



Monmouthshire, Brecon &
Abergavenny Canals Trust

Canal Connections

SPRING 2019



COMMUNITY BOAT – LATEST NEWS INSIDE

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
MONMOUTHSHIRE, BRECON & ABERGAVENNY
CANALS TRUST**

www.mbact.org.uk

Tel: 01633 892167

Registered Charity No. 515897

Registered Office: Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, Cwm Lane, Rogerstone, Newport, NP10 9GN



Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

CAR PARKING AT FOURTEEN LOCKS CANAL CENTRE

You may have read details in the press recently that our landlords at **Fourteen Locks Canal Centre – Newport City Council** – are planning to introduce a charge for car parking at the centre. The plan was originally revealed as part of the Council's draft budget in December, but full details have now been published, and it is due to be implemented later this year.

This decision will have a big impact on our Trust, its members and volunteers. Two thirds of the Trust's income is generated through Fourteen Locks, and we rely heavily on the contributions from our volunteers. Other activities such as history talks by Phil Hughes and Roger Foster provide the added activities that are so vital to achieving one of our primary aims of raising awareness of the Trust. Under the enthusiastic management of **Kate Wickens** and her team, visitor numbers have risen sharply over the past three years. More than **60,000** people attended the centre last year, an increase of **over 10,000** on 2018. The additional footfall is important for a number of reasons. Apart from the obvious one of generating extra income for the trust via the shop and cafe, it also adds weight to any applications for external funding, as it shows that we are running a thriving and successful enterprise.



The charge will apply between the hours of **6.30 am and 4 pm, seven days a week**, and will be **£1 for up to 4 hours, £3 for up to 5 hours, and £5 for over 5 hours**. It is estimated by **Newport City Council** that the income generated from **Fourteen Locks**, along with **Tredegar Park** who are having a similar scheme introduced, will be in excess of **£40,000** per year. This, however, could prove to be a false economy, as the work carried out by Trust volunteers in and around the Fourteen Locks site saves the council thousands of pounds each year in maintenance costs.

Security is also an issue. The Fourteen Locks site is quite remote and this has been a problem in the past, a situation which could be exacerbated if money is left in the parking meter overnight.

In spite of a number of meetings with council officials, publicity raised in the local press and on TV, and a petition containing over 4,000 signatures, **Newport City Council** still seem determined to press ahead with their plan.

The Trust has itself lodged a formal letter of objection to the Council, and we have reproduced a copy of this on the next page.



Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

Mr G D Price
Head of Law and Regulation
Civic Centre
Newport
NP20 5BG

22nd March 2019

Dear Mr Price

Proposed parking charges – Fourteen Locks Centre Car Park

Whilst in many ways Newport City Council and the Canals Trust have a good working relationship and the Trust is not ungrateful for the varied assistance it receives from the Council, yet the Trust considers that to impose car parking charges at Fourteen Locks is unwise. For this reason, although the Trust understands the Council need to raise revenue, I am asked to write to you on behalf of the Trust to register a formal objection. The grounds are these: -

1. The Trust's objects are to restore, promote the use of and educate the public about the canal. The more people the Trust attracts into the centre the more these objects are achieved, not least by income from sales there. Charging will reduce the number of visitors, both casual and using the meeting room (also a valuable source of income), hindering the achievement of our objects and reducing our income. The less income we have, the harder it is for us to be able to run the centre, so while in many ways the Council seeks to help us, here it is doing the opposite.
2. The cafe in the centre attracts visitors in its own right. Because of its layout, visitors to the cafe must pass through the part of the premises occupied by the Trust. This in itself tends to promote education about the canal and cannot but help to increase our sales, thus raising more funds for our objects. In the same way as charges will reduce the number of visitors to our part of the centre, they will reduce the number of visitors to the cafe. We want a thriving cafe – the more it thrives the more chance we have of seeking a higher rent from the cafe and the more income we have the easier it is for us to run the centre and save the Council from the problems that would arise if doing so were unaffordable for us.
3. We consider that charges will lead to people seeking to avoid them by parking inconsiderately on nearby roads, which are clearly not designed for indiscriminate parking.

