

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND LOUGH ERNE BRANCH



Minutes

Branch Committee Meeting

16.00 hours Saturday 18 May 2019

Aboard *Andante*, Broadmeadow, Enniskillen

Present:

Patricia Donnelly, Mike Kingston, Noel Maitland, Ross Millar (Chair), Dr Catherine Boucher (co-opted as Child Protection Officer)

Apologies:

Mervyn Rolls, John Weir, Frank Woods, Alan Cousins.

In attendance:

Colin Slack (for items 5a & 5b only)

1. Minutes

- a. From last meeting approved
- b. Matters arising – **Haughton's Shore cruise in company** rendezvoused as planned with 11 boats and crews at Crom jetty on 26 April, with some members meeting for a pre-event get together at Carrybridge the previous night. Mike Kinston as event commodore had informed Paddy Deane the WI patroller of the intended cruise. This was later curtailed by Storm Hannah which blew in on Friday night. A re-organised event saw a few boats head to Ballyconnell on Saturday for dinner at the Anglers Rest and the remaining boat crews hosted by Robert and Avril Maitland for a spontaneous wine and canapé get together on the *Lazy Witch*. Sunday saw the main cruise travel through the locks to Ballyconnell, welcomed by Paddy and commended for all crews wearing life jackets. Congratulations to lock virgins John and June on *Phantom Lady* who then repeated the experience a week later with great confidence. Lunch in the Anglers rest saw the end to a successful if reduced event.

- c. **Branch representation at the Marine Safety Committee** (a multi-agency working group for coastal and inland waterways safety) Ross Millar attended on behalf of Mike Kingston at this partnership group and reported on the issues discussed:
- i. Racing markers in Lower Lough had been painted with fluorescent paint to aid visibility
 - ii. Issue with VHF DSC signal had been investigated and appears to be resolved
 - iii. The 2 deaths reported in 2018/19 across all coastal and inland waterways were on Lough Erne (one off Round O jetty and the other involving a jet ski at Muckross).
 - iv. The JESOP (Joint Emergency Service Operations) group reported 47 life boat call outs (5 involving helicopter) and 5 false alarms; 57 emergency call outs, of which 20 involved personal jet ski incidents and 1 hoax call
 - v. 26 May in Enniskillen is a special emergency services day
 - vi. New coast guard station on Tempo road opened
 - vii. Issue of jet skis was discussed at length as this is recognised as a serious issue on Lough Erne, whereas Lough Neagh public jetties are all attended by council staff: Lough Erne jet ski speed limits on Kesh River; Ross proposed working with caravan sites around the lough to encourage registration of jet skis before launching.
 - viii. Issue of anti-social behaviour around Enniskillen was discussed with PSNI briefing that they had closed land access to the small boat jetty south of Killyhevlin during May and June as they were aware of increased drinking and gathering of young people with significant safety concerns
 - ix. PSNI launching a safety campaign with 600 stickers on life jacket safety – the Branch has agreed to distribute to members
 - x. RNLI called for lake markers to be illuminated to aid their operations but there were concerns about the unintended consequences of encouraging boats to travel after sunset that has been an increasing trend for small boats. The Warden also stated that it was against the bye-laws for waterway use.
 - xi. Paddy Harkin attended the meeting and committed to continuing his work with unattended boats on public jetties ('hoggers')

It was agreed that this forum was valuable in keeping members informed of safety issues and initiatives. It was also agreed to set up the Branch annual meeting with Waterways Ireland senior staff and to survey members for issues prior to that

Action: Ross to contact WI to set up meeting for autumn with Branch committee and consider the content of the survey in preparation

