

## APC Returns With Star Speakers

After a gap caused by Covid, we were able to restart our Annual Partnership Conference with a bang this year. Speakers included Lord Hendy, Chair of Network Rail, and Richard Parry, Chief Executive of Canal & River Trust. Summaries of the talks can be found below, continuing on pages 3 & 4.

Also in this issue are other speakers from the APC: Rod Calvert (p5) and James Fennel (p6)

We also have a report from the AGM in June, with a summary of the decisions taken and reports (p6), and the talk by Jon Shortland on the proposed Universal development near Bedford (p7). ●

### APC: Peter, Lord Hendy

Peter introduced himself as Chair of Network Rail (NR), who own, operate and maintain the oldest railway network in the world. He worked with Richard Parry at Transport for London (TfL). The Canal & River Trust (CRT) own and maintain the oldest canal network in the world, and he and Richard therefore have similar issues.

Most of NR's work is the operation, maintenance and renewal of the existing railway network, but they also do major projects, and so that experience may be useful to the Trust.

Referring the conference's title: Water Where it's Wanted, Peter said that in his world nobody doubted the existence of climate change and its impact on their network. The previous day they had had four sections of railway closed because of earth movement, that morning a fifth was added to the list, when a large sinkhole caused a derailment. Once in twenty-year events now happen frequently, there are two landslips a week, and currently the water table is on the surface "roughly from Penzance to Wick".

Ours is a new build with different problems. Putting it into the environment as it is today is a different issue than building it 15 or 20 years ago, we will find some people very interested, and intrusive, in the project in terms of what impact it has on water courses and the general landscape.

#### *Challenges facing all large multi-year infrastructure schemes*

Decide what you want to do. One of the reasons projects are not done well, take a long time and cost a lot of money, is that they are not properly defined. It is a really good idea to decide what you want to achieve before you start.

The Great Western electrification is notorious, as is NR's delivery of it, because it was never defined properly, nobody knew which stretches were to be electrified. So the worst possible combination of not knowing what you are building and bad estimates for the cost of building it resulted in a project that was never properly finished.

The Trans-Pennine upgrade is strongly supported because regional and local partners want to connect cities in the north closer together. NR has a project improving the line between Manchester and York which is now 8 times the size it was when the Department of Transport initiated it, and NR has already spent £200m on abortive design costs because there have been substantial scope revisions to the project.

So, we need to be clear what we are trying to achieve so that time and effort isn't wasted in design changes down the line.

If using contractors, be sure that they are both capable and interested in doing the job. Another of Peter's jobs is as chair of the London Legacy Development Corporation which is building a major educational and



Peter Hendy addressed the APC

## View from the Chair



Simon Clewlow  
Trust Chair

For this edition of the View from the Chair I am unashamedly drawing upon the General Election statement issued by the Canal & River Trust, one of our partners in the Waterway Consortium, about the role of canals and by inference all our waterways. While charities must remain independent they can campaign so long as doing so furthers the charity's purposes and is in the best interests of the charity. While I have paraphrased in places, its important message is certainly one that I cannot express more clearly and is one which could apply equally to the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway.

Our network of canals matter. It is available for millions to enjoy and plays a significant role in addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time. The next government will face enormous challenges – from the climate emergency and its impact on nature, water and the environment, to widening inequality and the cost of living and health crises. The country's canal network is under threat from the effects of extreme weather, stretching resources to breaking point and potentially risking lives and livelihoods, our precious heritage and our nature habitats.

With the right partnerships in place with government these challenges can be tackled together, safeguarding the huge returns that a resilient canal network can deliver for the nation – valued independently at £4.6bn in annual social value and £1.5bn financial economic benefit. They matter to everyone – because canals enhance the natural environment, they help to mitigate climate change, and, as part of our national infrastructure, are integral to our future water security and supply. Put simply, canals generate immense social, environmental and economic value.

Canals offer free access to 'blue-green' space and nature for millions – a low-cost public health and wellbeing gift from the past, which passes through many of our most deprived urban communities. For many, it is the only such space within reach. It is imperative that these spaces are well-managed and safe, to encourage people to use them and benefit from them.

The existence and the resilience of the canal network, together with systems to manage water, form an important component of the flood protection landscape. The network provides defences that equate to billions of pounds worth of flood resilience.

