

## IWAI AGM MINUTES 2017

The 2017 AGM of IWAI was held in the Mullingar Park Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May at 8pm. 41 members attended. Many apologies were also recorded from members unable to attend.

The meeting was opened by President John Dolan who welcomed all delegates, introduced the other members of the executive who were present and then proposed a minutes silence for all deceased members and their families and friends.

The minutes of the AGM 2016 were proposed by Brian Cassells, seconded by Mick Kinahan and were adopted. There were no matters arising.

There was one item for AOB, raised by President John Dolan and that was in relation to a presentation that was to be made.

### **President's Address (See Appendix A for full address)**

John Dolan then addressed the meeting, summarising the significant developments within the association during the past 12 months and thanking the officers and members all across the country for their hard work and also thanking Allianz for their support of the AGM. John also thanked the members of Executive and their families, the sub-committees members, the members of Council and immediate past-president Carmel Meegan for their support.

The developments included;

- Canal Permits Review
- Heritage Bill 2016
- Shannon Water Abstraction
- CFRAMS
- Finance and new online payments system
- Membership
- Insurance
- The new website
- Dunrovin
- The Emergency Services
- Engagement with Government Bodies
- IWAI Policy Documents
- National Maritime Museum
- World Canals Conference
- Endeavour Cup
- Waterways Regulation
- CSIG
- Heritage and Restoration Projects
- Archiving
- Video Competition
- Ulster Canal

- PR and Communications
- IWN and advertising

A strong theme running through the President's address was the need for some assistance from members on various projects. These projects include web content, advertising, digital archiving. So if you have any skills in these areas and an hour or two to spare the Executive would like to hear from you.

Two sub-committees have already been set up, one to respond to the tabled ESB Amendment Act 2017 and one to review and revise the Articles of Association.

### **Presentation of Accounts and Honorary Treasurer's Report**

John Martin summarised the association's accounts that were circulated with the AGM papers. The Association's income had increased by 17% to €125,846 while expenditure had dropped by 24% to €95,257, leading to a surplus of €30,589 compared to a deficit of €17,542 in 2015.

John also informed the meeting that IWAI financial reports were now up to speed with reporting standard FRS104.

He then outlined some additional notes from the auditors;

- Branch assets and stock needed to be reviewed. Some were no longer of enough value to make them worth keeping on the books from an accounting point of view, although they needed to be logged for insurance purposes
- Shop stock need to be reviewed and valued for the same reason as above
- Branch investments – some branches have three bank accounts all of which have to be reconciled. The end of year accounts would be much easier for treasurers if they were to consolidate these into one account.

John also noted that it can be difficult for branch treasurers to compile the end of year accounts because the spreadsheet (paper version) does not align with the online profit and loss sheet. So this year IWAI needs a sub-group to work on simplifying the reporting system for end of year accounts. The sub-group would be comprised of John himself, Tony Byron and some branch treasurers. All volunteers would be welcomed.

There being no question in relation to the end of year accounts, they were proposed by Tim Meehan and seconded by Jim Connelly and were adopted

### **Appointment of the Auditors**

The retention of Sinnott and Hughes as auditors was then proposed by Cathal Kinney, seconded by Carmel Meegan and was carried.

### **Proposed Motion**

Tony Byron then spoke to the proposed motion that had been circulated to members in relation to the Memorandum of Association and the reasoning behind it. He explained this resolution had arisen as part of an ongoing major exercise to review the Articles and Memorandum of this

Association. It had immediately become apparent that IWAI was not in compliance with the Charities Regulator as aligned with the Companies Act. Therefore we had to revise the wording of the Memorandum of Association as proposed before they were passed to the Companies Office and the Charities Regulator. He outlined the three areas to be revised;

- Governance of income and property (which required only small edits)
- Inclusion of specific reference to the Charities Regulator
- The process in relation to winding up of the company should that occur

Tony then read the proposed resolution which stated that;

That the Memorandum of Association of the IWAI be amended to provide for the following

1. That the Memorandum of Association of the IWAI be now known as the Constitution of the IWAI in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Record Offices
2. That the Constitution be reformatted to include information required by the Charity Regulators act.

That this AGM will approve the new Constitution of the IWAI as produced in appendix A of this document and that this will then be placed before Council for formulation as policy.

John Dolan then called for a show of hands and the resolution was carried by a majority in favour.

### **Election of Directors**

Nominations had been invited for both Executive and Council positions. There was a shortfall of two on both Executive and Council Representatives.

