

# ASHBY CANAL ASSOCIATION

## TRUSTEES REPORT and ANNUAL REVIEW for the YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023

### Reference and Administrative Details

Ashby Canal Association is a Registered Charity No 1063566, Company No 3396198, limited by guarantee registered in England whose Registered Office is at 40 Holland Crescent, Ashby de la Zouch Leicestershire LE65 1FS.

Trustees: P. Oakden (Chairman), D. Watts, C. Walker, R. Smith, R. Taylor, M. Wooding, C. Aston, A. Jenkins and M. Jeffs.

Secretary: W.G. Hetherington.

Advisers: G. Pursglove (Chairman, Ashby Canal Trust); Prof. O. P. Mulka, (President of the Association).

A. Jenkins (Editor of "SPOUT", the quarterly magazine of the Association & Website Administrator) and H. Worth, (IWA Honorary Engineer.)

Bankers: HSBC Bank plc, Market Place, Hinckley, LE10 1NU

Solicitors: M & S Solicitors Ltd, Lion Court, Staunton Harold Hall, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 1RT

Independent examiner of accounts Penelope Barber of Golden Eagle, Hockley Port Moorings, All Saints Street, Hockley, Birmingham B18 7RL

The Ashby Canal Company Limited, a former Associated Company has been dissolved..

Vice Presidents: S.J.Wain; Patron: A Bridgen MP

### Structure, Governance and Management

Ashby Canal Association ("ACA") was incorporated on 2nd July 1997 and is governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 10th June 1997. It took over the activities of the former unincorporated organisation of the same name originally founded in February 1966. The trustees are nominated and elected by the members of the Association from within the membership, serve for a period of three years and retire by rotation. Along with co-opted members they form the management committee, undertaking the day to day running of ACA's affairs and decision-making. There are no outside appointees. No committee members received remuneration for their services other than payment of out-of-pocket expenses, such as postage, travelling expenses, etc., most of which was donated back to ACA.

A Health & Safety policy is in place and safety issues were reviewed at management committee meetings. Public liability and other major risks are covered by appropriate insurance. Major risks are kept under review. For events and work parties, risk assessments are carried out. Appropriate financial policies are in place, and the accounts are subject to independent examination.

### Objects and Activities

(1) **The principal objectives** of ACA, set out in full in its Memorandum of Association, are to improve the condition of, preserve, and enhance the Ashby de la Zouch Canal for the benefit of the public and to promote and assist the restoration of the derelict northern reaches of the canal.

The Trustees declare that the Association's objectives are not exclusive to any particular interest group, are for public benefit and that the charity constitutes a public benefit entity under Financial Reporting Standard 102.

All of the Association's activities are continuing operations and the Association is a going concern.

(2) **Relationships** with other organisations and charities

The Association maintained working relations with The Canal and River Trust ("CRT"), The Inland Waterways Association ("IWA"), The Ashby Canal Trust ("ACT"), Leicestershire County Council ("LCC"), North West Leicestershire District Council ("NWLDC"), Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council ("HBBC"), Natural England and The Environment Agency and had dialogue with local district and county councillors and Member of Parliament. The Association is a corporate member of IWA, a member of the Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs, and is represented on the board of the Ashby Canal Trust.

(3) **Volunteer contributions**

ACA is fortunate to have many volunteers. Volunteer work parties undertook regular maintenance of the Association's canal-side land and buildings at Snarestone Wharf, work on the line of the canal around the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct and at the Illott Wharf site. With the assistance of a grant from IWA, ACA volunteers have been constructing a footpath along the route of the future restored canal between Snarestone Wharf and the new terminus in Measham. Weekly work parties have been laying hardcore, installing gates and signposts and building steps. Work is ongoing. They also took part in ACT work parties at Moira.

Administrative, membership, secretarial and accountancy work was done voluntarily. Some of ACA's regular social events have not been possible this year in view of Covid, but smaller events were arranged when national regulations allowed. Newsletter editing, database, publicity design and web-site management were also undertaken entirely by volunteers or as gifts in kind. The oversight of Heritage Lottery Funded archaeological survey work and public events related thereto, was done by volunteers, as was planning for the next phases of canal restoration. ACA's sales and information kiosk at Snarestone was available, when permitted, for visiting boaters and walkers, thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers and our volunteer site caretakers.

In total, 6,255.75 hours of voluntary work were contributed to the Association during the year, equivalent in monetary terms to more than £111,470.50 The trustees record their thanks to all those involved.

