



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The New Coracle Shed, Green Wood Centre, Coalbrookdale, TF8 7DR on Saturday 13th October 2024

PRESENT

Steve Miles, Peter Stanyon, Charlie Quinnell, Peter Faulkner, Euan Raffel, Dave Purvis, Jude Pilgrim, Julie Upmeyer, Pete Redding, Raymond Green, Mark Dellar

APOLOGIES

Terry Kenny, Gary Furland, June Lewis and Bruce Watson

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Agreed as a correct record. Proposed by June Lewis. Seconded by Peter.

MATTERS ARISING

Carmarthen had two television personalities join them for a tv coverage, Rick Stein and Gordon Ramsey (Who got straight in a boat and without any delay fell straight out).

REPORTS

Chairperson

The Coracle Society is heading in the right direction, membership wise in a good stead pre covid and numbers, with good groups and individuals. Hopefully going forwards with the projects which have been proposed and have been running which have been well received and accepted. They have been giving good reports.

Thanks to those behind and in front of the scenes for their hard work for getting those projects up and running, sharing with everyone the joy of making a coracle and getting them onto the water. Looking forward to the society as a whole and the future is looking bright.

The Carmarthen and Cilgerran have done a few pieces for TV and promotions at the Royal Welsh Show. Charlie has been doing great work up in Scotland too.

Fishing has been pretty poor this year, with fish stocks disastrous and not looking healthy. We are expecting more restrictions on the netsmen with longevity of the state of the rivers being the big thing. Later on in the season, numbers of salmon and sewin were good.

Secretary

A good year of a steady stream on enquiries to the society with a few local media requests which have been forwarded to the relevant people. Thanks to those which have responded to my emails and have helped out. It's been good to highlight the new red list project to those enquiries which have been in regards to coracle building.

Treasurer

Balances today – current account: £1144.28

The 2023 accounts were presented for approval. Nothing much of note. Some members paid twice for their 2023 renewals (manual payment as well as automatic renewal) – messaging will be reviewed to prevent this happening for 2024 renewals.

£195.91 is ring fenced for the endangered crafts project: the tail end of phase 1 and start of phase 2. We currently have 98 members of which 77 are individual members and 21 joint/ family members.

National Coracle Centre

No report

Netsmen's reports

Teifi Coracle Netsmen's Association

It was a poor season fishing wise as we only had 3 months of the season. A lot of the members didn't fish in the last month of the season because of state of the river and lack of fish. We were also washed out the first few weeks of the season because of river water levels and the fish running through then. What is happening to the state of the rivers is a real cause of the problems impacting the fish.

In Cilgerran there's still 12 licences available, they say they are all taken out but they aren't all taken out, there was probably 6 or 7 as a max. 4 on the tow of 8. The average licensee age is increasing, despite encouraging children to get involved. The discontinuation of this is more likely to be being pushed of the river by licencing rather than the next generation taking it on in the next 5 to 10 years. It sounds like rod fishing and the connected licenses/ permissions are being reduced too. Poaching is still present on the river despite the active bailiff presence.

On the Taf there is one license which is held by one man from Carmarthen who has a license there and for the Towy.

Carmarthen Coracle & Netsmen's Association

Looking back at past reports, we repeat ourselves by stating it's been the worst season on record - with another drop in catch numbers this year, we find ourselves saying the same thing for 2024. Salmon remains catch & release, while sewin numbers have further reduced. With a licence for the Towy currently almost £700, we can't see the future of coracle fishing continuing as we know it. Possibly it will become a heritage fishery in the not-too-distant future, as enthusiasm amongst the coracle association is very low. Many of the older generation of coracle fishers have now retired from fishing or will be retiring soon. During the year, we've been working with Carmarthen Together to carry out water testing at well-known pollution locations in our area. The results have been shocking and have been reported in the press and social media - but it continues to happen. Sadly, the Towy is one of many rivers across the country facing this issue but we'll continue to monitor and report.

March 2024 saw the coracle men proudly march in the Carmarthen St David's Day Parade, led by the Mayor of Carmarthen and the Bishop of St David 's Dorrien Davies. Both dignitaries spoke of their support of the Carmarthen Coracle and how the town valued the coracles as part of the town's heritage.

