunteer to concentrate on other jobs.

Whilst most of the work last year was carried out at Bourton Meadow this has meant less time spent at our other sites, but on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September we had the largest ever group of people to join a BCS work party at the Nature Reserve site. 31 volunteers from Santander joined us and with 8 of our own volunteers this made a total of 39 people on site. Because of the increased number of people on site we were able to carry out a large amount of work, which included painting the lock gates, re-pointing the bridge area, weeding along the footpath and trimming back the hedge.

Team building days have gone well last year and as well as Santander who came twice we have also had two visits from the EA and other groups from McAfee and Price Waterhouse. And I mustn't forget the pupils from Furze Down School who were taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme; they have been working on site from January last year and doing a splendid job and they are planning to join us again this year.

Although most of the action took place at Bourton Meadow, Cosgrove wasn't forgotten. As well as adopting the canal and lock, BCS has been given permission by CRT for test trials to be carried out to re-water this section of canal.

Training sessions for our volunteers to learn to drive excavators and dumper trucks were arranged over the weekend of the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> March and a training weekend was held at Bourton Meadow. Terry Cavender ran this weekend and hired in an excavator and a tracked wheeled dumper truck. With the help of Dave Wedd

from BITM WRG, several of our volunteers are now qualified to drive both vehicles. This was a requirement from CRT before our volunteers would be allowed to work on site at Cosgrove

Our work parties have now moved back to the Nature Reserve site where a considerable amount of winter maintenance work will be carried out and as this site is also on the North Ouse Valley Way we still get plenty of people walking along and inquiring about future plans, informing us about how much they feel we have achieved over the last year and wishing us good luck with our future plans. For information our work parties continue over the whole year taking place on alternate Thursdays and on the second Sunday of each month. Anyone who feels they would enjoy this type of work, no skills or experience necessary, would be very welcome to join us, we always make new volunteers very welcome. Or if your company runs team building days do get them to make contact with me as I'm sure we could arrange a visit!

#### **Athina Beckett, Work Party Organiser.**

The majority of this year's detailed achievements have already been covered in the reports elsewhere. I would add that it is however important to recognise the additional work that has gone into all of the many hours discussion, email, debate, research, planning, liaison, partnership meetings and many other aspects of the restoration work. During 2013 there was an even greater amount of project management activity than the previous years. This focused mostly on Bourton Meadow as well as the CRT approvals for Cosgrove and the building of the first bund. As ever, a significant amount of this work is re-usable for other construction projects and can be utilised as a template for future projects although needs to be updated for changes in procedures, legislation and other requirements placed upon us by partners.

Whilst I have led this work it has been a **huge team effort**. This has been supported by various people both from BCS and partners including Environment Agency, Canal & River Trust, Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckingham Town Council to name but a few. The ongoing support from landowners and local residents as well as councillors and the waterways community has been invaluable in helping with the 'backroom' work undertaken to help with the achievements. Despite some of the technical complexity, all of the trustees have embraced the necessary rigors from project management, health & safety and various other aspects. I must make specific mention of Richard Lewis for acting as assistant Site Leader on the various Category B work parties throughout the year.

**All this work can only be carried out with the continued support of our volunteer work parties and the people who support them. Extra help is always needed so if you think you can help please contact Athina, Terry or one of the other committee members.**

The project folders and associated documents needed to support these projects will be available at the AGM including the WRG Practical Restoration Handbook and the Site Health & Safety files. Some of these documents are also available on the web-site at <http://www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/resources/>

In summary, we could not achieve what we have without the help of our members, supporters, partners and volunteers. I look forward to continuing to make further progress towards the overall restoration.

