



# IWA AT WORK

## COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

8 MARCH 2014 HUGH LYNCH'S, TULLAMORE, CO. OFFALY

Before the meeting commenced, President Carmel Meegan welcomed everyone especially all new officers and thanked the proprietors and staff of Hugh Lynch's for their hospitality.

### PRESENTATION

This was followed by a very informative and enjoyable presentation by Neil O'Hagan of the Pride of Ireland Trust (Atlantic Youth Trust). Their goal is to commission a purpose built tall ship that will bring young people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland together for exciting and challenging voyages. They have conducted extensive research locally and internationally to help determine the best solution and now they know exactly what is needed. The amount of fundraising they have to do is staggering but they are confident it can be achieved. Carmel Meegan thanked Neil for his presentation and said the IWA would be delighted to be associated with this project, even though we were not in a position to provide financial support.

### MEETING

The meeting was attended by 40 delegates and 2 observers. Apologies were received from Bill O'Dwyer (Belturbet), Carmel Byrne (Derg), Gerry O'Hara (F-K), Brian Cassells, Cormac Smith (Powerboat), Jim O'Riordan (Dublin), Catherine Malone, Ken Bell (Lough Erne)

### AGENDA

In keeping with the new Standing Orders for IWA Council, the President requested that those present would adopt the Agenda and allow the meeting proceed. There being no objections the Agenda was proposed by John Dolan, seconded by Alan Kelly and adopted.

### MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Peter Maxwell, seconded by Greg Whelan and were adopted.

### MATTERS ARISING

Web master training is now complete. 23 members attended in January with 15 attending in February. This training was provided by Colman Byrne and was felt to be a great benefit to all. Thanks to Colman for all his hard work.

### FINANCE

Treasurer Jean Kennedy confirmed that all branch end of year accounts for 2013 had been received. A print out of the accounts was provided to all. Most branches made a profit in 2013. She pointed out there was still cash sitting in bank accounts not earning any money. Branches need to manage their money to maximise the return on it. A meeting with all treasurers is needed.

Jean confirmed that 95% of renewals now are online and that by September the online accounting system will have a balance sheet available which will mean substantially less work for treasurers.

Carmel Meegan thanked Jean Kennedy for her time and effort in keeping the Association's accounts up to date and in such good order.

### MEMBERSHIP

Maria Stuart (Membership Secretary) gave a synopsis of renewals to date. 474 memberships had been renewed by post or online. 598 direct debits were about to run, which gave a total of 1072 renewals including life members. This is a 63% increase in renewals compared with the same time last year. 160 memberships were renewed in January, with 217 renewals in February after a reminder email was sent out. 2/3 of members are renewing online or by direct debit with 1/3 using the postal system.

All branches need to try to target lapsed members. Also the Executive need valid email addresses for all members.

There was a request to allow branch treasurers to be copied on the automatic email that members receive on renewal. This is being looked into but in the meantime Maria can forward these emails to the relevant branch treasurer.

Carmel Meegan thanked Maria Stuart for her tremendous effort and work and also commented that the online system was working very well and was a great asset to the Association.

### CANAL BYE LAWS

A presentation was given by Alan Kelly (Kildare) updating the Council on the progress to date by the Canal Action Group sub-committee.

Public meetings were held in Offaly, Kildare, Dublin and Carlow to emphasis the negative effect of the proposed bye laws amendments. All were well attended. The initial reaction was one of surprise then anger.

The IWA 30 page submission to Waterways Ireland was put together in just over 2 weeks and is available on the IWA website and campaign page.

Since Jan 6, 7 press releases have been sent out as part of the media campaign.

Kildare County Council has successfully put down a motion to reject the amendments.

Over 2000 individual submissions were received by Waterways Ireland as part of the standard letter of support.

International and national boating organisations have been convinced to support our campaign.

Local Authorities are currently debating the issues.

Huge cross party support has been achieved.

Many Parliamentary Questions have been raised in the Dáil and there have been questions and debates in the Seanad with a delegation from the Association invited to attend.

The Association was invited to address the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht on Tuesday 25 March.

The next step is the rolling rally from Shannon Harbour to Dublin, arriving to coincide with the Dublin Rally. All branches along the canal are to join this rally.

Also the postcard campaign involving all 22 branches of the Association. We want the Minister to receive cards from all over as this is an all island issue. Waterways Ireland are planning changes to the bye laws governing the Shannon Erne and River Shannon.

A submission on Waterways Ireland draft corporate plan is to be made by 31 March.

Tremendous work has been done by the sub-committee, and all those who have helped them, in raising awareness and meeting the deadlines for submissions and Carmel Meegan acknowledged this work and thanked Greg Whelan, Alan Kelly, John Dolan and others.

Greg Whelan commented that local elections were coming up in May and suggested that members have literature on hand to give to people that are canvassing for votes. The postcard that is being developed could be used. We should also encourage branch members to lobby local council members and MEPs.

### DUNROVIN

Carmel Meegan read a synopsis of the history of the project stating that *Dunrovin* warranted development. At the last Council meeting delegates were asked to go back to their branches and look for submissions as to what should be done with *Dunrovin*. 11 submissions were received. Of the 11, 8 featured inclusion of the RNLI station in some form. A sub-committee of the Executive met with the Athlone Branch and then with RNLI Athlone. The RNLI need to scope the site and are to be given a letter of support from IWA to allow them to do this. Any possible site development by the RNLI may include some development for IWA. Executive members unanimously agreed to bring before council the following