Properly maintained, the network offers an opportunity for water movement, ensuring water security at a time when this is increasingly under threat. Interconnected canals allow the movement of water from wetter areas to drier areas – they are used already to supply drinking water to London, Bristol and Cheshire, with other projects poised to follow suit.

Canals provide much-needed habitat for threatened wildlife at a time when biodiversity in the UK is in crisis. Our network is the UK's longest linear blue-green space and a vital part of the nation's nature recovery network – a 2,000-mile wildlife corridor that connects urban green spaces for wildlife and is home to many everyday and protected species.

The canal network and associated heritage structures generates some £1.5bn of economic benefit per year to England and Wales through hospitality, tourism and marine businesses, supporting over 80,000 jobs.

Running through the hearts of our towns and cities, canals and waterways contribute to a low-carbon future, offering traffic-free routes along our towpaths for local travel as well as recreational walking, running and cycling, and routes for waterborne freight.

The latent energy in the water itself provides further exciting opportunities – cooling urban areas in warm weather, providing low-carbon heating and cooling for neighbouring buildings, and generating green energy through hydropower schemes.

Furthermore, the economic and social value of urban regeneration with water at its heart has been shown multiple times – transforming places and recreating communities where this is most needed. Canals have become vital to the world today, in ways unimaginable to their original engineers 250 years ago. We must not take them for granted. With the right support, canals and all forms of waterways can continue to deliver even more environmental, social and economic benefits for all.

At approximately 1% of the length of the canal network looked after by the Canal & River Trust, all the above applies equally to what the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park could bring as a benefit to the country. Indeed, it looks to me like a very good investment since, on a straightforward pro rata basis, the Waterway Park could annually generate £46million of social value and £15m of financial economic benefit and more than justify putting "Water Where It's Wanted"! ●

(Continued from page 1)

cultural complex at the Olympic Park. Each 4-week period he and his chief executive observe the costs going up, the finish date stretching into the future, and some contractors have gone bust. It is a really difficult market to buy anything in engineering or construction at the moment. The shortage of suitable labour leads NR and LLDC to do a lot of training and have many apprenticeships.

Working with or “corralling” volunteers is not as easy as it looks. Managing volunteers in the modern world is quite difficult. Volunteers “don’t have employment rights, they do have strong views, many of them only want to do what they want to do, they might not want to do what you want them to do.”

### **Potential for collaboration between infrastructure projects**

“But that shouldn’t put you off” as there are many other people doing this. For instance, Cotswold Canal (where Peter happens to be vice president) is doing similar work, though as a restoration. East-West Rail may be a useful collaborator – Peter will put us in touch with their chair and chief executive, and they may provide moral or actual support.

The other ideal collaborators are government, national and local. The art there is to find people who are helpful, because some will be distinctly unhelpful or disinterested. When you find someone helpful, cling on to them and find out who else they know who might be similarly motivated .

### **Challenges and opportunities facing all projects**

The opportunities for us are that this project plays into a modern lifestyle which is keen on the environment, which particularly interests those under 40 who will have to live in it. People are keen on leisure and experiences in a way that this might have been harder 30 or 40 years ago. People are recognising climate change and what we

can do in the management of water round here will help in this area, which is a good thing.

While the national economy is in a really bad position, the politics of doing things like this are pretty good. One of the frustrations for local government is the number of times government asks people to compete for money that people believe they need anyway. When it comes to competing for available money from public or charitable funds, there are still lots of sources of it, some quite wealthy.

### **His experience working with politicians.**

Peter’s late father-in-law’s opinion was “don’t trust any politicians, ever”. His advice is a little more nuanced: don’t trust anyone further than you can see them. Public confidence in politicians is low at the moment, but there are more good ones than bad ones – you have to find them and find an alignment with what they want to achieve.

Working for Transport for London when Ken Livingstone was mayor had some challenges, but Ken had a clear vision for what he wanted London to be, which was at the heart of the London plan, and still is, all these years after Ken ceased to be mayor.

If you want to get money out of politicians, you need to explain most carefully why you are trying to achieve what you want to do. The details of how you do it are interesting, but concentrate on what the objective is and why it is good for people, and why it is good for the local, regional and national economy.

That is at the root of why they might support you morally or, hopefully, with some money. So often people are so keen to describe the detail of what they are doing that they forget to describe why they are trying to achieve it and what its importance is.