#### **Terry Cavender, Trustee & Programme Manager for Projects and Partnerships**

##### **9) Publicity and Communications Group Report:**

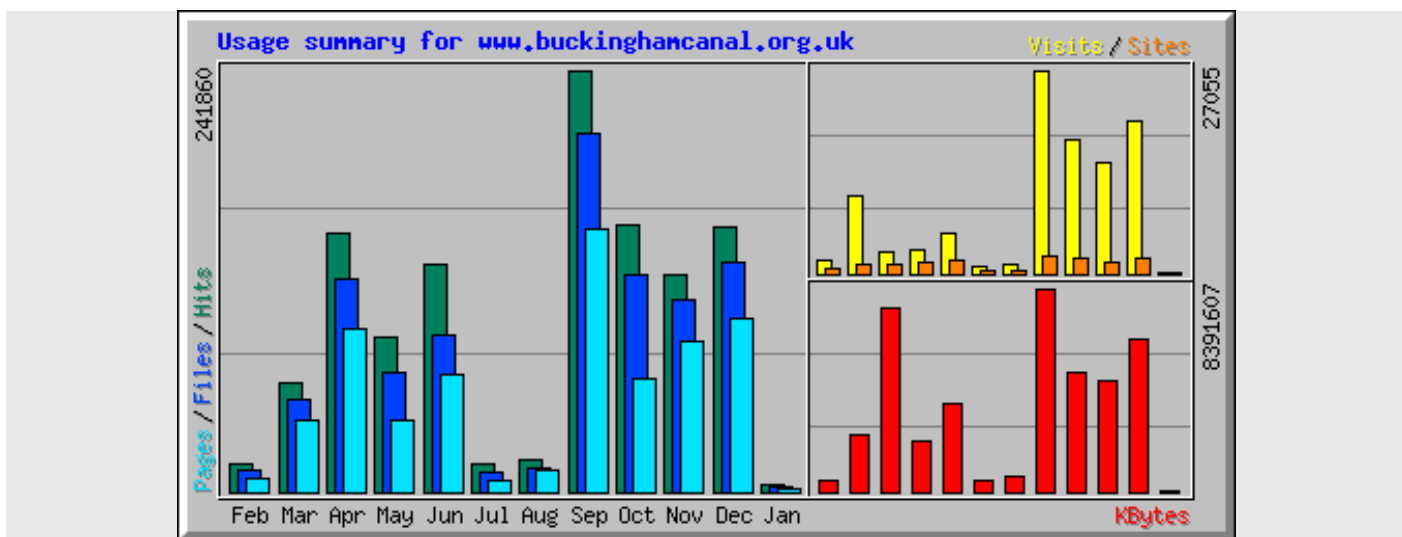
Before presenting his report, Richard Lewis explained that it was a suitable time for him to stand down from committee and that he would be handing over the various aspects of his role to others in the coming months.

It has been a busy year and the Publicity and Communication team have been working hard behind the scenes to support all the events including the Cosgrove Festival, the Bourton meadow heritage day and re-opening, the AGM and of course the newsletter. Thanks go to all on the team or who have worked with us, together we have made this truly successful year. I am very proud of all we have done to raise the profile of the Society through publicity and the image re-design.



The evolution of the logo has been well received and I would like to thank all involved with a special mention for Ness Whight who did a lot of the graphic design work for the logo and website rebranding. Ness has now withdrawn from the team due to other pressures on her time. I also must mention Ian Matson for his invaluable assistance with various projects since he became involved with the Society this year.

The revamped website has also been well received and well used. Alan Maynard is continuing to help us with some of the technical aspects as we aim to make the maintenance effort a lot less manual. As can be seen from the below analysis, visitors to the site were at a high point in September and October which obviously coincide with the Bourton Meadow publicity.



Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
<a href="#">Dec 2013</a>	4887	4249	3194	657	2205	6282641	20378	99033	131730	151510
<a href="#">Nov 2013</a>	5666	5026	3901	667	1470	4590283	14688	85827	110572	124672
<a href="#">Oct 2013</a>	7291	5931	3090	852	2080	4919970	17893	64892	124564	153111
<a href="#">Sep 2013</a>	8062	6831	5013	901	2286	8391607	27055	150419	204946	241860
<a href="#">Aug 2013</a>	5967	4753	4129	442	374	602145	1326	12389	14260	17901
<a href="#">Jul 2013</a>	5382	3916	2272	349	433	505665	1048	6818	11750	16148
<a href="#">Jun 2013</a>	4362	3014	2234	182	1801	3655726	5479	67045	90431	130877
<a href="#">May 2013</a>	2865	2227	1330	104	1394	2097709	3230	41246	69061	88840
<a href="#">Apr 2013</a>	5511	4514	3478	112	1333	7567474	3035	93932	121891	148815
<a href="#">Mar 2013</a>	2964	2541	1952	497	1312	2364512	10439	41008	53373	62251
<a href="#">Feb 2013</a>	558	432	266	66	732	469509	1871	7468	12101	15633
<b>Totals</b>						<b>41526016</b>	<b>106670</b>	<b>671705</b>	<b>947399</b>	<b>1155220</b>

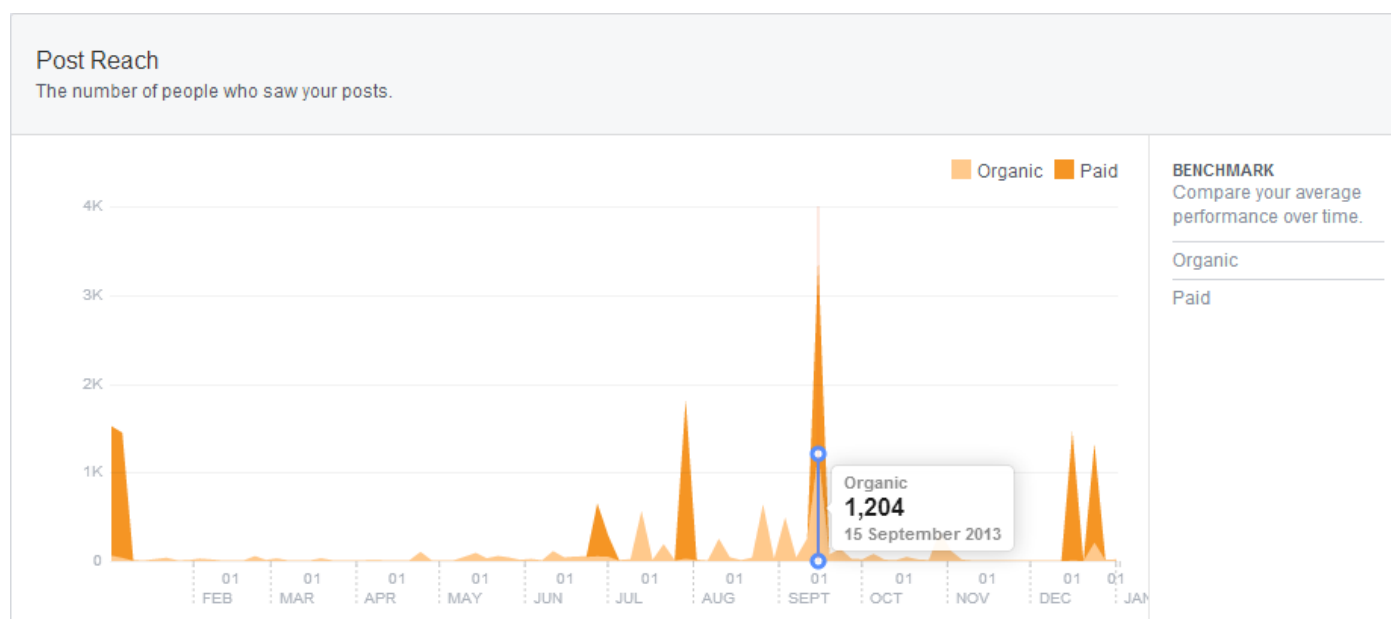
Just for clarity, the best metric to look at from the above is in our opinion visits. Bear in mind some of these will be search engines and analysis shows that about 50% of our visits are probably human. The definition

of this is that a visit occurs when some [one with a] computer makes a request for a page on our website for the first time on that date. As long as the same site keeps making requests within a given timeout period, they will all be considered part of the same Visit. If the site makes a request to our server, and the length of time since the last request is greater than the specified timeout period (default is 30 minutes), a new Visit is started and counted, and the sequence repeats. Since only a complete page will trigger a visit, remote sites that link to graphic and other non- page URLs will not be counted in the visit totals, reducing the number of false visits.

