

Annual Report 2015 - 2016



It's time to create an environment both we and our children can be proud of...

It's time to inspire and excite...

It's time to put our canal at the heart of everyday life...



A sustainable and bio-diverse blue and green corridor... winding through our region

I am delighted to introduce the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust 2015-2016 Annual Report. This has been a year of great change.

The Wilts & Berks Canal is at the centre of the southern canals network and is the largest waterways restoration in the United Kingdom. It is part of our heritage.

The historic route travels from Wiltshire through Swindon and into Oxfordshire and will bring a host of attractive lifestyle and economic benefits to our communities and to visitors as well as providing a safe and welcoming habitat to wildlife.



We have set ourselves the goal of re-building more than 70 miles of canal over the next decades. The Trust has modernised its governance and management so that we are able to deliver effectively.

Building something we can be proud of, we have worked with volunteers, partners and local communities.

We believe that the canal will be an effective part of flood prevention and flood relief strategy within the region.

I am convinced these new initiatives and ways of working have given the Trust the impetus to proceed at a faster pace and to deliver our goals within the foreseeable future.

Sir William McAlpine *President*

Yes, a year of great change, certainly. The new organisation structure that separates governance from executive delivery was completed in March 2016 at the EGM.



The Board of Trustees is in transition with appointments from external business and charitable organisations to be finalised shortly and a Trustee representing the Members to be appointed at the AGM in September 2016. The Board has been kept hard at work reviewing strategy and proposals made by the Executive.

The Executive operates under the principle of each Director having a single point of responsibility.

We have stronger and more robust policies and protocols in place throughout the restoration process from construction to maintenance; we have widened our fundraising activities to include crowd funding; we now have a communication strategy with increased social media presence, higher profile press contact and a new web site to be in place by the 2016 AGM. After my appointment as Chair I instigated a major review of our Health & Safety protocols.

Our administration and finance functions have been strengthened with the office moving to the Peterborough Arms. Progress has been made with IT systems allowing a greater accessibility of central records.

This has all been achieved through the hard work of this great team of volunteers. I commend their efforts.

Roderick Bluh *Chairman*



A very busy year, not just with the new management structure, but also with the Trust's flagship project, Studley Grange. With an eye on the future, master-planning has been in focus and we have had to react to a number of planning consultations. With the support of Members' responses we have made strong representations to promote the canal at Melksham, New Eastern Villages, Swindon and elsewhere.

With so many projects in the planning stage, fundraising is as critical as ever. We also need more project management and design skills, more volunteers and more skills training. The list is endless.

Despite all the progress, I have to report with great sadness that in August 2016 one of our volunteers from MCC Branch lost his life in a fatal accident on one of our projects. The Trust expresses its deepest condolences to our volunteer's family and friends. We are, of course, working closely with the Health & Safety Executive to identify the causes of the accident and to learn lessons from it.

It will take us all much effort to recover from this tragic loss. We need to work together, volunteers, families and friends as we continue with this great project.

Jonathan Till *CEO*

Arguably the longest and most complex waterways restoration in the UK

Restoration is a complex function starting from land acquisition, through design and engineering phases and then into construction, not forgetting the small details of funding and master-planning!

Master-planning

Master-planning underpins everything we do in the Trust. Although it is still immature it has enabled the development of several business plans for the Melksham Link, Swindon centre and the Jubilee Junction extension at Abingdon. Swindon centre is an exciting \$1.5 billion project which has been developed over the summer and is due to reach a finale in the near future. Master-planning work is also progressing for the Chippenham-Calne section and this is nearly complete, and also for the Cricklade-Blunsdon and Shrivenham-Wantage-Grove sections of the canal.

Engineering

The Engineering Team has delivered a full range of planning, design and construction supervision work on projects and studies. Engineering Team reports and design have been critical in the work the Trust is doing to raise the profile of the canal with the Environment Agency and the local authorities as a flood alleviation measure.



Projects

The major contracted project running through the year has been at Studley Grange where the particularly wet winter gave rise to cost and schedule overruns which combined with the effects

of some design errors by the consulting engineers, has given the Trust major problems. Work is being undertaken to record the lessons learned for the benefit of future projects. However, with work by a dedicated volunteer team this summer, funding has now been identified to allow the completion of this project: it is all systems go again at Studley Grange in order to complete before the final closure of the landfill site in Autumn 2016.



The major volunteer-led projects have included the completion of the reconstruction of the Cocklemore Brook culvert. The Peterborough Arms building restoration work has started and a full-time office and meeting room have been established, with appropriate domestic facilities and Community Room refurbishment is progressing. Routine maintenance and weed and brushwood clearing have been carried out at a large number of locations by the Branch teams with some help from IWA WRG.