**Canal Restoration:** Restoration plans are in place for the canal northwards from Bridge 62. Leicestershire County Council agreed to transfer the Transport and Works Act Order 2005 (TWAO) to the Association since it decided that it no longer wished to continue with its involvement in the canal restoration scheme. The implementation of this transfer is progressing slowly. Upon completion, ACA will be the land-owners in a position to apply for a substantial Heritage Lottery Fund ("HLF") Grant. As a precursor to the application, ACA carried out a HLF funded Industrial Archaeological investigation at Illott Wharf which was completed and the formal report issued by Leicester University in April 2019. Rules for Lottery Grant Applications changed significantly early in 2019. Previously a grant for canal restoration could be applied for only when works are carried out on the original route. This is no longer the case where the emphasis is now more on features including benefits to the public and local community. Once the TWAO transfer is complete ACA may apply for a grant to fund restoration either from Bridge 62 to Measham or from Bridge 62 to Gallows Lane. The timing of

the TWAO and the grant application have been affected by Covid restrictions but the application for transfer is now with DEFRA.

- **Fund Raising:** The Restoration Appeal continued, with the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct appeal continuing to attract donations. Income from the operation of ACA including that received from the shop amounting to £76,095.68. The shop at Snarestone Wharf was open whenever possible but income was again affected by reduced footfall and fewer boat visitors during the year.

- **Publicity:** We provided information for visitors through the ACA website, hotline, leaflets, free maps, notice boards and in person at the information kiosk at Snarestone Wharf.

- **Public Events:** The popular Moira Canal Festival did not take place in May 2023 due to adverse weather conditions which made the intended site unusable.

- **General ACA representatives** attended CRT Waterway User Group meetings during the year. Development proposals and planning applications affecting the whole length of the canal and its environment were scrutinized by the management committee, and comments made where appropriate to local authorities. ACA continued to manage trail-boaters, canoeists and visiting boaters. The off-line nature reserve on ACA land at Snarestone provides a valuable habitat for thriving wildlife. Maintenance work on the reserve was carried out by ACA volunteers.

**Social meetings** with speakers, which are open to members and the general public, but were not possible during the previous year, recommenced on 13th October 2022 and continued during the following winter and spring months to promote interest in the canal and its historic and social environment. ACA's newsletter, 'Spout', was published quarterly, to communicate with members and the public.

**ACA's website** (ashbycanal.org.uk) provided news and information, online membership applications, donations and also facilitated many email enquiries from the public. The Facebook Group "Ashby Canal Association Friends" continued to be popular.

**Financial review Major Risks** The major risks to ACA are (a) that ACA ceases to have sufficient funds to carry out its day to day objectives and (b) that volunteer input does not continue at its present level, as all its activities are performed by volunteers. Both these risks are regularly reviewed by the management committee and policies put in place when required to help mitigate them.

**Policy on reserves** The policy of the management committee is to maintain a general reserve at a prudent level, sufficient in their view to meet anticipated revenue expenditure in the short term (up to one year). ACA also holds designated reserve funds to enable the Association to make substantial financial contributions towards the canal restoration scheme over the next five years; this includes specific funds designated to the supply of bricks for the construction of the Gilwiskaw aqueduct.

**Other financial information**

Subscriptions and generous donations from members and the public continued to form a large part of ACA's revenue, most of which were gift-aided. Specific donations were received towards the restoration of the canal's northern reaches. ACA raised funds through its sales shop and a bric-a-brac stall. A card payment system is installed. ACA also sold advertising and collected mooring and slipway fees. The Association records its thanks to all who have supported it with cash or in kind and to all the volunteers. Interest rates remained low during the year. A conservative low-risk approach is taken to investing funds: the ACA have no investments currently. Life memberships are recorded in a separate fund and written back into revenue over a period of ten years. The detailed financial results are set out in the statement of accounts showing a net deficit of £28,352.45 for the year; the deficit mainly being due to bills for the Stop gate infrastructure project as well as solicitor's fees for facilitation of the TWAO. The accounts show details of the designated funds allocated to the restoration scheme. No funds were held on behalf of others. All funds are deposited in a UK bank. There were no funds in deficit. The accounts are being independently examined and certified.

**Membership** At 30th September 2023 there were 568 members, including 186 life members. (2022 total membership 617)

THE TRUSTEES DECLARE THAT THEY HAVE APPROVED THE ABOVE REPORT

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees by PETER OAKDEN, Chairman .....

this            day of            2024