Press coverage has had some good results during the year especially around the Bourton Meadow rewatering project and thanks must go to the Buckingham Advertiser for collaborating with us on this along with help received from various comms teams at CRT, AVDC and BCC.

Event publicity has been successful with lots of poster production courtesy of Pitney Bowes. Distribution of these has been ably supported by Kirk Senior along with other Society volunteers encouraging shopkeepers and a range of other venues to display our materials to whom our thanks go.

Facebook has been a growth area with us now having over 250 followers on the Facebook page. By carefully selecting certain postings on Facebook, we have had audiences of over 3,000 for some articles.



It has now been 3 years of my editorship for the Navigator newsletter and recently Christina Newman has kindly helped to further refresh the layout of this key publication. I am now looking to move on from this and welcome offers of help to lead the editorship, publication and further evolution of the newsletter and all our digital media.

Please contact myself or any of the other trustees if you feel you would like to get involved in this area supporting the exciting times ahead for the Society.

**Richard Lewis, Trustee & Publicity and Communications Manager**

**10) To consider the Resolution to change the Buckingham Canal Society to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), as recommended by the Trustees**

**Buckingham Canal Society 2014 - AGM resolution**

**Trustee's recommendation to change to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**

2013 saw the long awaited culmination of the Buckingham Canal Society's aspiration to restore the canal take a major step forward with the award of grants followed by the relining and rewatering of the Bourton Meadow section. The transition of the society from the previous unincorporated charity to the CIO is now seen as a natural step as the focus shifts more toward restoration and the increased levels of activities further restoration projects may bring alongside associated risks and liabilities.

The restoration focus has already seen a greatly increased need for the formalisation of policies, procedures and practices both on and off project sites. As such, an important element of this evolution is to recognise the need for adherence to them throughout the work of the society whilst also aiming to ensure that our volunteers enjoy undertaking the tasks and we all have fun.

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is a relatively new form of legal entity designed for non-profit organisations with operations similar to ourselves. CIOs have been devised, and are being actively promoted, by the Charity Commission. The main benefits of this new type of entity are that it has: legal personality, the ability to conduct business in its own name, and limited liability so that its members and trustees will not have to contribute in the event of financial loss.

Charities can alternatively be formed as companies limited by guarantee which provide similar benefits. However, they then must be registered with, and comply with the regulations of, both Companies House and the Charity Commission. In contrast, the CIO only needs to register with the Charity Commission. This is anticipated to significantly reduce bureaucracy for the charity.

It is also necessary to adopt a new constitution in the form directed by the Charity Commission using their model constitution. We have tailored this standard format to include our specific requirements and the Objects of the Society have been transposed from the current constitution.

**As such the trustees of the Buckingham Canal Society unanimously recommend the resolution to transfer the Society to a CIO and adopt the revised constitution as per the resolution for the 2014 AGM.**

**NOTES:**

A copy of the draft Buckingham Canal Society constitution is on the following pages in this AGM pack.

Further details of CIOs and frequently asked questions about them are available on the Charity Commission website [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)

Rob Oldham explained the reasons for changing the Society from an unincorporated charity, which presents several legal problems including the progressing of restoration projects and Trustees Indemnity, and the decision to change to CIO status. He also explained the process of drawing up the new Constitution.