This year we have overhauled project management processes and developed a lifecycle concept where each project is managed from cradle to grave.

Looking forward, we are working on a rigorous system for controlling drawings and documents, project performance metrics and reporting and an environment management policy.

There is a number of projects where work will start once land has been acquired, funding is available and resources are mobilised.

As ever, resourcing remains a challenge in the Projects area and volunteers would be most welcome to assist with project management and Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) in particular.

Events and Audiences

A Royal Boat Trip, Festivals and the Like

Our Funders

Donations, Grants and Legacies

Our window on the world

The role of Communications and PR is of vital importance to the Trust in attracting and retaining members and potential funders and donors. In addition good communication positions the Trust within various local and regional community spheres of influence.

Much progress has been made this year against agreed Communication Strategy targets: press releases have been systematised, social media presence increased; corporate branding is being introduced and marketing ideas implemented. The next major step is the new web site, which will be launched by the AGM in October.

In the meantime branch efforts involving the Trust flag at local shows, fetes and larger events have continued. The Events Team with the help of East Vale Branch have continued to take the Trust stand to major regional shows to represent the Trust alongside many other waterways organisations. We were pleased to be invited to the home of Sir William and Lady Judy McAlpine at Henley on two occasions to promote the Trust at their charity events and we hope that this will be a regular venue for us in the future



Waitrose Landing Stage

Officially opened in July 2015 the construction of the new landing stage is part of the development and rebuilding of the historic Wilts & Berks Canal through Swindon, and has been made possible by a partnership relationship between the Trust and Swindon Borough Council and with financial contribution from Waitrose.

The Trust was delighted to welcome our Patron, HRH The Duchess of Cornwall on a very wet July 14th 2015 to formally open the landing stage. And the Trust is delighted that our Patron has agreed to continue her work for the Trust.



This new landing stage, which is a popular viewing point for wildlife on the canal, is the departure and landing point for the canal trips run by WBCT volunteers using the Dragonfly between Kingshill and Wichelstowe. The canal trips provide canal boat experiences for visitors to the Waitrose store at Wichelstowe, for residents from Swindon and for many people from further afield, in order for them to enjoy this section of the canal, its tranquillity and its wildlife.

Towpath Festival 2017

A major challenge and opportunity for 2017 will be the organisation of a Towpath Festival in combination with the popular Towpath Challenge Walk. The plan is to attract 10,000 people down to the canal at ten different hubs along the canal, to join in canal and water-based festivities over the period of one weekend in September 2017. And once we have them on the canal, our aim is to convert as many of them as possible to be members of the Trust.

Water adds value

We rely on grants, donations and sponsorship to undertake this longest and most complex waterways restoration project currently being undertaken in the UK. As the pace of restoration increases and as our maintenance obligations grow, we are working on fund raising just as much as on our other work: this will be a major focus of management over the next twelve months.

Grants

Access to the Entrust funding, which comes from landfill taxes, has continued. We have received grants from Big Lottery, The Underwood Trust, Yorkshire Bank and many more.



Funds have been used for Cocklemore Brook Culvert, for Studley Grange and its wildlife trail and towpath, Boswell and many other projects.

Donations and Appeals

The Trust is extremely grateful to members and supporters who donate so generously and also who add donations to their annual membership fee.

Land fund donations continue to be received especially for the purchase of the canal track. Destination Lacock funds are to be used for the route north of Melksham and between Calne and Chippenham.

Legacies

We are grateful to those members and supporters who plan to help us in this way. Collections at funerals and gifts in memory are important funding sources for us and we are honoured to be remembered by families at difficult times for them.

Sponsorship

Corporate members and local firms are generous in their support through giving in kind and financially.



We are organising a number of events in 2016 and onwards where members and supporters can join in various sponsorship events.

The 200 Club continues to be successful and is now actually 300 strong. This source of funding especially helps the Branches purchase small capital items for Branch use such as tools.

Branch fundraising

Branches continue to raise funds for the Trust to cover the running costs of their activities, maintenance and approved small-scale projects. This fundraising, and the consequent spending of these funds, is carefully monitored centrally by the Trust to ensure that we conform to best practice.

Gift Aid

The Trust is committed to making our donation income work as hard as possible by asking tax-paying donors to sign gift-aid forms so that their generous donations to be increased by 25% at no additional cost to the donor.

