

The North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1180474

Working to Secure Norfolk's Canal Heritage

www.nwdct.org

secretary@nwdct.org

Annual General Meeting held on the 12th October 2021

at the North Walsham Methodist Church.

OFFICER ANNUAL REPORTS

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NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

CHAIRMANS' ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 12TH OCTOBER 2021

As chairman of your Trust, I must not only reflect on the debilitating effect the dreadful Covid 19 virus has caused to many sides of our work but also pay thanks to the steadfast work carried out by our officers and highly worthy volunteers throughout the past troubled times.

The structure of the Trust has been reliably built on a very firm base and is still evolving to include and cover the developing future plans and requirements of our ideology and strategy.

Some officers and Trustees have sailed onto pastures new in the past two years and I thank them for their input in all disciplines to the Trust, which has been well received and greatly appreciated. New members have joined the organising team and they have and are being welcomed and assisted in their journey with us. New posts are being created to relieve the pressure on some of the existing and we do need more good people to come forward to take up these posts. All will be fully supported, with help given when asked for or offered and the successful applicants would bring with them their own skills, ideas and experiences to the task, which would be well respected.

As can be seen from the annual financial report, the Trust has weathered this inclement climate considerably better than was expected when Covid 19 struck.

I have been duly impressed by the resilience and adaptability shown by our volunteers and their leaders on the 'work face', who have continued (subject always to the then current government regulations) with their work in all manner of conditions!

Much behind-the-scenes work has been and is being carried out with various authorities, such as NNDC, NCC, EA, NWT, NWTC and the four various proprietors of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal.

I would like to recognise and thank the many people, members, firms and companies who have contributed to our achievements over the past 24 months and in particular our Trustees and Officers.

Finally, with your support I look forward with optimism to the future when progress in our cause and work will be continued.

Thank you all, once again.



Chairman
NW&DCT

NORTH WALSHAM AND DILHAM CANAL TRUST
FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR THE YEAR 1ST June 2020 to 31st May 2021

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR 1ST June 2020 to 31st May 2021

Income

Events	£	-
Sales of merchandise	£	38.00
Grants	£	1,510.00
Donations	£	6,028.36
Subscriptions	£	2,266.00
Trip Boats	£	1,320.00
NNDC Rate rebate	£	518.16

Total Income

£ 11,680.52

Expenditure

Subscriptions	£	54.00
Rent	£	3,000.00
Rates	£	217.60
Insurance	£	1,614.57
Security	£	70.16
Work Parties	£	2,145.51
Admin	£	451.16
Marketing	£	874.42
Trip Boat	£	160.42
Building Maintenance	£	60.00
Machinery Repairs & Servicing	£	3,585.32
Plant Machinery Tools	£	279.68
Ebridge Lock	£	317.45
Bacton Wood Lock	£	21.98
Depreciation	£	6,059.70

Total Expenditure

£ 18,911.97

Excess of Expenditure over Income

£ 7,231.45

Membership Secretary's Report to the AGM 2021

A number of changes over the course of the last 18 months have made comparison with membership data from previous years less meaningful.

- Early in the covid pandemic we took the decision not to chase members for unpaid subscription fees, instead continuing to consider them members, even after subs had lapsed.
- In July of this year we went live with a new membership platform (MemberMoJo) which counts each associated member in a 'Family' membership, unlike our previous methodology in which we counted each 'Family' membership as 2 members.

As a consequence, our current numbers are not truly comparable with previous data.

There was an initial, anticipated drop in membership numbers shortly after taking the data live on the new database in July. Those members who had chosen to lapse over the covid period failed to engage and refresh their memberships and so there was a correction in terms of member numbers, which simply reflected natural attrition that we had not recorded in the prior year.

However, since going live in July with MemberMoJo we have gained 47 new members, the majority of which (with the exception of the 20 who joined at our Ebridge Open Event) have joined and paid online. It appears that the new system is already making it easier for people to join and start to enjoy the benefits of membership immediately.

New members get an immediate confirmation and welcome email and are instantly included in any member mail distributions.

Reminders of forthcoming renewal dates are automatically sent and members can opt out of these reminders, should they wish to (which they may wish to do, if they pay by standing order). Indeed, members are in complete control of email traffic and *can* opt out of all emails from MemberMoJo, although **I would advise caution** as we now use this platform to send out Quagmire, Q-extra and other communications!