The annual Carmarthen River Festival with its Coracle Races took place during August. It was another successful event, which saw many taking part in the races and a huge queue of children eagerly awaiting their turn for the coracle pool. Next year 's River Festival date has already been announced and will be held on Saturday 19th July.

We've taken part in various publicity projects, including a Welsh children's TV programme, also 'Cais Quinnell' which sees Wales & British Lions Rugby star Scott Quinnell travel around Wales learning the

language, ITV Cymru Wales have featured us on their news, award winning photographer Joann Randles has followed Malcolm making coracles for a feature in the Western Mail and we've proudly unveiled our coracle design shopping bags, gift cards and postcards (all proceeds go to Carmarthenshire Water Safety Partnership, a registered charity who promote water safety to our local schools).

Ironbridge Coracle Trust

The Ironbridge coracle Trust had a great regatta, very well attended with have a go session on a small pool and on the river were constantly busy. Julia, is stepping down and is hopeful that next year there is someone to run the regatta.

Jude shared the sad news that Mike Twitchen has passed away from a stroke on the 20th September 2024. . Mike regularly helped at the Ironbridge coracle regatta as a safety canoeist and was known for the coracles made out of all sorts of materials such as tents and estate agent signs. He will be sadly missed. Our thoughts go to his wife Ruth and his family.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President: Peter Faulkner

Vice Presidents: Rod Bowen, Martin Fowler, Terry Kenny

Proposed Euan Raffel; Seconded Jude Pilgrim

It was proposed that John Davies be removed as a Vice President as the Society has not had contact with them for some time. Proposed Euan Raffel; Seconded Peter

Carried and elected en-bloc, with the proviso that should Peter's health deteriorate, Terry Kenny will take over as President

Chairperson: vacant

Vice Chairpersons: Malcolm Rees, Charlie Quinnell

With no proposals for a Chairperson, it was proposed two vice chairs be elected and the search will continue for a Chairperson.

Proposed Peter; Seconded Jude Pilgrim

Carried and elected en-bloc

Mark Dellar was thanked for his work as Chairperson.

Secretary: Peter Stanyon

Proposed Euan Raffel; Seconded Jude Pilgrim

Treasurer: Euan Raffel

Proposed Jude Pilgrim; Seconded Dave Purvis

Carried

Committee: Mark Dellar, Gary Fruland, June Lewis, Dave Purvis, Pete Redding, Julie Rees, Steve Miles
Proposed Euan Raffel, seconded Jude Pilgrim

Carried and elected en-bloc

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Another AGM has passed, in fact the 34th. The inaugural meeting in Cenarth in 1990 is still very clear. Those present will remember a cloudless blue sky and us sat in Martin Fowler's new coracle centre, which at that time was a breeze block skeleton without a roof. I have, so far this year, been unable to

get afloat on the Teme here in Leintwardine, but with some weeks until the new year I still have hopes that it will happen.

The highlight of the year was attending the Ironbridge Coracle Regatta in August with my wife Vivienne. The turnout was amazing and the expansion of the site to embrace so many side attractions created the feeling of a coracle village. It truly put a beating heart to the occasion, creating a feeling of warmth and togetherness. It was especially pleasing to see so many children getting involved with the coracles; our future members. Well done to all

those involved in making it happen. With fine weather and a friendly river, the crowds were obviously having a great time.

Did you see the three barnacled old sirens of the river mingling with the crowd? They certainly stood out with their sunburn wrinkled faces and gravelled arms. Yes of course they were three of the many founding members in 1990, namely myself, Terry Kenny and Gerwyn Lewis.

It is no mean feat to organise and establish an event such as today's and the foundation was laid by Terry and Gerwyn some 30 years ago. Long may the regatta flourish.

My sincere thanks to the officers of the Society for their unstinting support in keeping the Society afloat.

Another year is closing but I am sure that during the winter months there will be much ado about coracling matters, planning events, trips and courses for 2025.

I shall leave you with my usual advice – respect the water, and take nothing for granted.

Meeting closed