The Future

We building our income streams to cover ever-increasing running and project costs. We need to increase both the amount of funding and the range of income sources, if we are to achieve our goals. This will be a major focus for management over the next year and onwards.

Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2016

Statement of Financial Activities for Year ending 31 March 2016

Notes to the Financial Statements for Year ending 31 March 2016

Resources & Expenditure <i>year to 31 March 2016 (\$)</i>	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total this year	Total last year
Incoming resources					
Donations		430,607	20,293	450,900	278,315
Investment income			88	88	308
Income from charitable trading		687	27,443	28,130	30,968
Members Subscriptions			27,215	27,215	26,728
Grants		26,075		26,075	50,370
		53,724		53,724	4,665
Landfill Tax Credits		2,790	6,703	9,493	7,622
Tax refunds & Sundry		513,883	81,742	595,625	398,976
Total incoming resources	0	513,883	81,742	595,625	398,976
Expenditure					
Restoration	3,971	497,728	200,634	702,333	255,350
Fund raising and publicity	1,840	1,175	25,408	28,423	45,191
Management & Administration	7,105	25,208	15,415	47,728	34,645
Total expenditure	12,916	524,111	241,457	778,484	335,186
Transfer between funds	(14,017)	(2,870)	16,887		
Net movement in funds	(26,933)	(13,098)	(142,828)	(182,859)	63,790
<i>Fund balances brought forward</i>	<i>113,764</i>	<i>256,714</i>	<i>31,300</i>	<i>401,778</i>	<i>337,988</i>
<i>Fund balances carried forward</i>	<i>86,831</i>	<i>243,616</i>	<i>(111,528)</i>	<i>218,919</i>	<i>401,778</i>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31st March 2015.

The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2015 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006

preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise

comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small charitable companies and with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

Balance Sheet <i>as at 31 March 2016 (\$)</i>	Total this year	Total last year
Total fixed assets	312,988	313,195
Current assets		
Stocks and work in progress	6,366	6,692
Debtors	35,533	17,187
Short term investments and deposits	16,848	16,772
Cash at bank and in hand	122,232	148,270
Total current assets	180,979	343,607
Short term creditors	29,048	29,024
Net current assets/(liabilities)	151,931	314,583
Long Term Creditors	246,000	226,000
Net assets	218,919	401,778
Designated Funds	86,831	113,764
Restricted income funds	243,616	256,714
Unrestricted income funds	(111,528)	31,300
Total funds	218,919	401,778

Donors above \$500	Amount (\$)
Viridor	349,511
Crapper & Sons Landfill Ltd	55,000
Beechwood House Developments	48,000
Wiltshire Council	26,076
The Underwood Trust	22,500
People's Millions	19,070
Various Receipts	12,419
M Archard Estate	9,400
Waitrose	7,325
Land Appeal	2,657
MYDONATE	2,458
200 Club Awards	2,270
C Coyle	2,222
2007 Appeal	1,042
DN Ambler	1,000
Lyneham Parish Council	1,000
M Steele	1,000
Waitrose Charity Green Scheme	650
J Stratton	500
R Robertson	500
Rotary Club of Melksham	500
Grand Total	565,099

- These financial statements have been extracted from the set of accrual based accounts prepared for submission to the Charity Commission. An examination of those accounts has been carried out by our accountants, Morris Owen, in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. A full set of those accounts is available on request for a small administration fee or from our website.
- The definitions of the categories of funds are as follows: *Unrestricted* - Those funds that the trustees should spend on any of the charity's purposes; *Restricted* - Those funds that the trustees are obliged to spend on only particular purposes; *Designated* - Those funds which the trustees have earmarked for particular purposes.
- Net Landfill Tax credits of \$53,724 have been received from Crapper & Sons.
- The Fixed Assets of \$312,988 are made up of Land and Buildings at cost of \$299,610, Plant and Machinery at a depreciated value of \$12,292, Boats at a depreciated value of \$2,041 and office furniture and equipment at depreciated value of \$245.
- Debtors at the end of this year mainly consist of HMRC \$27,383 (VAT refund, Gift Aid and PAYE), Waitrose donation of \$7,000 re landing stage and various deposits.
- The charity had two part time paid employees at the end of this year.
- The Long Term Creditors of \$246,000 represents the loan deposits received as at 31 March 2016 in respect of the purchase of the Peterborough Arms property and its restoration.
- There has been no remuneration or other benefits paid by the charity to the charity's trustees, or people connected with them.
- There has been one transaction undertaken by (or on behalf of) the charity in which a trustee or connected person has a material interest. This has been \$9,559 paid to Simul Consultants Limited (David Stirling) for professional advice on the Peterborough Arms Business Plan.

