

Volunteer Scheme, Report to the AGM 12th of March 2022

As you may well be aware the Volunteer Scheme was introduced in August 2015 prompted by the need to achieve three particular objectives:

- (1) To increase the sense of 'ownership' of the Trust and its activities amongst our moorers.
- (2) To widen the group of volunteers and volunteering across a much wider group than had previously existed. Effectively to lighten the load for the relatively small group of volunteers who had given many hours to the Trust, week in, week out.
- (3) By achieving the above, in encouraging greater participation in the Trust's activities by our moorers that would help to reduce the running costs of the Trust in carrying out the various jobs and tasks we need to undertake across the year.

Now into its seventh year it is my view that the Scheme has now become a part of 'how we do things around here' in that for all new moorers it is taken on and accepted as a part of having a mooring at Hawne Basin. The pandemic however did, for all of us, create almost two years of uncertainty with the need to keep safe, secure and well taking absolute priority for us all. The Coombeswood Canal Trust has been no exception in all its efforts to keep Covid out of the Basin. It was in the midst of that that the 2019/20 Scheme year (1st of July to the 30th of June) was suspended in its tracks and the 2020/21 scheme abandoned completely. This was a difficult decision to take and, I must acknowledge, not one that was met with unanimous approval given that volunteer hours already worked were in effect lost. Notwithstanding this decision it is testimony to all the residents and the one or two leisure moorers 'locked in' alongside them that they carried on with the necessary maintenance purely for the good of the Basin and I would like to record a special thanks to them this afternoon.

Moving on the Scheme was reinstated on the 1st of July 2021 as life began to feel a little more like normal, whatever that is! Thence to be slowed down by the onset of autumn and winter and, with it the Omnicron variant and now in the early spring there are no legal restrictions in place, just the need to learn how to live with Covid. It's been a slow start but as things get back to more like 'normal' and the weather improves we look to the Volunteer Hours Scheme continuing to make a real contribution in meeting the three objectives as set out at the beginning of my report.

Almost three quarters into the scheme's 'year' participation in it at the time of writing follows a familiar pattern. In that approx one third of eligible moorers (CCT Members) have completed all the twenty hours required, another third not having completed any to date and the remaining third somewhere in the middle. It is not too late, with hopefully a maintenance weekend in the offing, for the above one third, one third, one third proportions to change in that many more can complete 'their' hours, some to increase the hours already completed and those who have yet to start, time to do so.

As said on previous occasions the Scheme has never been about raising money; saving money YES; and indeed we would have been delighted if the Supplementary Charge was never made. However, as in the past any money collected by way of the Supplementary Charge this year will be set aside by the Governing Council and put towards projects looking to improve the infrastructure around the Basin. For example in previous years these monies have gone towards improving the toilet block and the installation of electricity meters. This honours our commitment to put any monies raised from the Supplementary Charge towards projects that will have a direct positive impact for those who moor at Hawne Basin.

Looking back over the last nine months or so we hope that there have and will continue to be 'jobs' and tasks to fit all levels of interest, skill and time available. Remember all jobs have the same value; an hour given for one task is the same as an hour given for another, irrespective of its complexity and 'degree of difficulty'. This is a principle we believe is vitally important and hopefully encourages you all to 'give what you can'. It is equally valued.

Do remember however that all tasks 'qualifying' under the scheme must have been identified by the Scheme's co-ordinators prior to been carried out, not, unfortunately, seeing a job you feel needs to be done and carrying it out! If however you do identify a job in such a way please let us know. It may well be added to the list!

Once a job or task has been carried out do remember to enter the details on your boat record sheet in the Cabin as soon as you are able. It is your responsibility to do this, and very much in your interests as we cannot retrospectively allow, after the 30th of June each year, claims for hours worked.

To Sum up:

Now in our seventh year, the sense of togetherness and ownership within the Trust, somewhat battered by the pandemic, is beginning to come back and will hopefully increase. The Scheme has helped enable, amongst others, cover of the Shop when our caretakers are on leave and helped us, by and large, to keep on top of the regular maintenance tasks around the Basin. Many thanks to all!

Finally, I would personally like to thank those involved in the running of the scheme and, in particular to Sheila Campbell as Coordinator of the scheme.

Jon Jones

March 2022