Members can also log in and alter their own data - updating their contact details, amending their gift aid status, joining the Contact Directory or work party distributions etc.

MemberMoJo helps us to safeguard the data of our members and all emails are sent such that they appear in each member's mail box as if it is sent *just* to them. No string of email addresses, CCs or BCCs; no risk of mistakenly sharing email addresses with other members.

Conversely, it also allows us the opportunity to share data - should members opt in to the Contact Directory- fostering communication within our membership group.

New membership applications, so far this year, total 59 which is very healthy and perhaps reflects the growing number of users of the canal, counting in their number swimmers, paddle boarders, wildlife photographers and dog walkers. It is heartening that these users choose to join the NW&DCT to support the maintenance of this valuable community asset.

Total no. Memberships 260 (321 members) as at 18/8/2021.

Membership queries can, of course, still be directed to me at membership@nwdct.org and by post to:

Membership Secretary NW&DCT,



Please do feel free to feedback any comments you may have on the new database. We are constantly revising and updating it to get the most out of it for our members.



BOATING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2021

This year has been a challenge in terms of attracting Passenger Boat Customers, for rather obvious Covid reasons. We did organise various ways of reducing costs and increasing passenger numbers able to be on board safely. Non-the-less, passenger numbers have been very low. Just before the Open Weekend, there was an article by the EDP, promoting the service. This brought a wonderful response. Thereafter, there was a huge upsurge in passenger numbers. Come the end of School Holidays, that had dropped off to a significant extent, but customers do keep coming. As I have said for a couple of years now, I'm certain of a steep increase in customer numbers as soon as the upper pound is re-watered. Most, by far, of the visitors we've had over the past 3 years have expressed a firm intention to return as soon as that happens.

When we began, the whole Trip Boat project was done on a shoestring. We started with a petrol outboard we already had, cobbled the trip boat together at as low a cost as was possible. "Ella II" has done us proud and is now due for a renewal of her Boat Safety Certificate, a re-paint and general service. This year we have replaced the lead acid batteries and the electric outboard. The main set will last us a further 3-4 years, provided that all goes to plan. We shall need another pair for the Standby set next season, in all likelihood. I have further plans which can be revealed next year if they come to pass. These plans will not involve The Trust in any capital expenditure.

For reasons of both normal retirement due to advancing years and others around Covid causing alterations in crew members' personal and professional arrangements, we are rather short of crew for now. A hand has been extended asking for new crew members. By the time of this meeting, we are hoping to have improved numbers, but have not had to turn passengers away and certainly don't expect to have to. On the subject of crew, we are also in need of operators for both The Weedeater and Weasel, the dredger, in the foreseeable future.

The Weedeater was serviced over the winter and this summer we have been fortunate to be able to obtain a pair of wider cutting blades, which will be prepared over this winter and ready to use next season. The great benefit of these, apart from there now being a supply of parts, which will cover us long into the future at very low cost, as well as to give us an extra foot each side, the purpose of which is to stop damage to the valuable reed growing from the waters edge. The blade will extend beyond the width of the paddles, which is not the case with the original blade. Weed-cutting and raking has been performed at regular intervals throughout the season, whilst taking careful account of nesting birds etc.

Weasel, the dredger, has been leased from OCC for a 15 year period in exchange for giving it a major service, returning fully serviced at the end of the agreed period including changing the tired digger arm (supplied by Laurie) on the front, a thorough UHP cleansing of the hull, welding repairs by Daren Wright Fabrications of Dilham (50% of the time for that having been donated), replacing hydraulic lines and re-sealing rams as necessary, a thorough re-paint by our volunteers of the hull (which it is hoped will last up to 20 years) and superstructure and re-wiring of the electrical equipment. The other part of the agreement allows for OCC to use the craft, should the need arise.

Anybody wanting answers to any questions not mentioned in this report may contact the Boating Officer.

[REDACTED]

Fisheries Officer's Annual Report 2021


We continue to have an abundance of recorded catches of roach, rudd, bream, tench, pike, perch and dace, in what is now an upwards continuing year on year trend. It's very pleasing to be able to report the numerous evidenced catches of specimen fish which is credit to the thriving ecosystem that restoration of the Ebridge section has created.

My number one concern is the silt levels and the causes of silt at Spa Common. This presents a significant danger to the canal ecosystem and especially our fish stocks as it's a spawning ground. I greatly support the Trust in trying to resolve this ongoing problem and causes with urgency.