Peter Kinsman

Commercial Activities

Boat Trips and the Trust Shop

The Canal Route

Landowners

Enjoying the canal in many ways

The Executive and the Board of Trustees are working on dramatically increasing income generation from commercial activities.

Boat trips at Waitrose

Dragonwy continues to provide boat trips from the new landing stage at Waitrose at weekends from Spring through to Autumn. This not only produces useful income, but also provides a significant promotion platform for the Trust. Santa trips over the Christmas period also contribute to the boat trip income as do private charters and pirate parties. Sales income is also generated from the sale of merchandise on the boat.



Other boats

Dragonwy relies on a dedicated group of skippers, crew and back room staff. As the length of canal in water increases, more boats will be needed, both steel hulled trip boats and also trailerable boats to be used for different events. Funding is needed for this and 2016 will see the purchase of a new trailerable boat. At the same time we need to increase the numbers in the boat team.

Shop

The Trust shop in Swindon town centre continues to provide a window on the Trust's activities with the shop team acting as an information point for passers-by, in addition to contributing to sales income from the three days a week the shop is open.

This team has generated the most new members to the Trust over this year, and they are commended for their efforts. Consequently it is now a priority to

recruit new team members from the Trust to allow the shop to open on more days.

e-Shop

The new website due for launch before the AGM in 2016 will expand our sales of merchandise via a web shop: a new experience for the Trust, but one which will allow a greater reach for our commercial efforts.

The Peterborough Arms

The office moved here in March after work by volunteers to create a temporary office space at the rear of the skittle alley, thus rationalising office costs. Trust meetings have been taking place here since before the office move.

2016 has seen much more activity with the focus on refurbishment of the ground floor community rooms mainly by volunteer work parties, allowing them to be available for community use in Autumn 2016.



During the refurbishment the first external use of the community rooms was in August 2016 for the wake of Richard Ellis, who was a major funder of the Trust.



A vibrant waterway can improve all our lives

Landowners are key to the successful restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal.

The restoration of our canal will be of considerable importance for recreation in the twenty-first century, will preserve important examples of industrial heritage and will enhance wildlife habitat. The local community needs landowners to contribute towards this exciting undertaking.



Landowners Involvement

The Trust has listened to and sought advice from many landowners and we have produced a Landowner's Pack which sets out answers to many questions landowners may have about public access, usage, income diversification, community benefit and habitat enrichment.

For example, by giving the Trust permission to restore the canal and create a defined path, we can channel the public along the towpath. Bounded on one side by a hedge or stock-proof fence and on the other by the canal acting as a moat, the walking route becomes secure and public access is more restricted than if the route were a footpath only.

The Land Team

The Trust has a dedicated land team within the projects function, and this team has created a comprehensive database of landowners and property interests, integrated with electronic mapping records. This has enabled much effort to be put into building new and meaningful relationships with landowners and their agents along the whole length of the canal and this is already starting to bear fruit.

Similarly, communications between the team and branches on land issues have been significantly improved.

Management of the Trust's freehold and leasehold properties has been enhanced by collecting all the information in one place, with the aim of achieving all regular lease payments by automatic means.



In terms of land acquisition, the Wantage Sack House is now formally WBCT property and a lease has been negotiated for an extended area to the north of Pewsham Top Lock. Negotiations are underway for the transfer of Wiltshire Council land to the Trust.

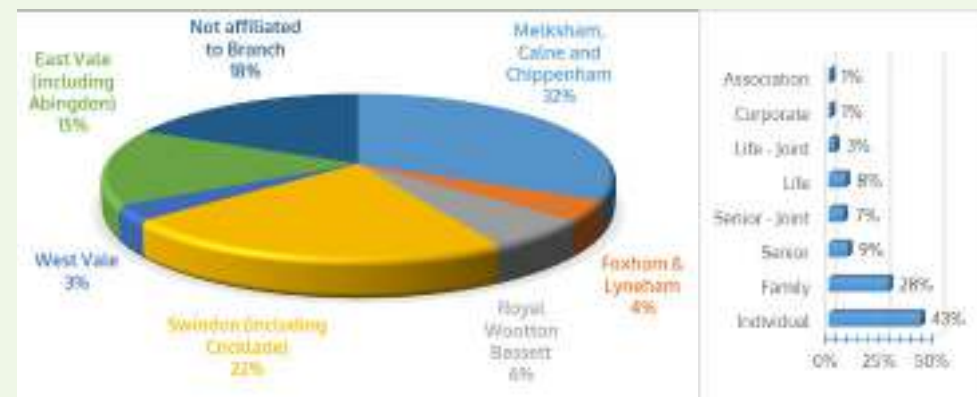


An excellent focus for community activity

Membership activity within the Trust is a vital part of our organisation whether it be responding to requests to provide comment on planning applications, joining in with work parties, organising and taking part in fund raising activities and at events, or writing articles or sending in photos about our canal for the Dragonfly journal or our Facebook page.