Peter wished us the best of luck with our project! ●



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## **Electra: This year in numbers**

**W**e plan to have 260 cruises over a 35-week season, comprising: 4 schools, up to 20 family specials cruises, plus approximately 10 *Electra* ‘thank you’ / ‘networking’ cruises and the same number of sponsored ones.

Of course, none of this could happen without our terrific team of forty volunteers on the boat and on the shore! ●

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## **Fields Road (Bedford Commercial Park)**

**T**he survey of the area has now been completed and we now understand the complexities of building a waterway to link the SUDS ponds through this development. Our next step (with the cooperation of the Borough Council) is to find a viable design solution to develop the area and create a water facility for the people of Wootton to enjoy prior to a permanent waterway being constructed. ●

Richard Parry, Chief Executive of the Canal & River Trust (CRT) also spoke to the APC.



Richard Parry addressing the APC

It is 10 years since Richard last spoke at a B&MK event and “it’s great to be back”. Since then his involvement may have been intermittent, but he has celebrated our successes and shared our frustrations quietly along with us.

Richard began by referring back to the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) presentation (p6). He sees this as “a big opportunity for all of us”. While the numbers may not be as big as some suggest, but even if only half of it is true, there is a lot of money to be gained from this new regime. Waterways are

particularly recognised as part of this. The CRT was successful in persuading Natural England and then into the planning process, that water was a thing to place high value on in the future regime.

Richard then touched briefly on the history of the canal network and of the CRT. The CRT is responsible for most of the canals in England and Wales (the Bridgewater being a notable exception, though there are others), and some river navigations (most prominently the Severn and Trent) though most are EA responsibility, including the River Great Ouse.

The canal network, of course, is a vital green corridor - particularly in urban areas – about 50% of CRT canals run through densely populated urban areas, connecting green space, providing corridors for nature, vital for nature recovery and biodiversity. It is a rich habitat because in addition to the water there is typically an offside green

canopy, as well as the verge, towpath and often a hedgerow.

There are systems to monitor water levels throughout the network, with 24/7 alerts and people responding – these systems have been busy in the last 3 to 4 months – a very sophisticated way to make sure that they do have enough water in the right places and not too much or little in the wrong places. As a result they have a key role in flood management and alleviation. Canals can help mitigate flood impact. In the last three months there has been a lot

of this, working with EA to move water away from areas where it was a problem using the canal network and infrastructure.



**Canal & River Trust**

Making life better by water

The “natural health service” is perhaps the pithiest way of describing what CRT wants to do, delivering “wellbeing on the doorstep” so people don’t have to travel to far-flung corners of the country to enjoy nature – they can enjoy where they live.

But also, longer term, mitigating climate change. Richard was fascinated by the flood alleviation study earlier, because it really makes the point that providing waterways can help as we face into more extreme and volatile weather. It is vital that Canal & River Trust plays its role in water security through water transfer. It is working with Severn Trent and Affinity water companies to use the Grand Union to move water from the Midlands towards Leighton Buzzard. The project is moving relatively quickly, though still 5-6 years away. It will provide investment for the Grand Union, to overcome the uphill sections, to provide resilient infrastructure, as well as covering operational costs. The costs to the water companies, however, would be much higher if they used an alternative method.

This presents an opportunity for our Waterway, as about two thirds of the way down from the Midlands will be a turnoff towards Bedford, so what is the impact on the water transfer scheme for that? There are some conversations to be had about how the scheme, which is just at the “in principle” stage, can interface with our project.

How to make the case? CRT has big numbers, rigorously derived, for the benefit waterways bring. These figures for the “Aggregate benefits to society & the economy” use evaluation methodologies aligned with HM Treasury Green Book for wellbeing



Some of the iconic structures the CRT has to maintain

guidance and show £4.6Bn per annum as the aggregation of welfare benefits, £1.5Bn contribution to the economy including about 80,000 jobs.

In addition to this report there is a companion document, an impact report, also recently published and also on the website, "Transforming places and enriching lives". This includes cases and examples – stories of what CRT does and the impact it makes. It unpacks the different ways they provide benefit and bring them to life. The main headings are:

- Health, wellbeing, and happiness. The benefits we know, and the scale – the millions of people it is touching, communities able to be more active because the network is maintained.
- Creating cohesive communities. Volunteers' programmes and community engagement using the sense of place the waterways provide.
- Learning and enhancing skills. Lifelong learning, but particularly children. Helping teach history, nature, safety, sense of place, STEAM subjects.
- Prosperous and connected places. Using the network to enhance value, encouraging tourism, routing fibre-optic cables.
- Green and blue futures. Water-source heat pumps are more efficient than air-source ones. The water can be used for cooling and, of course waterborne freight is more environmentally friendly than on road.
- Cultural and environmental assets. The role in nature recovery, particularly in urban areas.

