

MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE
SHREWSBURY & NEWPORT CANALS TRUST
held at the Cosy Hall, Newport, Shropshire
Saturday 21st October in the year 2000

1. ***Attendance Register & enlistment of Members***

Names and addresses noted and acceptance of Membership Application forms with accompanying cheques were received.

2. ***Introduction and Welcome***

The three Trustees who initiated the formation of the Trust as required by law were introduced - Steven Bean from the Shropshire Union Canal Society, Cllr. Sue Harris, Telford & Wrekin District Councillor and David R.B. Adams of the Shropshire Union Canal Society and Town Councillor.

Mr. Davied Adams as acting Chairman opened with these words, "This meeting could prove to be an historic occasion". He further outlined the background from the original meeting held in Newport on 25th June 1965 to form the Shrewsbury & Newport Canal Association in response to pressure from local people and a Newport & Market Drayton Advertiser headline "*What shall we do with this stinking ditch*"? The circumstances in 1965 were not amenable, the project was put on hold and the Association reformed as the "Shropshire Union Canal Society". In 1968 they turned their attention to the restoration of the derelict Montgomery Canal. Success followed a hard struggle and the Act for the restoration of the Montgomery was passed in 1987.

A small sub-committee was set up in 1988 to look again at the original objective, the restoration of the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal. In 1991 it produced a booklet entitled "*The New Challenge*" and more recently it had compiled a prospectus entitled "*A 2020 Vision*" directed to local authorities and other parties with the suggestion that a Trust be formed. Shropshire County Council agreed to support the formation of a Trust and a well attended Public Meeting was held in Newport on 29th June 2000, under the chairmanship of Mr Tony Hirst OBE, when it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that a Trust be formed.

The S.C.C., had since referred to the restoration in the County Structure Plan as, although costly, it was likely to bring significant economic and environmental benefits. The Government has confirmed their support to waterways reconstruction nationwide in a document entitled "*Waterways for Tomorrow*" revealed by John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister. The attitude of British Waterways was no longer negative being now willing to invest £100 million in the restoration of canals including the Lancaster canal and the construction of the Milton Keynes to Bedford canal, first proposed in 1810 at a cost of £70 million. Thus the time was right.

At the meeting of the 29th June, several landowners had expressed their concerns on the grounds of the re-splitting of their land, loss of planted trees, capacity of bridges, and the security of their land from public trespass. The Chairman emphasised that all these matters would be sympathetically addressed. Whilst the remaining 19th century structures will be restored, in the many sections where the canal has been totally removed the alignments might be altered, all including bridges will be built to the standards of today, and thousands of trees will need to be planted - thus this will be a canal of the 21st century.

The Goal - The restored canal - will give East Shropshire and the nearer part of Staffordshire (long a tourism backwater) considerable economic regeneration. The canal's economy lies in the connection of the new town of Telford to the inland waterway system and, at a later stage, the town of Shrewsbury, bringing economic benefit to the whole region;. The cost will be high but this is inevitably a long-term project and the expenditure is likely to be spread over many years.

David Adams concluded by saying to those present - "You are on the ground floor of a scheme which for many of us may not be completed in our lifetime, but if we get it off the ground., if we raise the money, if we conquer the obstacles, this will be a legacy we will leave to those who come after us, who many years from now, may look back to those who had the vision at the very beginning of the 21st century".

Steve Bean advised that following the meeting of the 29th June 2000 he had commenced the formation of a Company limited by guarantee and had agreed the details with the Charity Commissioners.

3. *Apologies*

Peter Bradley MP Simon Murphy MEP Dee Halliday, Newport Town Clerk
Wynne Jones, Principal HAUC Shrewsbury & Atcham Countryside Unit
Tony Hirst OBE, President of SUCS Chris Clarke, Shropshire CC
Mike Wilkins Raymond Elkes

4. *Confirmation of the Objects of the Trust by the Memorandum of Association*

The objects of the Trust were confirmed unanimously as follows:

1. To promote the restoration of the Shrewsbury Canal between Shrewsbury and Wappenshall Junction in the county of Shropshire and of the Newport branch of the Shropshire Union Canal (hereinafter together called "The Canals") to good and navigable order and to promote the maintenance and improvement of the Canals for the benefit of the public.
2. To promote the fullest use of the Canals by all forms of waterborne traffic and for all forms of water-related commercial, local amenity, tourist and recreational activity for the public benefit.
3. To promote the education of the public in the history and use of the canals and waterways and of the Canals in particular.