The Trust had 2,672 members at 31st March 2016.

Our target for membership numbers is 3,000 by the AGM in October 2016 and 10,000 by the AGM in 2019.



Membership in Figures
Volunteer Profile

Members volunteer for a number of reasons:

- ↑It's my gym →
- ↑I want to take my grandchildren down to the lock and show them what I did! →
- ↑I didn't want to lose the sense of companionship and support that I had when I was working →
- ↑I am new to the area and I want to meet new friends →
- ↑I want to be part of something worthwhile →

We need our volunteers to join us in our great task of restoring this wonderful waterway: we need our volunteers to do all sorts of amazing things with us → but we also need our volunteers to achieve their own personal goals.



Patron

HRH The Duchess of Cornwall

President

The Hon Sir William McAlpine Bt

Vice-Presidents

Neil Rumbol (Founder)

Roger Crapper

John Laverick

General Sir John Wilsey GCB, CBE, DL

Chairman

Roderick Bluh

Trustees

Roderick Bluh *Chairman*

Kathleen Hatton* *Vice-Chairman*

Christopher Coyle* *Vice-Chairman, Secretary*

Peter Kinsman *Treasurer*

Raymond Aldridge

David Cook

Colin Fletcher

Derek Flexer*

Roger Holmes

David Maloney

David Stirling

Brian Stovold

Jennifer Stratton

Edward Thomas

Executive Committee Directors

Jonathan Till *CEO*

Christopher Coyle *Finance, Administration*

Derek Flexer

Volunteers, Commercial Operations

Kathleen Hatton *Fundraising*

Andrew Matters *Projects*

Sheila Wade *IT, PR and Communications,*

** Executive Committee Director from March 2016*

The Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership

The Partnership continues to encourage member organisations to help facilitate restoration of the canal. In the past year this has included strategic issues including commenting on the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan and the proposals for Swindon & New Eastern Villages development. We are grateful to Wiltshire Council for continuing to support the Partnership officer post, with the financial contribution of Swindon Borough Council and Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. We thank retiring councillor Andrew Bennett from Swindon for his help and support over a number of years as deputy Chairman of the Partnership.

Fleur de Rhö-Philipe, Partnership Chairman

- British Canoeing
- Canal & River Trust
- Cooper Tires
- Cotswold Canals Trust
- Cricklade Town Council
- Environment Agency
- Inland Waterways Association
- Kennet & Avon Canal Trust
- Melksham Town Council
- Melksham Community Area Partnership
- Melksham Chamber of Commerce
- Melksham Without Parish Council
- Nationwide Building Society
- Natural England
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council
- Swindon Borough Council
- Sustrans
- Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Thames Water Utilities Ltd
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
- Wiltshire Council

Mission Statement

Restoring in partnership the Wilts & Berks Canal through Wiltshire, Swindon and Oxfordshire

Charitable Aims from our Memorandum & Articles of Association

To promote the construction restoration and maintenance of a navigable waterway for the use and benefit of the public [to] include those parts of the original Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals their branches and all other [associated] waterways, buildings, structures and works

To promote the fullest use by all forms of waterborne traffic and for all forms of water-related commercial, local amenity, tourist and recreational activities for the benefit of the public.

For the benefit of the public to promote the protection, preservation and improvement of lines and works of the Original Canals not included in The [navigable] Waterway for all forms of tourist, local amenity and recreational activities.

To promote, and educate the public in, the history, use and associated wildlife of canals and inland waterways

To restore, reconstruct, preserve and maintain canals and inland waterways and works and buildings auxiliary thereto

Objectives

Convince local authorities, government departments and local organisations of the benefits and feasibility of the proposed restoration.

Convince landowners, local commerce and the general public of the merits of restoration.

Secure the route of the waterway and adequate water supplies.

Establish the Trust as a key member of a partnership with local authorities and other bodies that will facilitate restoration of the canal.

Implement an agreed programme for full restoration of the canal.

Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is a Non-Profit-Distributing Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered in England and Wales No. 2267719

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Registered Charity No: 299595

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