The CRT are facing severe financial constraints in the near future to maintain aging infrastructure with a reducing Government grant. The impacts for us are both that we need a Grand Union to connect to, and that CRT will certainly not be looking to take on additional cost by increasing its network in the foreseeable future. ●

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## APC: Rod Calvert



We were welcomed to the APC by Rod Calvert.

Rod was there with multiple hats - Chair of Marston Vale Trust and President of Bedford Chamber of Commerce, and Deputy Lieutenant of the County, all relevant to the day.

Chamber of Commerce has 25% of employed people in Bedfordshire work for firms who are members of the Chamber. The Chamber and business is massively in favour of the Waterway. They see huge business opportunities flowing from the establishment of the Waterway.

Forest of Marston Vale is one of the smallest of 11 community forests in UK. These forests were established to recover industrially damaged land. It is 61 sq miles, its objective is to increase tree coverage in the area. When they started, 20-odd years ago it was 3% it is now 15%, 3,000,000 trees have been planted in that time. The Waterway Park runs right through its area, and the FoMV trust is very supportive of the Waterway, even little bits on the way.

As Deputy Lieutenant Rod was responsible for the Queen's Canopy in Bedfordshire. Bedfordshire managed to plant 235,000 trees in the Queen's name – more per head of population than any other county.

King Charles has said that the 4 things he wants to mark his reign are Commonwealth, Climate, Community and Culture. The Waterway fits very well with two of these: Community and Climate. The Lieutenant has set up a panel for each of these "4 C's", and Rod's is Climate. In the absence of direction, Rod has written his own job description and it features the Waterway very heavily. ●



Rod Calvert addressing the APC

## The new Welcome Centre.

Brian Kite, volunteer Welcome Centre Co-ordinator has announced that the *Electra* Welcome Centre at 7 Campbell Wharf, MK9 4BG is now open from 12.00 to 15.00 Thursday to Sunday, through until mid-December.

"The Centre has a wealth of information about *Electra* and the planned Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park. We would like to recruit more volunteers to explain our operation to visitors. If you are interested, please visit Volunteering with *Electra*, on the website, which includes an Expression of Interest form. ●



James Fennell and Nicki Mables from Lichfields spoke to the APC about Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).



James Fennell addressing the APC

This can be both a risk and an opportunity for the Trust.

A general duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity has been around for some time.

Over recent years, Government has felt that this general duty does not go sufficiently far enough to address a decline in biodiversity in England. A statutory duty requiring a measurable net gain in biodiversity value has now been introduced onto most forms of development being proposed through the planning process.

The Environment Act 2021 signposted the introduction of the new mandatory requirement, which came into force on 12th February for major developments and on 2 April for minor developments.

Using a standardised calculator, the existing baseline habitat classifications and value of a development site can now be measured. The requirement is for that baseline value, measured as a Biodiversity Unit for each habitat type, to be increased by 10% with the implementation of that development – so a net uplift of 10% on the existing value.

From now on, planning conditions attached to planning permissions will require a Biodiversity Gains Plan to be submitted and approved prior to the development starting. That Gains plan should show whether that 10% uplift can be achieved on the development site, preferably, and if not, that an off-site solution has been identified and committed to.

Any off-site provision - termed compensation – needs to be placed on a national register to be managed by Natural England.

Essentially the hierarchy is:

- On-site
- Off-site via registered provider of biodiversity units.
- Off-site via purchase of statutory biodiversity credits.

### *What are the implications for the Trust?*

- Engineering works associated with construction of the Waterway Park will require BNG.
- BNG associated with construction of the Waterway Park should be provided onsite.
- The waterway and associated habitats like wetlands and floodplain could deliver biodiversity units, over and above the BNG requirement.

- These units can be sold in the offsite market to developers who can't meet their requirement onsite.
- Delivery and maintenance of units could present commercial opportunity for the Trust and local landowners.

