

## FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL

The Minutes of the Ninth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Cromford Canal (FCC), Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1164608 held at 7.30pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025, in the Church Hall, Ironville.

### Present

31 members including Trustees and 11 visitors.

#### 1. Introduction

Judy Berry (chair for this AGM) opened the meeting and, for those guests and new members, introduced David Martin (chair of the FCC), Richard Handley (Executive Secretary), John Barker (Treasurer) and Jon Siggins, the presenter for the second part of the evening's meeting.

#### 2. Apologies for Absence – Hugh Potter and Steve Parish.

#### 3. Minutes of the Eighth AGM - these were agreed as a true record. Proposed by David Martin, seconded by John Barker and carried unanimously.

#### 4. Matters Arising – there were no matters arising.

#### 5. Report of Trustees – David Martin reported that:

**Meetings:** Trustees met ten times during 2024 plus presented the 2023 annual report and accounts at the April 2024 AGM: Trustee meetings were held either in blended video conferencing / in-person format. Our charity is operated 100% by volunteers and we have over 100 of them, covering Trading operations, Work Parties and specialist roles such as Engineering support.

**Restoration:** work had continued at Beggarlee, with land drainage work being undertaken by volunteer work parties, with additional labour and mentoring provided by the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG). Trustees had also approved funding of a detailed geo-technical survey of the Aqueduct Cottage to Gregory Tunnel stretch where there are known issues of bank instability. The consultant's report had been presented to the canal owner (Derbyshire County Council) so they can start to plan remedial work.

**Preservation & maintenance:** John Barker's weekly work parties had been hard at work litter picking, strimming vegetation, repairing and painting fences, planting hedges, repairing footpaths, digging out silt traps, rebuilding steps at many places along the canal.

**Trading Operations** (boat and merchandise sales) have generated another record surplus for the charity's cash reserves: merchandise sales account for over 25% of our Trading Operations revenue, which is thanks to the three couples who manage the Weighbridge shop at Cromford, who deliver wholesale sales, and fulfil online orders from our website.

**Fund raising – Strategic:** The charity's three main means of generating funding have traditionally been through Trading, Membership fees and ad hoc donations and legacies: we have been fortunate to receive several legacies from bequests in wills which have been added to our unrestricted cash reserves.

**Communications and publicity:** Keeping the charity in the public eye is key for us and this is done through a variety of means: we published four editions of our quarterly journal "Portal": we regularly send updates to our database of 1100 email contacts and use social media – mainly Facebook: our FCC Facebook group has grown 500% over the last five years to 4200 members. We constantly update and refresh content on our new website.

**Public and member engagement:** Trustees are acutely aware that we need to constantly engage with not only FCC members, but the wider interested public and we are constantly trying to expand this area of our operation. In 2024 we held a total of nine social events on a variety of

subjects at the church hall at Ironville, with around 30-40 attendees at each and as planned three other very successful events were held at Cromford's Gothic Warehouse.

**Volunteers:** We have a stable cohort of dedicated volunteers across the charity who are all well-briefed on all activities of the charity, and all committed to working towards the charity's strategic aims: without them we would really be unable to function. A total of around 11,500 hours of volunteer hours were delivered to FCC activities in 2024.

**SUMMARY:** In summary, the FCC charity has had a very successful 2024: we've generated a significant surplus from our trading activities, have secured some small and medium sized grants for our ongoing tactical and strategic restoration work. Our public visibility has increased dramatically, and we continue to be supported by our wonderful cohort of volunteers. Work has continued at the Beggarlee extension, and our regular work parties ensure that the canal is conserved for future generations. Despite making some significant purchases of certain assets, we have closed the year with higher cash reserves due to significant contributions from Trading Operations and a notable legacy donation. The work parties were given a round of applause for the incredible work they do in varying places along the canal and thought different activities. David's report was received with thanks.

## **6. Annual Statement of Accounts**

The accounts had been previously circulated through the FCC website with hard copies made available to all members present at the meeting.

John Barker provided an analysis of the FCC funds over the 2024 financial period noting that the FCC reserves had increased from £157k on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 to £227k by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. This had been due to the Cromford Shop, Birdswood takings and the receipt of legacies and grants. John thanked Angela Marsh for her grant application work.

The path at Lower Hartshay will be re-instated which will use up the remaining restricted grant funds given for that purpose. A legacy of £15k went towards the £28k cost for a digger which is being used at the Beggarlee Extension and stored at Langley Mill.

The accounts for the year are provided at the end of these minutes.

## **7. Adoption of the Accounts**

Proposed by Mike Kelley and seconded by Mr Bazley and, with no votes against or abstentions, the accounts were adopted unanimously.

## **8. Appointment of Community Accounting Plus as Auditors**

Proposed by Mike Kelley and seconded by David Martin, the appointment of Community Accounting Plus as auditors for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 was carried unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

## **9. Election of Trustees**

The FCC's constitution requires a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve Trustees. The FCC currently operates with nine, three of whom stood down at this AGM but opted to seek re-appointment/re-election. The three Trustees were Hugh Potter, Ian Hooker and John Barker. All had been formally nominated and seconded in writing. There were no other nominations for the role of Trustee. The re-appointment of Hugh Potter, Ian Hooker and John Barker as Trustees was unanimously approved.

## **10. Any Other Business**

Mike Kelley stated the FCC had been a charity for 23years. Some current Trustees had been with the FCC since the beginning whilst others were no longer with us. There is always the need for new volunteers and Trustees to enable the FCC to continue moving forward.

The meeting closed at 8pm



**Friends of the Cromford Canal  
Statement of assets and liabilities  
at 31 December 2024**

2023		2024
£	Note	£
	<b>Cash assets</b>	
156984	Bank accounts	227619
<u>50</u>	Cash in hand	<u>50</u>
<u>157034</u>		<u><b>227669</b></u>
	<b>Other monetary assets</b>	
<u>2225</u>	Stock	<u>2798</u>
<u>2225</u>		<u><b>2798</b></u>
	<b>Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	
	Trip boat 'Birdswood' & its fixtures & fittings, purchased in July 2013, cost £61,683.	
	Dumper truck, purchased November 2016, cost £3,900.	
	Land at Cromford Canal Langley Mill, purchase completed December 2019, cost £9,697.	
	Land at Cromford Canal at Hartshay, 500 yards, donated.	
	Welfare unit, purchased February 2023, cost £10,104.	
	Volvo Digger, purchased September 2024, cost £28,800.	
	General equipment.	
	<b>Liabilities</b>	
<u>(3445)</u>	Creditors	<u>(744)</u>
<u>(3445)</u>		<u><b>(744)</b></u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
John Barker, Trustee