A question was raised from the floor regarding the transfer of membership and this was taken up by another speaker (Nigel Preston) who also enumerated a number of changes to the Constitution that he and Helen Preston had concerns about. Mr Preston presented his list of changes stating that some of these were trivial, some he agreed with, some he did not:

- Trustees will serve for a term which is normally 3 years, compared with 1 at present
- Trustees will no longer be required to be members of the society
- The quorum for general meetings is to be reduced
- The quorum for trustees' meetings is to be reduced
- The election process for trustees is no longer specified
- Officers are no longer to be elected by the membership. Indeed there is no necessity to have officers
- The limit on the number of trustees is to be removed
- The limit on the proportion of trustees who may be co-optees, rather than voted in, is to be removed
- The minimum age for members is to be removed
- The minimum age for trustees is to be reduced
- In future subscriptions will be set by the trustees, at present they must be agreed by members at the AGM
- AGMs to be up to 18 months after registration of the CIO (which itself could be up to a year after the previous AGM) then at intervals of up to 15 months. At present they must be "every January or thereabouts"
- Somewhat technical, the Equal Opportunities statement has been removed. [Mr Preston said that he understood that this was to be included elsewhere]
- The minimum number of members required to call an EGM is to be increased
- There will be a power for trustees to make rules and bye-laws (without the need for members' agreement)
- Trustee sub-committees may in future include non-trustees, and non-members, rather than just trustees
- Resolutions may in future be agreed other than at a general meeting

Mr Preston went on to say that there were areas which may or may not have been considered by the committee, but which are not included in the draft constitution:

- Voting rights for any non-standard membership category (e.g. junior members or corporate members). [Mr Preston pointed out that this was a statutory requirement]
- Whether a provision should be included to transfer automatically all BCS members to the new CIO; otherwise individual agreements would have to be obtained

This prompted animated discussion which was brought to a close by **agreement of a revised Resolution to:**

- Establish and register the Buckingham Canal Society as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation  
42 In Favour Nil Against
- Subsequently dissolve Buckingham Canal Society as an unincorporated charity  
**Proposed:** Rob Oldham **Seconded:** Helen Preston  
41 In Favour Nil Against
- Adopt the revised constitution subject to amendments agreed by the elected trustees at a subsequent meeting  
**Proposed:** Terry Cavender **Seconded:** Nigel Preston  
39 In Favour Nil Against
- Transfer all existing operations and assets to the new entity in due course  
**Proposed:** Rob Oldham **Seconded:** Nigel Preston  
44 In Favour Nil Against

#### 11) Election of Officers and Committee Members – Nominations received

		<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
CHAIRMAN	-	-	-
TREASURER	Vasanthi Wilmes	Athina Beckett	Vernon Draper
SECRETARY	Anthony Smith-Roberts	Stuart Cummins	Vernon Draper
COMMITTEE MEMBERS			
	Athina Beckett	Robert Oldham	Terry Cavender
	Jonathan Brown	Vernon Draper	Geoff Wood
	Terry Cavender	Richard Lewis	Stuart Cummins
	Stuart Cummins	Vernon Draper	Anthony Smith- Roberts
	Robert Oldham	Terry Cavender	Richard Lewis

There being no other nominations the above members were elected by majority vote in favour. At present the committee going forward has no elected Chairman.

#### 12) Subscriptions:

The Committee agreed not to increase the current subscription rates for the year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015

#### 13) Members' questions: There were no questions from members

#### 14) Any Other Business

On behalf of the Buckingham Canal Society and in grateful thanks for their long service as Chairman and Treasurer respectively, Terry Cavender presented Athina Beckett and Vernon Draper each with a model Narrowboat and a framed photograph of the Bourton Meadow Open Day.

On behalf of the Buckingham Canal Society and in grateful thanks for his service as Publicity and Communications Officer and Trustee, Terry Cavender presented Richard Lewis with a framed photograph of the Bourton Meadow Open Day.

On behalf of the Buckingham Canal Society, Terry Cavender presented Chris Smith with a large copy 'boat licence' for his Trail boat, which was used at the Bourton Meadow Open Day.

#### 15) Chairman's Closing Remarks:

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and for their contributions to discussion.

The formal part of the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

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A Cheese and Wine interval afforded members and guests the opportunity to meet committee members and to catch up with old friends. This was followed with a presentation by committee member Terry Cavender entitled *Buckingham Canal: Building Tomorrow's Heritage*. The talk encompassed the Bourton Meadow Project and the Society's vision for the future.