### *What are the next steps?*

- BNG should be integral to the vision for the future of the Waterway Park.
- The multi-faceted benefits of the park (bio-diversity, water management, recreation, economic etc) should be carefully articulated.
- Measuring the baseline position and the potential for BNG by experts is key to identifying the scale of the opportunity (and challenges).
- A BNG Strategy should feed into a wider feasibility study informed by national, regional and local policies (including emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategies).
- A Vision + BNG Strategy + Feasibility Study provides springboard for raising awareness and seeking partners and funding. ●

## Marking the crossing points

A suggestion was made a few months ago that where the Waterway crossed the roads under Bedford Borough Council jurisdiction, signs could be put up to advertise this fact.

A team of volunteers from the EPG comprising Steve Waring, Alan Mayo and Chris Fox visited each of these sites and put forward a proposal to members of the Council to see if these were sensible.

Unfortunately, we have not yet heard back on this but are hopeful that things will move forwards shortly. The signs will be made and erected by the Council but the Trust has agreed to pay for them.

The proposed locations are: Cemetery Road, Ridge Road, the old A421, Fields Road and the Bedford Western By-pass. ●

## Electra: Donations

Last season we started collecting donations, specifically towards developing our Family Specials Programme, to enable people who wouldn't otherwise be able to experience being on the water to come on an *Electra* cruise. Guests on board generously donated over £2,300, in 2023 and we have already received well over £300 in 2024. So far we have run four cruises, for the Ukraine Appeal, Keech Hospice, The Bus Shelter and Jo's Hope. ●

## AGM: Jon Shortland



Jon Shortland, Chief Officer for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Growth, Bedford Borough Council (BBC), spoke to the AGM on "The Growth Agenda for Bedford and the potential of the Universal Theme Park & Resort Project".

He began by describing the joys and difficulties of preparing a local plan, which have to meet central government aspirations, last at least 15 years, and be found "sound" by an independent Planning Inspector.

BBC is working on the 2040 Local Plan. The strategy is to base new housing near railway stations, not all of which yet exist, to reduce the impact on roads and the environment.

The plan has gone to the inspector, who had some concerns. As BBC was looking at these, the Universal project emerged, so the examination is on "pause" until the Universal project is determined, as Universal would be built on land that BBC had allocated for housing in the plan. Meanwhile BBC are developing Universal and non-Universal solutions to the examiner's concerns.

Jon also talked about what BBC is doing to improve Bedford town centre, improving the 'heritage' appearance of the High Street and Midland Road, also changing some road layouts and redeveloping the "Mayes Yard" block which was Debenhams and Beales to residential and commercial use.

### Universal

Universal are one of the 25 largest companies in the world, so this is a different sort of conversation than BBC has had on some occasions in the past.

Bedford is the only site Universal is currently considering for its theme park & resort project. They considered 300 locations in Europe, and Bedford came out top. Largely this is because 60% of the population of Britain live within 2 hours of Bedford - the same logic the Trust has used to promote Brogborough Hill as a viable site for a commercial operation to build a boat lift or similar to overcome this.

Another advantage of Bedford is that international trains arrive at St Pancras, and Bedford trains leave from the same station, and proximity to Luton Airport.

This would be the biggest theme park in Europe. Eight million visitors a year are expected (four times bigger than Alton Towers), and there would be 8,000 FTE jobs on site, with another 12,000 in the supply chain.

For this to work, Universal would need significant infrastructure improvements - they need their customers to be able to get in and out easily. They expect the government to fund these, on the basis that the VAT on ticket sales would cover those costs in two years.

This means that some of the improvements BBC was planning would be superseded by Universal's needs, and at no cost to BBC.

Because of the size of this project, it would not go through the normal planning processes, but would be through a Special Development Order, through Parliament. A go / no go decision is expected this year, and the intention is to open the doors of the park in 2030.

### The Waterway Park

In the 2013 Local Plan, policy AD27 expressed BBC support for the creation of the Waterway Park - that policy is still in place, and every proposal is checked to ensure that it does not affect our project.

The Waterway is considered to be a strategic green infrastructure link benefiting the borough as a whole, but is particularly important to the delivery of sustainable growth in the Northern Marston Vale.

The route acts as a Sustainable Drainage System at the Bedford Business Park in Wootton, and the culvert under the new A421 exists.

In the new 2040 plan, part of the Vision section says "the BMKWP will encourage healthy lifestyles, tourism and a diverse ecology", so it is still a fundamental part.