All nominations to the Executive had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. In the absence of no more than one nomination for each position, John Dolan proposed that the nominations be accepted as circulated. John then read through each nomination and named the proposer and seconder for each. All were agreed. A similar approach was taken to election of the Council members with unanimous agreement from the floor.

The nominations were as follows;

**President** John Dolan - Proposed by Ronnie Colton, seconded by Tim Meehan

**Vice President** Alan Kelly - Proposed by Beth O'Loughlin, seconded by Irene O'Neill and Jason Shaw

**Honorary Secretary** Kay Baxter - Proposed by Kevin Regan, seconded by Eileen Taylor

**Membership Secretary** Michael Geraghty - Proposed by Natalie McGowan and seconded by Les Saunders

**Treasurer** John Martin - Proposed by Donal Molony, seconded by Myles Brady

### **Directors**

Kevin Clabby - Proposed by Brian Corcoran, seconded by Ian Craig

Brian Cassells - Proposed by Jim Henning, seconded by Drew Nelson

Tony Byron - Proposed by Ruth Fitzpatrick, seconded by Denise Byrne

### **Council Representatives**

Les Saunders - Proposed by Michael Geraghty, seconded by Natalie McGowan

Thomas Meegan - Proposed by Blaithin Fitzgerald, seconded by Brian Fitzgerald

Mick Kinahan - Proposed by Sheila Kinahan, seconded by Kevin Dunne

Siobhan Bigley – Proposed by Brian Corcoran, seconded by Kevin Clabby

John Dolan then called for nominations from the floor but there were none.

### **Endeavour Cup**

There were a total of 8 nominations for the Endeavour Cup, with one individual being nominated twice. The nominations, and a short citation for each, are as follows;

- The Heritage Boat Association of Ireland (HBA) in recognition of its many and varied activities dedicated to the promotion of the Waterways of Ireland. Since the formation of the HBA, the Association through its officers and members has consistently promoted the causes of older boats and craft of any sort, shape and description but especially Irish canal craft.
- Stephen Maher in recognition of all his voluntary work and free legal advice in connection with the Bylaw campaign. His role was critical to the Association reaching a comprehensive position on the proposals; moreover, he provided his service free-of-charge-a real indication of his commitment to the IWAI. (Stephen was nominated twice)
- Brian Wilson for all his work with CSIG
- Charts Special Interest Group (CSIG) whose members are working together to deliver a new set of charts for the rivers, lakes and canals of Ireland with the aim of making the waterways safer and more enjoyable for everyone. This aim is one of the founding ideals of the IWAI. The group is a fine example of what can be achieved when people unite and work together for a common goal.
- Michael Kinahan of the Dublin branch for the years of service he has given to the Branch, and for his work with voluntary groups along both canals.
- Peter Maxwell who has been at the forefront of the Newry / Portadown branch for more than ten years. His passion and commitment to the Newry Canal is an example to all. It also extends to the main IWAI body where he endeavours to see the rules of the IWAI Constitution adhered to for the benefit and security of all at Head Office and the wider membership.
- Damien Delaney who has been a member of the IWAI for close on 50 years, for his generosity of spirit and his equally generous parting of his time for the benefit of others, and his impact to date on the IWAI . As a member of Athlone IWAI he was one of those who took

up the challenge of the founders to protect and develop the inland waterways. Nationally Damien spent many years on the executive and was the president of the IWAI. Damien with other Athlone IWAI members and other concerned parties formed a committee and pursued the RNLI to set up a Life Boat station on Lough Ree in or about 2009. When the station needed a manager Damien stepped forward in his typical “can-do” attitude and took on the role so that the project could proceed.

All nominees were acknowledged as being very worthy recipients of the Endeavour Cup however there could only be one, and this year it was to be the trophy went to Damien Delaney, IWAI Athlone. Unfortunately Damien was unable to attend the AGM but will be presented with the cup and his certificate at a later date.

### **AOB**

John Dolan informed the meeting that a presentation was to be made to Stephen Maher in recognition of his work with IWAI on every occasion that we are in need of legal advice. Stephen was not present and the presentation will be made at a later date.

John then went on to make a presentation to Derek Whelan to recognise and thank him for his contribution to the association in managing the advertising for the last eight years.

Derek, in his acceptance speech, paid tribute to and thanked Colin Becker, editor of IWN for his professionalism and courtesy in the eight years of working together.

There been no further business John Dolan brought the meeting to a close.

Kay Baxter

Honorary Secretary

## **Appendix A – President’s Address**

Good evening fellow members and guests,

As I mentioned at the start of the meeting, it is a pleasure to welcome you here tonight on behalf of the Executive and I would like to thank Allianz for their support with hosting tonight’s AGM.

I would like to acknowledge the work of all our officers and members all over the country who continue to build and support our association’s objectives, your work is appreciated and forms the bedrock of our association.

I had the pleasure of meeting many members at some of the IWAI events and rallies over the past year, all well organised, with new members participating and in many cases generations of the same family together. All of the events demonstrated the comradeship and spirit of IWAI. Well done to all the organisers for their time and commitment and also their promotion of protecting our waterways environment.

All indications from the 2017 Calendar of Events, which presents a great snapshot of the depth of IWAI events North, South, East and West, is that this level of branch activity continues this year, best wishes to all involved.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my colleagues on the Executive and their families, for their great effort on Executive over the past year and Carmel for her support to me in her role as Past President.

As reported over the year in IWN and at Council meetings, it has been a very busy year with significant work in communication, campaigning and lobbying including the Canal Permits Review, Heritage Bill 2016, Shannon Water Abstraction and CFRAMS. Work continued on all other projects and areas with a focus of improvement of services to members. We introduced efficiencies in how the business of executive is conducted and are constantly reviewing methods of reducing costs and maximising other income sources.

### **Finance**

As you will see from the accounts, our finances are on an improved footing and we have been able to increase in 2017 the distributed funds to branches as presented at the last Council meeting. I would like to thank John Martin for his enormous dedication to the task of National Treasurer. To say it has been a baptism of fire for John in his first year as Treasurer would be an understatement. John though not an Accountant has overseen the introduction of the new balance sheet, a review of branch account signatories’, the changeover to an new online payment provider with associated reductions in charges and fees which will be very evident in next year’s accounts.

I would also like to mention with thanks, the support that John has received from Noel Griffin with the payments system and Adele Picard in relation to the end of year accounts.

### **Membership**

Membership Secretary, Michael Geraghty is very active and available to help branches and members renewing online. Our membership is at the core of our association, the drive for

new members must be led at branch level, council and executive will do whatever is needed to support this.

2106 – 2017 has seen an enhanced focus by Michael on membership retention and recruitment including corporate membership. The centre pages of the spring edition of IWN projected here behind me highlights the difference your membership continues to make. It is also now easier to join with the new online payment system.

The potential from the other core areas of our association such as waterways conservation and restoration, walking, wildlife, water sports activities and the environmental etc. is quite significant and must continue to be developed. We are not only a boat owners association and we need to push the message that you don't need to own a boat to be a member of IWAI.

Our Association recognises that nurturing and supporting young members of our association is critical with our junior membership and the young person's membership rate for 18 to 23 year olds.

### **Insurance**

Branch Officers you will be aware of the good work of Tony Byron on the national asset register and on our insurance policies, any outstanding forms would be gratefully received by Tony.

### **Website**

Our new website went live last year, thanks to the great work of Colman Byrne, Noel Griffin and Colin Becker and significant support from Allianz. We are looking for members to join the web team and also members who will assist with updating sections of content. No web skills are required for the latter just a familiarity of the specific topic under review and a knowledge of using word, you can decide your input be it a few hours or more. Please contact us if you feel you can help.

### **IWAI/ RNLI strategic alliance project at Dunrovin**

The IWAI strategic alliance project with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution at Dunrovin is ongoing, and the design team are working to lodge the planning application as soon as possible. It is expected to go to construction in the later part of next year.

I would like to thank the IWAI Dunrovin sub-committee for their ongoing work under the chair of Martin Donnelly, The committee are actively planning their project package to promote the project to external funding authorities and contributors. Martin is not seeking re-election to IWAI Executive but has indicated his interest in continuing his work with the committee as determined by the incoming executive, this continued commitment is appreciated greatly.

### **Our Nations Emergency Services**

It has been a devastating year for our Nations emergency services, as an organisation whose members receive great comfort from knowing that our Emergency services are always there, we extended sincere sympathy to the family, friends and colleagues of Catriona Lucas, Doolin Coast Guard Volunteer and the crew of helicopter R116, Capt Dara Fitzpatrick, Capt

Mark Duffy, Winch operator Paul Ormsby and Winchman Ciarán Smith.

I would also on behalf of IWAI express our gratitude to all rescue services that operate on the Inland Waterways.

### **Engagement with Government Bodies**

Engagement with Government bodies has continued over the year in relation to Shannon Water Abstraction, code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft and the proposed ESB Amendment Bill 2017.

Following the presentation by Irish Water to IWAI Council in March, the final submission by IWAI was completed and submitted. Much work done here by past Presidents Greg Whelan and Carmel Meegan highlighting the need to ensure that excess water being drawn off the system does not have a negative impact on our significant domestic and International boating tourism.

The IWAI was invited by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, to participate in the review of the Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft. The Code of Practice was first published in 2005 and revised in 2008. The Code provides guidance on best practice for the safe operation of a variety of craft for coastal as well as inland use. Martin Donnelly coordinated the IWAI response and we are pleased that a significant number of IWAI suggestions have been included in the proposed working draft that was recently issued to IWAI for final comment.

#### *ESB Amendment Act 2017*

In response to the proposed ESB Amendment Bill 2017, a dedicated subcommittee under the chairmanship of Kevin Clabby has been formed. Joining Kevin on the committee are Brian Corcoran, Damien Delaney, Donal O'Siochan, Paddy Cooney and Tony Baker. Their work is underway.

### **Associations Policy Documents**

#### *Memorandum of Association*

As there is a special resolution on the agenda I will comment no further on this at this time other than to thank Tony Byron, Greg Whelan and Stephen Maher for their work on this matter.

#### *Articles of Association*

The Articles of Association have been discussed on occasions over the past few years, I am pleased to advise that a dedicated subcommittee has recently been convened and are now working on updating the Articles. The Committee: include Kevin Clabby as chair, ably supported by Siobhan Bigley, Brian Corcoran, Tom McGowan and Stephen Maher.

## **IWAI at the National Maritime Museum of Ireland**

Earlier this year the IWAI permanent exhibition on the Inland Waterways was opened at the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, this is a very appropriate partnership between IWAI and The Maritime Institute of Ireland, who deserve great credit for their achievements since 1941 including their fantastic museum in a great setting, it is well worth visiting. Thanks to Padraic O Brolchain, Carmel and Colin for their liaison work on this project.

## **World Canal Conference 2018**

Work continues by the IWAI team of Alan Kelly, Colin Becker, Carmel Meegan, Brian Cassells and John Martin with Waterways Ireland, our conference partners on preparation for the 2018 world Canal conference taking place in Athlone in 2018.

## **Endeavor Cup.**

I would like to congratulate all nominees for this year's (soon to be announced) endeavor cup award, all worthy nominees. I would like to thank our Hon Secretary Kay Baxter for her work not just in organising this but in all aspects of her valuable work with Executive and Council for IWAI.

## **Inland Waterways Regulation**

What continues to impress me so much is the ability of our association to reach out and form partnerships and share projects and alliances with local communities along our waterways at so many levels, it is one of our characteristics that hopefully will continue and grow.

As an association IWAI have many opportunities facing us in the next few years, foremost of these continues to be the area of inland waterways regulation.

Of course the IWAI prefers the partnership approach for engagement and it appears based on recent meetings with Waterways Ireland that the upcoming Shannon Byelaws Review will be based on a genuine consultation process.

Lessons learned I think from the process in another area that continues to see significant investment of time and effort by many of our members. This is the legislative framework governing the Grand Canal, Royal Canal & Barrow Navigation that include the Canal Bye-laws and the Heritage Bill 2016.

The former is parked pending the outcome of the latter, which saw a number of key amendments introduced during its passage through the Seanad. A total of 61 amendments (53 from the IWAI position paper) were presented in the Seanad.

The Association of Irish Local Government joined Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council & South Dublin County to support the call to increase from 21 days to 90 days the period for consultation in relation to bye-laws and it is good to see the Minister has accepted this initial IWAI proposal.

I would like to acknowledge the great efforts put into this task by the Canal Action Group, it has been a pleasure working with Alan Kelly, Vice President and the wider team on this

campaign. I would also especially like to thank Stephen Maher for his great assistance to IWAI on this issue.

It is appropriate also to acknowledge and express appreciation to all political representatives in the Seanad, the Dail and Local Authorities including those along the waterways who have supported the IWAI common sense position on the provision of bye- laws.

Previous canal bye-law revision attempts if successful would have seen 99% of the canals dramatically affected by the introduction of poor bye-laws designed to deal with issues that are only of concern in 1% of these waterways.

Our message is simple; let's get bye-laws that will be fit for purpose and will address any current issues, protect the future of our canals, help the local communities and tourism potential.

### **Charts Special Interest Group**

It is great to have seen over the year the great work and progress of the Charts Special Interest Group (CSIG) as presented to executive by PRO Les Saunders.

### **Our Waterways Heritage & Restoration Projects are an important area for IWAI**

IWAI restoration work continues around our branches with canal restoration on the Boyne Navigation, the Lagan Navigation and the Newry Canal and work on the Rams Island Project on Lough Neagh and the islands on Lough Corrib, well done to all who continue to commit their times to these important projects.

Restorers of waterways are special, they allow us that follow, to benefit from their dreams and their hard work on restored navigation systems and for that we must be very grateful.

The vision and hard work of the RCAG and many IWAI members on the Royal Canal restoration allows us now to live their dreams and I would encourage you to get on the Royal and the Grand and Barrow, maybe even do the Green and Silver and enjoy what they have to offer.

2017 sees the bicentenary of the completion of the Royal Canal to Richmond Harbour with the RCAG leading a celebration event on 27 May in Clondra, we wish them well and look forward to it.

In Dublin, it is worrying that the Georgian Graving Docks in Dublin's Grand Canal Basin could move from public ownership as part of a land bank sale. Echoing IWAI Dublin concerns, the Docklands Business Forum highlighted the potential for regeneration for theatre space, children's recreation and a luxury yachting destination with marine repairs and believes that "blue space" is imperative for the people living and working in the area. IWAI will continue to engage on this issue.

### **Archiving our IWAI History**

In my address last year on taking up office, I highlighted how the IWAI have promoted and ensured that the Inland Waterways have been preserved, managed and remain accessible since its foundation, and that I believed that we were at a time when we need to preserve, manage, and promote access to the IWAI story and its people by archiving our own history.

I have happy to advise that we have secured support from Allianz to develop a digital IWAI archive, this support by Allianz for this project and a number of other areas is greatly appreciated.

Currently a work flow pattern procedure and guide is being developed in conjunction with a professional archivist and we are looking at sourcing scanning technology for the project.

It is hoped that this mobile digital archiving system will get to some of the rallies this year, so let us know if you are interested in hosting it at your rally please.

Maybe this is a good time to consider forming a Digital Archive Special Interest Group?

### **IWAI Video Competition**

In a new venture for IWAI, I am pleased to announce tonight the launch of an annual video competition will be open to all IWAI branches and must be generally based on a branch event(s).

The main objectives are to

1. Encourage the making of 5 minute videos that will showcase IWAI
2. Encourage the involvement of our younger members. Team must include a minimum number of young members
3. Encourage interaction between branches
4. Showcase the videos on the IWAI website

A set of rules are in draft form and will be published shortly.

Colman Byrne has kindly agreed to manage this competition for IWAI.

### **Ulster Canal**

At our recent meeting with Waterways Ireland, IWAI asked for an update re the Ulster Canal

Waterways Ireland advised that that the contract has been awarded for the section between the Shannon – Erne to Castle Saunderson with a commencement date on site no later than 5<sup>th</sup> June and opening this section in 2018.

### **PR and Communications**

We have broadened our PR and communications externally in a focused and targeted manner in terms of delivery time and our approach under Alan Kelly. 2016 – 2017 has seen a significant number of press releases that have been picked up nationally and internationally. I would like to thank Alan for his work on this supported by Irene O Neill and also Brian Cassells for his continued work on promoting our Association in Northern Ireland on so many fronts.

## **IWN**

We have an excellent asset in IWN that is growing all the time under Past President and esteemed editor Colin Becker and it is a superb shop window for IWAI both internally and externally.

Derek Whelan after securing advertisements in IWN for 8 years called last orders in December. Derek has made a very valuable contribution, volunteering quietly behind the scenes, in an area that has been particularly challenging over the past few years as the economy compacted. Derek, thank you for your work and also to Una for sharing your time with the association in this important area.

We are presently broadening our approach to advertising both in IWN and on the Website and want to put in a team to share the load, if you would like to get involved please let us know.

Where you can, please support our sponsors, shop and IWAI advertisers.

## **Review**

A strong successful organization is one that seeks to create its own future, one that consults, examines, reviews its objectives and operations and then adapts and transforms itself in response to the needs and aspirations of its members and the environment within which it operates.

It is proposed that we will undertake in autumn a scoping exercise to look at the needs and aspirations of our members and the environment within which IWAI operates. With this in mind we will seek the opinion of all members on what you feel should be considered as part of such a review, which will include a member's survey. I hope that you will engage with us on this exercise and if there are any members with special skills in this area we would like to hear from you.

When founded 63 years ago the purpose of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland was to promote the development, use and maintenance of Ireland's navigable rivers and canals, your executive will continue to honour and promote those aims with your support.

On behalf of all members of executive, I wish you a safe and enjoyable year on and around our waterways.