2. Events in 2019

- a. **Boatyard Gin visit**, Tully Bay on 27 July – Ross has organised this with the Boatyard with a cost of £45 per person which will include a bottle of gin or whiskey and 3 cocktails. Members aware of a high level of interest in the event with only 30 places available. Barbeque with members providing own food
Action: Ross to advertise on a first come first served basis
- b. **Erne Boat Rally** is being held on the 31 May to 3 June where Ross and Noel Maitland will represent the Branch and raise the issues discussed by members at previous meetings.
- c. **Music at Crom** events on 8 July (with the ‘Hand me Downs’) and 10 August (with ‘Midnight Graffiti’). Noel reported that the event was selling out
- d. **Lower Lough Erne** cruise-in-company in September still aiming for Castlecaldwell but may use the event to assist members with pick up of buoys and other skills. Arrangements to be decided at the next meeting
- e. **Annual dinner on 5 October** in the Moorings Bellanaleck has been agreed with advertising later in the summer
- f. **Visit to Crom Castle** – there has been interest by members for the Branch to organise a visit to the Castle perhaps in conjunction with a cruise-in-company in late August
Action: Ross to liaise with Lord Erne about possible dates

3. Events for 2020

The committee began to discuss the events calendar for 2020 with a view to advertising early and for providing for a wider range of member interests. Suggestions to date include a par-3 golf competition in Manor House, a childrens/ young people sailing training event at Carrybridge, a wider range of cruise-in-company events to focus on environment, waterway safety and boat skills. The members survey would ask for ideas and interests.

4. Membership update

The Branch now has 110 members with other expressing an interest in joining which the committee expects to increase with the launch of the leaflets and banners.

5. Publicity

- a. **Leaflets** – Colin Slack arrived at the meeting with 1k printed leaflets that committee members had approved. These would be used to advertise the Branch and could be displayed at marinas and other public venues. Holders

would be ordered, to be given to marinas with the leaflets for easier display. Colin advised the cheapest option was through Amazon.

Action: Ross to distribute leaflets and order holders

- b. **Banners** - After reviewing a number of images and text for the banners it was agreed to use the image of Enniskillen Castle and the waterway and the text :

“ Support the waterways

Joint the Branch

Access Members Benefits”

The banners would be displayed, attached with cable ties, at marinas (with permission) which should be negotiated by committee members with home marinas.

Action: Colin Slack to amend the banners and print off as agreed.

Committee members agreed to discuss with their home marinas

- c. **Articles for the media** – Ross reported that the Impartial Reporter although interested in printing articles from the Branch have been tied up with a big local story. This would be kept under review and followed up later in the year
- d. **Other media** – Mike Kingston reported that further to the confirmed find of a sunken Catalina in the Lower Lough the BBC have followed up with filming for a ‘Year on the Lakes’ (title likely to change as it will now have a nationwide broadcast). Mike and Robert Navan took Sarah Breen from the BBC out to view the site and were able to photo it clearly. The timing of the broadcast is not yet known

Action: Branch to advertise to members when the programme is to be broadcast as there is likely to be high member interest

6. Any other business

- a. **Event with head injury charity** – Mike Kingston has been approached by Ken Bell for the Branch to support access to the lakes by a group of individuals from a head injury charity on Tuesday 6 August. The proposal had been for a number of members to travel in convoy to transport up to 50 individuals from Manor House to the Mooring for dinner and return to Manor House. Committee members agreed that this was very much in the spirit of the IWAI and Branch’s terms of reference to support access to the waterways, particularly for those less able to do so. Several practical concerns were raised and it was proposed that the Branch support the event through sponsorship of a charter transport such as *Lady of the Lake* or the *Kestrel* asking that local businesses and the Branch defer the cost of the transport.

Action: Mike Kingston to discuss further with Ken Bell and Ross and others to approach local businesses for sponsorship

- b. **Marquee** – Mike Kingston is holding the Branch marquee and reported on its poor condition. He was unsure that it was safe to erect and described it as being very difficult to store. It was agreed that this was probably past any useful life and should now be written off but might be tried one last time on one of the upcoming events. It was recognised that the type of lightweight large tents available now were cheaper, easier to erect, safer and easier to store and the Branch should now consider replacing it, particularly in light of the increased events programme

Action: Branch committee to consider the replacement of the marquee

- 7. **Date of next meeting:** Proposed 27 July 2019 during the Boatyard gin event– time and venue to be confirmed