5. *Explanation of the Articles of Association:-*

The Chairman then outlined the salient points of the Articles of Association including membership, AGM, proper meeting notices, procedures, quorums and voting. It was also noted that all Trustees appointed at this meeting would serve for one year only but would be eligible for re-election, thereafter they would retired in thirds. The Company Secretary would oversee the preparation of proper Minutes and Accounts and the Annual Report to Members.

It was agreed that all Trustees would have a copy of the Memorandum & Articles of Association and members on request.

6. *Defining the number of Trustees (unlimited, but not less than three)*

It was agreed that the best number of trustees would be seven to eight with powers to co-opt additional members who could bring specific expertise. The maximum financial liability of each Trustee is Ten Pounds.

7. ***Confirmation of provisional Trustees***

This was unanimously confirmed - Steve Bean Cllr. Sue Harris David Adams

8. ***Appointment of Trustees***

In addition to the above the following Trustees were appointed:-

Cllr. Eva Allen, Newport Town Mayor
Roger Branton, ex Chairman of SUCS and Hon. member
Geoff Eastgate, Builder & Civil Engineer from Wellington, Shropshire
John Bentley, Lecturer at HAUC. Experience in Town planning & Economic Development
Kira Holland - Teacher, Shrewsbury - longstanding supporter of restoration

The Chairman proposed that Mr. Gordon Howdle, Civil Engineer and ex-Director of the Operations department of Wrekin Council who was present on 29th June be approached. Other possible trustees/advisers of those present - Pat Martin of Gnosall representing the Boat owners, Mr.D.P. Crow of Wappenshall representing the landowners who wanted time to reflect. Mr Tim Perkins representing a landowner and member of the C.I.C. declined being a Trustee but would advise as a member on land acquisitions.

9. ***Election of Officers***

It was unanimously agreed that the following be elected:

Chairman	David Adams
Vice Chairman	Cllr. Sue Harris
Secretary	Steven Bean
Treasurer	Left open
Publicity Officer	Roger Branton

10. ***Future Priorities for Action***

It was agreed that the future priorities were:

1. To draw up an accurate and modern list of the Landowners from Norbury Junction along the route of the Canal to Shrewsbury.
2. To consult with the various local authorities i.e. Shropshire & Staffordshire County Councils, Stafford Borough, Telford & Wrekin Council and Shrewsbury & Atcham, Newport Town Council and all Parish Councils along the route.
3. Consultation with the NFU, CLA, Nature Conservancy, British Waterways and other similar agencies.
4. To obtain advice from the Inland Waterways Association and all other Restoration groups including offers of support already made by the Chairman of the Wilts & Berks Canal.
5. To discuss with Consultants as to how a feasibility study could be best achieved.
6. The raising of funds to finance the study.

11. ***Frequency of Meetings***

It was agreed that the first meeting of the Trust should be held immediately afterwards with a further one organised within the month. Thereafter to be held on an average of once every two months or at the Trustee's discretion. Trust meetings to also be open to Members.

It was suggested that there be general meetings of Members on a quarterly basis with appropriate speakers on specific subjects relating to canal restoration.

It was agreed that the Annual General Meeting be fixed on the third Saturday in October. Therefore the financial year will need to end on the 30th September.

Note: AGMSaturday 20th October 2001.

12. ***Date of next Trustees' Meeting***

Note: confirmed at Trustees' meeting following, to be at 7.30pm on Thursday 9th November 2000 at The Guildhall, High Street, Newport, Shropshire.

13. ***Any Other Business***

The question was asked as to what was the position of the new Trust with regard to the Shropshire Union Canal Society to which Mr. Bean replied that this would be considered at the next SUCS Council meeting at which he would suggest that the Trust be affiliated.

Mr.J. Dalkin suggested that to keep costs down that all correspondence should be despatched by electronic means to those with e-mail addresses. This was noted.

14. ***Conclusion***

The Chairman warmly thanked all those present for their interest and attendance and particularly thanks to Mr. Steve Bean for preparing the necessary documents for the formation of the Trust, liaising with the Charity Commissioners and despatching the numerous invitations to attend today. The Press requested that all those present should retire outside to the nearby Town lock to have an official photograph taken.

In final conclusion the Chairman reminded those present that "today the 21st October is the 195th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, a notable British victory. Whilst our battle would be done in the friendliest of ways we should be under no delusions that the course we have set upon today would be hard, long and maybe incredibly difficult, but in the end by the grace of God we should achieve our aim and reconnect our County Town and East Shropshire, including Telford and Newport back to the inland waterways system."