



IWAI AT WORK

HEAD OFFICE REPORT SPRING 2014

There has been no Council meeting since the last issue of IWAI so Hon. Secretary Kay Baxter summarises some of the activities on the Executive's agenda.

WELCOME

The Executive would like to welcome any new members who have joined the Association in 2014. We hope you find your first edition of IWAI informative, educational and most of all interesting. To existing members who have renewed their membership, thank you. To those of you still to renew, doing so before the end of this month (March) will ensure you continue to receive your copy of IWAI, along with all the other benefits of being a member.

IWAI is always looking for interesting material to publish. If there is anything of interest happening in your local area, let the editor know at editor@iwai.ie. The addition of any high resolution pictures to illustrate the piece is also very welcome.

AGM

The IWAI AGM 2014 will take place on Friday 25 April 2014 at 8pm in The Bush Hotel, Carrick on Shannon.

As usual all members will receive notification, agenda, etc by post in advance of the meeting. We would like to encourage as many members as possible to attend. If you wish any items to be included on the agenda please notify the honorary secretary in writing at least 28 days prior to the above date. Mail to honsecretary@iwai.ie. This is your

association so please come along and make your voice heard.

CANAL BYE LAWS

As most of you know by now, Waterways Ireland has proposed changes to the Canal Bye Laws which will have a significant impact on users of our canals. The public consultation period closed on 3 February. The Executive formed a sub-committee chaired by past president Greg Whelan tasked with drafting a submission on behalf of the Association. Greg and his Canal Action Group have done a great deal of work in a very short space of time to raise awareness of this issue and spearhead a very active campaign seeking to have these amendments revised before they are signed into legislation. In addition over 1800 letters of support were received and delivered to Waterways Ireland. As yet the outcome is unknown. (See update opposite – ed)

EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Executive has taken on board the concerns raised by a number of members in relation to the apparent inconsistencies in the response of emergency services to calls for assistance aboard vessels or jetties. Some ambulance personnel are not permitted to access jetties or vessels as they have not been supplied with, or trained in the use of, personal flotation devices. In areas where this is the case and where there is a retained fire service this can lead to

considerable delays before first aid treatment is received because once the ambulance arrives at the marina, if the person requiring assistance cannot be brought by others onto dry ground, the paramedics then have to call in the fire brigade.

We have made contact with a number of other stakeholders, including Waterways Ireland and Irish Water Safety. We are also seeking a meeting with the Director of Operations in the Ambulance Service. Our aim is to get agreement to a consistent approach across all areas, so that people at least know where they stand (or lie as the case may be). If all area ambulance services were to take the same approach then at least emergency services operators could be told to alert both the fire brigade and the ambulance on receiving a call from a boat or marina.

DUNROVIN

A total of 12 submissions were received from branches with suggestions in relation to the way forward with *Dunrovin*. Of these 7 were in favour of some sort of collaboration with the RNLI in developing the site. Members of the Executive have met with both members of the Athlone Branch and members of RNLI Lough Ree. By the time of going to print the submissions and the result of these information gathering meetings will have been brought to the Council Meeting on 8 March and we hopefully will have a decision as to how to proceed.

WEBSITES

A new look website is under development for the Association. It's being developed by Colman Byrne assisted by (or should that be hindered by) a sub-committee

from the Executive. It will have a brighter, more modern look, will be easier to navigate and will adapt to whatever device you are using to access it. Hopefully it will be ready to go live at the start of the boating season. Colman is also looking for photographs that represent your branch/locality for inclusion in the website.

Colman has also provided excellent training to all branch webmasters in the use of Wordpress to manage their branch website content. Not all branches are currently using wordpress but ideally they should be. This would allow us to portray a consistent image to anyone accessing a number of the branch websites.

A final word on websites to all webmasters. It's vital that all branch websites are updated regularly with any news re local events, change of officer contact details, etc. Anyone seeking information on your branch should see the most up to date information available.

60TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK

The book being compiled by Brian Cassells to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Association this year is proceeding according to plan, and will be launched in October. Many thanks to all who have contributed.

2014 SEASON

As we are nearing the start of the 2014 season, the Executive would like to wish all members and their families a safe and enjoyable spring, summer and autumn on our beautiful waterways. Here's hoping for some of the glorious sunshine we had last year.



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are respectfully reminded that 2014 subscriptions are now due.

You can renew using the IWAI Online 365 system at www.iwai.ie/join or by direct payment to your branch treasurer. Members paying by direct debit will be renewed automatically and need take no action