

FRIENDS OF THE CROMFORD CANAL

The Minutes of the Tenth Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Cromford Canal (FCC), Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1164608 held at 7.30pm on Monday 13th April 2026, in the Church Hall, Ironville.

Present

34 members including Trustees and 10 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 Alan Green, the presenter for the second part of the evening's meeting on the Beggarlee Viaduct.

2. Apologies for Absence – Hugh Potter, Steve Parish and David Ratner

3. Minutes of the Ninth AGM - these were agreed as a true record. Proposed by Ian Hooker seconded by Jack Brown and carried.

4. Matters Arising – there were no matters arising.

5. Report of Trustees – David Martin reported that:

Overview:

The charity operates under a constitution requiring 3-12 Trustees who oversee the core administration functions and with 2 main subcommittees covering restoration and trading operations. The Trustees met 8 times during 2025 using a mix of in person and video conferencing formats. The charity is run entirely by volunteers with over 100 supporting trading, work parties and specialist roles. All activities are directed toward the stated objectives of restoring, preserving and maintaining the Cromford Canal and associated assets. The charity maintains strong strategic relationships with councils, canal groups, heritage bodies, and partner organisations. Communication efforts include journals, email updates, a growing Facebook presence, and widespread media engagement. Public and member engagement included social events, hosted visits, and national canal association meetings.

Restoration and Conservation:

Restoration work continued at Beggarlee including drainage, footpath clearance and gully bank landscaping by volunteer work parties. The Waterway Recovery Group contributed to flood mitigation finishing works at Beggarlee in May 2025. David provided an overview of the unresolved land ownership issues with Canal & River Trust which has caused a pause in restoration at Beggarlee. Design work and planning applications are ongoing including proposals for a new winding hole and embankment strengthening. Weekly work parties undertook extensive preservation and maintenance tasks along multiple sections of the canal.

6. Annual Statement of Accounts

Hard copies of the Accounts were made available to all members present at the meeting.

John Barker provided an analysis of the FCC funds over the 2025 financial period noting that over £4,000 had been made in interest, almost £4,000 in Gift Aid and that fund raising had remained much the same as last year. Membership fees are the second largest regular income source but there had been a slight decline in the number of members, but work is being undertaken to try and increase numbers. Four small grants totalling £6,000 had been secured and spent on restoration related activities and training. A targeted appeal raised over £2,500 towards replacement windows for Birdswood which were installed in March 2025. Merchandise sales contributed over 25% of trading revenue supported by the shop, wholesale and online volunteers. Around 10,000 volunteer hours were delivered in 2025 contributing to a strong financial position and increased cash reserves.

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

7. Adoption of the Accounts

Proposed by John Guyler and seconded by Jack Brown the accounts were adopted.

8. Appointment of Community Accounting Plus as Auditors

Proposed by John Barker and seconded by Mike Harrison, the appointment of Community Accounting Plus as auditors for the period 1st January 2026 to 31st December 2026 was carried.

9. Election of Trustees

The FCC's constitution requires a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve Trustees. The FCC currently operates with ten, three of whom stood down at this AGM but opted to seek re- appointment/re-election. The three Trustees were Richard Handley, Jack Brown and David Ratner. All had been formally nominated and seconded in writing. The re-appointment of Richard Handley, Jack Brown and David Ratner was agreed as a block re-appointment – proposed by Ken Brockway, seconded by Mr Bazley and carried. It was proposed by Mike Kelley and seconded by Ken Brockway that Judy Berry moved from being a co-opted Trustee to the position of FCC Trustee. This was carried.

10. Any Other Business

John Barker praised the enormous efforts of the volunteers - the work parties and boat volunteers. It was also noted that the FCC was a finalist in the BBC's Make a Difference, which awards unsung heroes. The volunteers were given a big round of applause from everyone at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm