

STAFFORD RIVERWAY LINK

(A Community Interest Company)

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Patron:- The Lord Stafford, DL, FRAGS

Objective: To promote the restoration of the historic river and canal waterway linking the county town of Stafford to the national waterways network for the benefit of the community and all interested groups.

Website: www.stafford-riverway-link.co.uk

Newsletter No 33

March 2021

Hello to all our members!

At last there is a hint of 'normality' to life regarding the covid19 situation that has coloured most of the last 12 months. Following all the guidance, we have been able to have some work parties but refrained from advertising them too widely as we had to restrict our numbers. Suffice to say, our A-Team, which makes up our wonderful builders, did what they could and their resulting work has boosted morale considerably. The 'Green Team' concentrated more on preparing the ground for the next batch of saplings, provided once again by The Woodland Trust, which should arrive for planting in mid-April. They also worked hard to protect the bund at the far end of the site from flood damage by filling and positioning 'gabion baskets' to reinforce the vulnerable area. During one of our work parties, we welcomed a lovely lady, Mary, who had brought lots of wildflower 'plugs' for our use. These included cowslips and knapweed and are now planted in the Lock House garden and under the hedges. She specialises in the most threatened UK species and has promised to bring more in the future. That is a brief summary of the site at present but there is much news on 'personnel changes'.

Ivor Hind has contributed the following, which tells of his changed situation:

As some of you will know I have now stood down as Chairperson because I am re-locating to be near my Daughter in Bedford and the round trip of 200 Miles is a bit difficult!!

I will be staying on for a while as a Director to help if needed with any earlier information regarding the project. I have enjoyed the support of all those involved with the SRL and wish them great success in the future. The team has now got in place specialist people who can bring to the project all that is required to help it succeed and all they need is you (The Members) help in any way you can. This could include fund raising, spreading the word and encouraging people to join.

I will have fond memories of the early days when the few of us would keep cutting the weeds down at each work party hoping someday we could start to build!

My thirteen years as Chairperson has been interesting and challenging at times, but never dull. So, to the Build team and the committee I would say don't give up on anything because "It's all possible if you have enough money!!" This is a quote I had from our original Scoping surveyors.

Finally thank you to all our members for their support and interest, please keep visiting the site when you can.

Best regards, Ivor Hind.

Hello from the New Chairperson

When Ivor formally stood down I, perhaps surprisingly, became Chairperson Company in March 2020. I have been a Committee Member since 2016 and was appointed as a Director of the Community Interest Company in March 2020

As a boat owner for over 20 years, with the northern section of the Staffs and Worcs Canal as my 'home waters' I have a keen interest in the Canal, in terms of both its history and its future. I believe in the importance of re-establishing the link from the Canal into Stafford, not only for the benefit of the local area but also the town itself. It is my belief that it has a part to play in the economic and environmental regeneration of Stafford Town Centre in years to come.

Over the Past 12 months, under difficult circumstances, a great deal of work has been done at the basin site, thanks to the building team. Anyone who has visited the site or has seen the reports on the website or Facebook will appreciate this. When safe to do so, the volunteer work parties have made an important contribution.

With the granting of planning permission last November, the next two or three years will see the provision of moorings, a new bridge and landscaping around the site. Hopefully, with the easing of restrictions, we can look forward to seeing more volunteer working parties on site. There is also a need to increase awareness of the project. Members can play an important part in this by spreading the word amongst relatives and friends and encouraging them to become members and contribute to fundraising.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Ivor for all the work he has put in over the last 13 years and, in particular, his powers of persuasion which is why I became a Committee Member originally.

Mike Price.

Membership Secretary. Malcolm Carmichael has taken over the role of Membership Secretary. We thank Peter Moore for his previous work in this capacity. Malcolm is a keen volunteer, often with the Building Team, but also a great help with the 'Green' Team. Malcolm has welcomed some new members recently and has sent the following message for inclusion in this newsletter:

April 1st is the start of a new membership year.

Unless you have already paid for 2021/22; or have been given a free years membership for donating through our crowd funding page on Facebook (We love you for that) or are a life member, then your subscription for 2021/22 is due. The easiest way to pay is to set up a standing order (to SRL CIC sort code 20-81-00 Account No 93816567 giving your surname as the Reference) or send us a cheque.

Have we got your correct email address?

SRL likes to put as much as it can of the money it gets into actual restoration work. We like to keep printing and post costs to a minimum by using e-mail as the preferred way of communicating with you. If you received this newsletter by post please can you let us know your correct email by sending one to srl2010@hotmail.co.uk.

Of course, if you do not wish to hear from us by email you are free to opt for text or post (or not at all!).

Data Protection

The SRL will store and use your personal data for the purposes of administering your involvement in their activities. We promise to keep your details safe and secure. We will never sell your data. The data will be collected and processed in accordance with the SRL Privacy Policy. For more information about how your data is used read the Privacy Policy on our web site.

Fundraising: Clive Cropper has been busy promoting our latest online fundraising initiative, which has a nominal target of £10,000 and is slowly creeping up. When I checked, prior to writing this, we had just reached £1,500 but I'm sure, by the time members read this, it will be higher. There are links on the Facebook

page and on the SRL website. Clive has also recently sourced a grant towards the environmental side of our project. This can fund such things as planting or providing bird/bat boxes etc.

I have just been 'rudely interrupted' by husband, John P., our site co-ordinator, who called for me to join him in the garden -BUT- it proved relevant to this very paragraph! A passing neighbour has just promised a small donation every month for the next 12 months! He follows our progress but cannot join in the physical side of our project. What a lovely gesture.

We have received a donation of £200 from the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), so we say a big 'Thank you' to them.

One of the local Stafford newspapers continues to be very supportive of SRL and is featuring us again but, of course, some of you wonderful members are not local. Below is the link that enables you all, however distant you are, to read their article.

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/stafford-project-that-could-boost-tourism-launches-fundraiser/>

I've mentioned the Facebook page and the website re accessing for fundraising, but it seems right that we should acknowledge and thank, those supporters who keep these sites updated. You all know who you are and you are so appreciated, especially when updates bring a chuckle or a smile – much needed in the current 'covid' times.

Now we are able to have slightly larger work parties again, locally the best place for information re dates are the notice boards, one positioned close to 'The Site' and one on the towpath to the West of St Thomas Bridge (bridge 101). Hopefully, information will also be on the Facebook and website pages. We look forward to welcoming you back. Eventually we aim to re-instate the bric-a-brac table which we had just started to organise when life changed dramatically for us all. Included will be a few books and jigsaw puzzles as well as other items often donated to help our funds. Come armed with your small change.

Looking further ahead, and being ever optimistic, remember how we used to hold evening social events from October to March? We are now planning for these again with the first one likely to be an update, with slides, in October of this year. Watch for details! We will hold the usual raffle, with prizes often donated by our supporters.

This seems to have become a longer-than-sometimes newsletter but, hopefully, it reflects the upsurge of interest and also our ability to re-engage with 'passers-by' as work progresses at a faster rate again. If you are walking past the site and there is activity, please stop and ask questions. If you are one of our 'more distant' members, we hope you will be able to visit in person one day but please spread the word to your friends and neighbours.

Finally, turn the page (if you're looking at a 'hard copy') for some recent photos of the site, probably taken by one or two of our regular volunteers, and inserted by John because my computer know-how is limited so I will bow to his greater tech-knowledge..... If you're receiving this by email, just keep scrolling down!

All the best, Vee



We now look like a proper construction site!



Building work progresses at a rapid pace.



The first section of the basin wall back filled.



The N-E corner ready for tree planting.



Corporate member

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