Our year-on-year trend of dead pike surfacing after winter continues to drop, all credit to our anglers and the Trust's adopted fishing policies.

Membership amongst our regular anglers is increasing and we continue to work to include anglers into the Trust and its work. I am pleased to receive many reports from other canal users that our anglers are amongst the friendliest they have come across.

I continue with my efforts to promote the canal on social media.

 - Fisheries Officer

20/08/2021

WILDLIFE OFFICERS AGM REPORT - 2021

13 Aug '21

Rewatering: Wildlife Mitigation I have been in email discussions with [REDACTED] Ecologist with the Internal Drainage Board-Water Management Alliance, about rewatering mitigation since spring '21. I then met him in June '21 to discuss this on site, and have sent his emailed comments to Trustees. Timing still seems to be the main factor to minimise harm to vulnerable wildlife, with early autumn seeming best.

Canal a Wildlife Corridor/Possible County Wildlife Site I and my Norfolk Flora Group colleague [REDACTED] re surveyed two County Wildlife Sites in the Canal corridor (Alder Carr, Spa Common) for the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and plan to do more. I have written about this for Summer's Q.

The Canal's Environs: Map of 2020 Survey of Adjacent Land Beyond the back sokes, the Canal is bordered by a wide variety of habitats, most of which have developed on land not in active agricultural use. A survey undertaken by myself in 2020 revealed how much of the Canal does in fact border semi-natural/unmanaged land – probably over 95%. The site is therefore almost entirely enclosed in and buffered by zones of 'wilderness' of various widths and comprising a range of habitats (see article in spring '21 Q. This 'sleeve' obviously enhances the Canal's already considerable potential as a refuge and corridor for wildlife.

I am now working with [REDACTED] Work Party Coordinator, to produce a proper online map of these Canal environs (many thanks to [REDACTED] for his expert help with this). We should then be able to use this map in order to graphically illustrate the Canal's wildlife corridor status in discussions with the EA, NWT etc; and for other purposes eg potentially contacting frontagers to encourage them re their positive role in this 'sleeve'.

Floating Pennywort. I have continued to attend the FP Working Group's monthly online meetings, and to send their Minutes to Trustees/Officers.

Wildlife Volunteers. We continue to have enquiries – particularly from students wishing to gain some experience, and I have met with and walked round with them, plus briefed them on our suggested protocol for recording wildlife. Now they are 'free range', but encouraged to send in their records to me, and to the relevant County Recorders.

Mini-meadow/[REDACTED]'s Meadow. I wrote an update about the mini-meadow in Q of May '21. Strangely, I then revisited it on the morning of the day of [REDACTED] death, which was nearby that afternoon. Obviously not knowing what was to happen later, I was delighted to see that our earlier cutting and raking off of coarse species had had a positive effect, and that many attractive flowering plants had started blooming in the Meadow again. I was with a student, and I mentioned my idea of the Canal-side of the site being a nice spot for a picnic bench or seat – "Perhaps called the [REDACTED] Seat". How strange and sad it is that [REDACTED] met his end near there later that day. I continue to moot the idea of a seat/picnic bench on this spot if it's acceptable to [REDACTED] family and friends, and if access is possible; and understand that this is being looked into.

Plant Recording The Canal plant list total is now 420.

ICT Officers Report to the Trust Annual General Meeting

WOW, what a year it has been and what changes the Trust has seen in regards to Information, Communications and Technology (ICT). As a Charity Trust we've definitely moved into the 21st century.

Our website – www.nwdct.org – continues to be worked upon and the layout improved. The Trust welcomed [REDACTED] as not only our Press Officer but also as our second website administrator and it's through his ideas that the format on some website sections have changed.

We've introduced new 'DONATION' buttons to our website which link directly to PayPal. These have been added along with links and 'buttons' to our new MemberMoJo database, which again is a new system, very easy to use and makes managing the membership database so much easier for all.

The website being kept up-to-date is important for those who wish to support us with Grants and additional funding. The website is usually a first point-of-call to learn about what kind of a charity we are.

Social Media – www.facebook.com/NWDCT/ page and group, Twitter & Instagram. Whilst our Facebook **PAGE** has information posted by a couple of Officers our Facebook **GROUP** continues to grow with many, many photographs and memories being uploaded by our supporters. What amazes me are the variety, quantity and quality of the wildlife photographs that are posted by those who use the canal pathways. Not forgetting the photographs of the stunning and beautiful sunsets that dominate the late afternoon canal skies. You are all so lucky if you live local to the North Walsham and Dilham Canal enjoying its ambience and natural beauty.