If despite objection charges are imposed, we ask for these points to be considered: -

- a) an initial free period for those who have just wish to attend the centre briefly, on Trust business or to visit the cafe; business at the centre with the Trust or who are only visiting casually;
- b) that the £1 charge does not increase with hours spent, as per to Goytre Wharf;
- c) the problem of anti-social use after 4 pm when charges will cease;
- d) to the need to ensure proper vehicular access standards as we understand are laid down by government. Apparently visibility from 2.4m behind the "stop line" should be 33m metres in each direction (30kph) or 45m in each direction (40kph) - ideally to the near kerb but looking to the left the centreline is okay and without visibility splay blind spots. I am told that at present visibility is nearer 10m in each direction, 15m at most.

Finally, let me say that the Trust is grateful for the 6 free spaces offered under the lease now being negotiated and that this letter in no way amounts to a rejection of that offer should charging go ahead.

I should be grateful if you would confirm safe receipt of this letter

Yours sincerely

Andrew Park (Trust Hon Sec)



Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

COMMUNITY BOAT – THE LORD RAGLAN – PROGRESS REPORT

We are pleased to report that work by our volunteers and trainee has continued apace on our **Community Boat** – the **Lord Raglan**, which will enable us to be operational this season. The installation of seating, incorporating battery boxes, has now been completed, together with cabin internal linings. The disabled friendly toilet compartment now has a fitted toilet and a special wide doorway to accommodate a wheelchair. The new sliding roof hatches, which will allow us to open up the roof to enhance the view of the canal environment, have now been fitted. All eight bilge pumps have been installed, together with all the conduit and trunking required to fit our not unsubstantial quantity of cabling. Installation of the new electrical systems is well under way.



In order to be able to accommodate more than 12 passengers the boat will need to be licensed by the **Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)**. The **MCA** requirements demand the highest standards of passenger safety, which we will need to fully comply with. One of their tests requires us to load the boat with the maximum number of passengers, and conduct a stability test moving some passengers from one side of the boat to the other and checking the effect on the 'heel' of tilt of the boat. The trial was extremely useful, and whilst the boat heeled (tilted) well within **MCA** specified safety limits, it highlighted the need to adjust the position of some battery vents, which is currently under way. We would like to thank all the volunteers who took part in the recent Heel Test trial (see photo).

Trust volunteers have worked tirelessly over many years to remodel and refit the boat, and bring her up to modern day safety standards. Our Trust is most grateful to all of them, as without our volunteers we would not be able to function as an organisation. At the moment we are particularly on the lookout for an electrician who could offer some assistance in installing the electrics in the **Lord Raglan** over the next few weeks. **Tony Pugh** and the electrical team require help with manpower, tools and materials. If you think you can help with this, then please contact Tony on anthonypugh@gmail.com or text **07970413803**. We are also looking to build up a team of volunteers to help run the **Lord Raglan**, as well as our sister vessel, the **Edith-Elizabeth** which is already operating short 30 minute trips from **Goytre Wharf**. Please see full details shown on the following page.

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DOES SPENDING THE DAY CRUISING THE BEAUTIFUL MONMOUTHSHIRE & BRECON CANAL APPEAL TO TO YOU?

If so, why not spend some quality time helping our local charity run its Community Boats? We are looking for volunteers to help crew the **Lord Raglan**, and the **Edith-Elizabeth**. Both craft are environmentally-friendly, being equipped with quiet, non-polluting electric motors.



Our main operating base for both is Goytre Wharf, near Llanover, a tranquil rural location on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. The Wharf, which is located within the Brecon Beacons National Park is well equipped with a Visitor Centre, café, toilets, car-park and large coach-parking area. Our customer base will be families, school parties, and disadvantaged and disabled groups.

We are looking for volunteers who can spare a day or more a week to fill the following roles:-

Crew - we are looking for volunteers to assist the Skippers in operating the boats and to ensure the comfort and safety of passengers. No previous experience is necessary as we will provide full training.

