



PRESS RELEASE

22 September 2016

Canal & River Trust Annual Public Meeting

The Canal & River Trust held its Annual Public Meeting in Birmingham today (22 September 2016) where over 80 guests came from around the country to hear about the charity's progress over the past year and its plans and ambitions for the future.

Allan Leighton, who was reappointed by the Trust's governing Council to serve a further term as chair, welcomed guests before chief executive Richard Parry gave an overview of the organisation's achievements during the financial year 2015/16. These included an increase in expenditure on the waterways and a growth in the number of people donating to the Trust and visiting, volunteering, and adopting stretches of its waterways.

As well as talking about future ambitions, the meeting saw director of asset management Julie Sharman give a presentation on the way the charity manages and prioritises the maintenance of its unique network of 200-year old locks, bridges, embankments, aqueducts and other assets.

After the presentations guests asked the Trust's senior management team about topics ranging from residential boating and support for vulnerable boaters, to the control of invasive hogweed, and the role visitors might play in helping the Trust's asset inspection teams.

The Trust's Council met after the Annual Public Meeting where they considered topics including the possible impacts of Brexit and the potential transfer of the Environment Agency Navigations, as well as discussing an update on the work of the Waterway Partnerships.

The Council ratified the appointment of four new Trustees to the charity's unpaid board, which is legally responsible for overseeing the work towards the organisation's charitable objectives. Dame Jenny Abramsky, Nigel Annett, Janet Hogben and Tim Reeve* replace Tom Franklin and Simon Thurley who conclude their time on the board, having served two terms as Trustees in line with the Trust's constitution (and Steve Shine who left the Trust early in 2016).

Allan Leighton, chair of the Canal & River Trust, comments: "I'm pleased to see the progress that has been made at the Trust this year and I think the results speak for themselves. The number of

people volunteering and donating has continued to grow, as have the partnerships formed with organisations as diverse as the Arts Councils in England and Wales, The Scout Association, Help for Heroes and Rolls Royce, plus numerous local authorities, charitable trusts and local canal societies.

“As we look to the future we’re continuing to grow our influence and engage with more people so that the waterways are on a firm foundation for future generations to enjoy.

“I’d like to welcome our new Trustees whose experience and calibre is a strong endorsement for what the Trust has achieved in a short space of time. They bring new and wide-ranging experience and perspectives that will help inform decisions on policy and strategy as well as oversight of the executive directors.

“I’d like to reiterate my huge thanks to both Tom and Simon for all they’ve brought to the waterways since the formation of the Canal & River Trust. They have been absolutely fundamental in the charity’s formative years and have helped create a formidable legacy.

“I’m sure that our supporters, partners and customers appreciate the achievements we’ve made as a young and growing charity. It was good to see so many faces in the audience today and I’m heartened that we have such a passionate group of people showing an interest in, and demonstrating their care for, our waterways.”

For more information visit: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-structure>

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Notes to editors:

Nigel Annett: Nigel recently stepped down as managing director of Welsh Water and is co-founder of Glas Cymru, the not-for-profit company that successfully took over the ownership of Welsh Water back in 2001, a move which resulted in the water industry in Wales being owned on behalf of its customers. He is currently a non-executive director of the Principality Building Society, and a trustee of Community Foundation in Wales. Nigel is a keen cyclist which includes regular rides along the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal.

*Nigel Annett has been serving as a Trustee since 1 June 2016 to fill a vacancy. In accordance with the Trust’s constitution, formal approval for his ongoing appointment has now been made by Council.

Dame Jenny Abramsky: A 35-year career at the BBC saw Jenny rise to the corporation's Director of Radio and Music. Prior to that, as Director of Continuous News, she ran the BBC's 24 hours news services. She is Chair of the Royal Academy of Music and the Board of Governors of the Royal Ballet, as well as having served six years as Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund/national Heritage Memorial Fund, among other voluntary roles.

Janet Hogben: Janet's early career was spent at BP, where she held a variety of roles. In an HR capacity it continued first at Seagram and then at Diageo, leading on a number of global strategy and business specific HR positions. For the last five years she has been the Chief People Officer for EDF Energy. She is a keen canal jogger and walker.

Tim Reeve: Tim is currently deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Victoria and Albert Museum. This follows 17 years at English Heritage, latterly as Director of Historic Properties with responsibility for the management of the National Collection of 420 historic properties. Tim is a former Trustee of the Hadrian's Wall Trust and the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, and is Special Advisor to the board of the National Memorial Arboretum.