Technology introductions this last year.

The NWDC Trust created a PayPal account.

For new beginnings this saw the introduction of Canal-side posters with PayPal QR codes which brought in extra funds. (If you have a smartphone, you may install a QR reader app, point your smartphone camera on the QR code and follow the instructions, you may make a £3 minimum donation or an amount of your choice). I must say that the PayPal app has been worth its introduction.

Thank you to all who have used this new facility.

Along with our PayPal account we introduced a Trust 'Zettle' Card Reader machine which was definitely a benefit at our recent 'Ebridge Open Weekend', especially for those who, through the pandemic, have now got used to using their cards to pay for items rather than carrying cash.

Social Media stats over the years (to date 17th August 2021)

Social Media Statistics	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Facebook PAGE 'likes'	429	600	937	1290	1671	2128	2333	2536
Facebook GROUP					213	407	894	1395
Twitter followers					91	125	150	167
Instagram followers					69	107	130	181

Our Facebook PAGE has, to date, 2673 followers.

Website: <https://nwdct.org/>
Facebook PAGE <https://facebook.com/NWDCT/>
Facebook GROUP <https://facebook.com/groups/www.nwdct.org/>
Twitter <https://twitter.com/NWDCTrust>
Instagram <https://instagram.com/NWDCanalTrust/>

FINALLY

A huge thank you once again to [REDACTED] Stalham.
His patience in taking the odd 'password reset' or 'please create this for us' phone call or email is endless, all of which is very much appreciated from the Trustees and Officers, but especially me. Thank you [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] supports the work of the Canal Trust and charges the Trust a very reasonable annual fee for hosting our WordPress website. Last year the site became secure with the installation of an SSL certificate all of which [REDACTED] charges us a very reasonable fee for.
[REDACTED] also created various Trust email accounts for use by Trustees and Officer. These will become available on a "Who's Who" website page very soon, along with Officer photographs so you'll know who is Who and their Trust role in detail.

[REDACTED]
Trustee and ICT Officer
Mob: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Quagmire Editor's Annual Report - August 2021

For Volume Five of *Quagmire*, publication dates were changed to the Months of February, May, August, and November. Monthly printed numbers have increased, reflecting the rise in membership requesting a hard copy, and the numbers required for the membership packs distributed to new members. In order to offset the cost of printing and posting, members are requested to donate an extra £10 p.a.

A *Quagmire* pdf is electronically sent to all members, and the magazine is also published on ISSUU. Printed copies are also sent to the Canal owners and stakeholders.

4.4 had featured two work party stalwarts, [REDACTED] plus items of tlc for *Weasel* and *Weedeater* on the Lower Canal. The 5.1 February edition featured twenty years of Volunteer Work Parties on the Canal. 5.2 looked more at the nature side of the waterway, including a tribute to Roy Webster and the *Boy Roy* Stories. 5.3 was dedicated to the late [REDACTED] and his work over twenty years on Bacton Wood Lock.

The Trustees felt there was a need for an interim report for Members, so, for June 2021, the first *Q-Extra*, online monthly news sheet, was launched, covering the other eight months of the year. Feedback has indicated that members appreciate the more regular updates on the Trust's work.

Contributions and comments are always welcome from members and volunteers.

[REDACTED]

Quagmire Editor

16 August 2021

Archivist's Annual Report - August 2021

On the archival paperwork side, it has been a quiet year, although a few new photographs have come to light. In particular from the files held by [REDACTED], whose photos added to the those, already known, of a trip taken along the Canal by a group of young men in their Norfolk Restricted class dingy in 1914. It appears that they may have enlisted the services of the pleasure wherry *Elizabeth* to accompany them.



The most remarkable find was that of two long and heavy chains, that were dug from the silt of Ebridge Lock. These chains have a substantial piece of wooden post at one end, and a piece to fit the top of the centre lock post.

Researching old photographs show that these in place at Bacton Wood and Briggate Locks. It can only be surmised that the weight of the chain helped to crack open the bottom gates, when the lone wherryman had emptied the lock and needed to pull the gates open from his vessel.

[REDACTED]

EAWA Archivist for the NW&DC Records
16 August 2021