Also in the housing policy areas: Policy HOU12 (South of Bedford): Development will be delivered in tandem with infrastructure and will require contributions to the delivery of the BMKWP. Policy HOU13 (Gibraltar Corner): Provision of land and a public car parking area to facilitate the BMKWP to the east of Gibraltar Corner. So developers interested in those areas know what they have to deliver for us.

When the Covanta incinerator was approved at Stewartby an amount of money (currently £4.5M) was allocated to the Waterway to be used at Green Lane. BBC has negotiated with Covanta, and this money is being released to use elsewhere on the route. The Mayor, Tom Wootton, will be holding a meeting on 11th July announcing this and options for using the money.

In summary: "Bedford's best years are ahead of it!" ●



Jon Shortland addressing the AGM

### Electra: Widening access

Three local primary schools, Woodend, Gifford Park and Middleton, have so far chosen trips this season on *Electra*, as a way of introducing their pupils to a very special part of their local environment. ●

## AGM: Simon Clewlow

Simon began by recording his thanks to all the volunteers, trustees, and board members. Also to Ruth Lutt for her work supporting the board.

Referring to the APC, Simon said that the theme of “Water Where it’s Wanted” is a theme he wants to work on over the next year.

In the last year Water Resources East published their report designed to answer the questions:

- Is there enough water in the catchment to supply a navigable waterway?
- Testing the capacity of the Waterway Park as a strategic balancing facility
- Can it hold excess flood water (winter) and then transfer to areas of drought (summer)?

They concluded that the River Ouzel is a good water source and Grand Union Canal would provide support during wet seasons when there is surplus water available to transfer.

Willen Lake could be used as storage for BMKW as could Brogborough and Stewart-by Lakes. So, based on preliminary findings, sufficient water resources are available for

BMKW with potential to transfer about 10 million litres per day to River Great Ouse at Bedford, with potential for water transfer from Grand Union Canal as part of wider scheme to move water by Severn Trent Water and Affinity Water together with the CRT.

Simon also reported that we are working more closely with Bedford Borough Council (BBC). The new mayor Tom Wootton, is keen to get the Waterway built.

The Lichfields report has just arrived, we will be reviewing it and considering our strategy on BNG.

The GIS mapping on the website is being improved and should be available soon.

For the future we should maintain the strong strategic profile we have established, build relationships with new Consortium representatives and continue to work closely with the Environment Agency and Water Resources East.

We need to review and update the economic and business case and continue to secure the Route.

We will aim to win more hearts and minds – “Water Where It’s Wanted”. ●



Simon addressing the AGM

### Minutes of the 18th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BEDFORD & MILTON KEYNES WATERWAY TRUST

Held at Box End Park on 25th June 2024 at 7.30 PM, Chair: Simon Clewlow

There were 35 members present and 9 proxy votes had been received. All proxy votes were in favour of all motions.

1. Simon Clewlow welcomed those present.
2. 24 apologies had been received by the meeting.
3. The minutes of the 17th Annual General Meeting held on 6th June 2023 were accepted with no votes against.
4. The Report of the Directors and the Statement of Accounts and the Balance Sheet of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2023 were accepted, with no votes against.
5. Don Allison is retiring as a director after many years’ good work for the Trust. Simon suggested a vote of thanks, which was proposed by Leigh Willows and seconded by John Best. This was carried unanimously.
6. Simon suggested a vote of thanks to Rose Johnston, our independent examiner of accounts, which was proposed by Leigh Willows and seconded by James Barbour. This was carried unanimously.
7. Simon also suggested a vote of thanks to Paul Smith, our Finance Director, in recognition of his hard work pulling together all financial reports through the year, which was proposed by Chris Hilliard and seconded by John Best. This was carried unanimously.
8. The longest serving Directors who have completed a three-year term were individually re-appointed for a further three years: John Best, Steve Ashley, Leigh Willows: all accepted with no votes against.
9. Hilary Chipping had been co-opted as a director during the year. The meeting confirmed her as a director with no votes against.
10. Simon gave his review of the Trust activities over the last year.
11. Jon Shortland, Chief Officer for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Growth for Bedford Borough Council was the guest speaker. He gave a review of the local plans for Bedford, with particular reference to the Waterway and the Universal Theme Park and Resort Project.
12. After questions from the floor, the formal business being completed, the meeting was closed at 8:50pm. ●

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