Visitor Centre/Ticket Office Staff – based at Goytre Wharf Visitor Centre.

We are also looking for experienced boaters for the following key positions:-

Skippers – experienced boaters who hold an MCA Boatmaster's Licence. They will skipper our unique 55ft long, 8ft 8" beam, double-bow trip boat, Lord Raglan.

Helms - suitably-experienced Helms who usually steer the boat. They will Skipper the Edith-Elizabeth or be second in command on the Lord Raglan. Training can be offered to suitable crew to achieve a RYA Helmsman Certificate qualification.

For further information or to express an interest, please contact **Captain Ian Lewis** via the contact details shown at the bottom of the page.



Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

MBACT DUCK RACE 2019

The **2019 MBACT Duck Race** will be held on **August Bank Holiday Monday – 26th August** – at **Llangynidr**, outside “*The Coach & Horses Inn*”.

We are now looking to identify at least the First, Second and Third prizes for inclusion on the tickets, which will need to be printed this month. Last year, we were very lucky to have donated “**Day Boat Hire**” from two of the major Hire Boat companies on the canal



(value £80-£100), so this year we will be hoping for something equally as good. We are also looking around for donations of the lesser (but just as important) prizes, such as Meal Vouchers, Whisky, Wine, etc. Donations can be left at **Fourteen Locks Canal Centre**, or given to any **MBACT** committee member.

Last year we sold **2,000** tickets and this year we are aiming for **3,000**. As you are probably aware, the **Duck Race** is **MBACT**'s major fund raising event during the year, and, in the past, it has made a tremendous contribution towards the running costs of our Trust.

There is better news regarding two of our main ticket selling events. Both the **Cwmbran Big Event** and **Pontypool's Party in the Park** will now go ahead, having secured alternative funding from their respective Community Councils. We can now concentrate our efforts on these two big days, as well as other smaller summer events, such as the **Llanover Country Fair** and the **Llangynidr Agricultural Show**. As mentioned in our last newsletter, we are still on the lookout for other summer fetes and shows, where we can possibly attend and sell tickets, as well as highlight the aims and objectives of the Trust and gain new members. These are all “*volunteer critical*” events, requiring extra help from members. “**Your MBACT needs YOU**”.

Volunteers are also required to help with the preparation of the ducks themselves. Many of these need renumbering due to passage of time, water erosion, and the odd excursion off the back of a Land Rover. Let us hope for an even better Duck Race this year!

Bernard Illman



Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

FOURTEEN LOCKS CANAL CENTRE

DRAGON AND UNICORN TRAIL

From **Saturday 13th April** until **Sunday 28th April** join us for family fun with two Dragon and Unicorn trails available. How much do you know about our mythical creatures? For **ages 6 years and over**, follow the questions to Lock 17 to test your knowledge. Or, for **ages 18 months to 6 years**, find and collect a Unicorn's mane. Both trails are devised by a qualified teacher. Only **£2.50** per child and everyone wins a small prize. No need to book, just turn up between **10am and 4pm Monday to Saturday** and **10am and 3pm Sunday** over the Easter holiday.

CHILDREN'S MINDFULNESS WORKSHOP

On **Monday 15th April - 10.30am to 12.00 noon**.

This interactive, fun session will provide an opportunity for your child to learn techniques to calm their minds. The session is suitable for children **aged 7 years upwards**, and **costs £5** per child. No pre-booking is required, but limited spaces are available. For further information, please email Rachel on datrainingsolutions@gmail.com.



EASTER PEBBLE DECORATING WORKSHOP

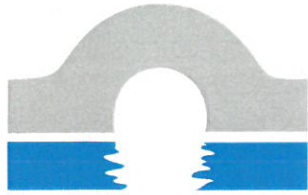
Newport Pebble Art will be holding an **Easter Pebble Decorating Workshop** on **Easter Monday - 22nd April from 10am – 3pm**. Jaime will be on hand to help create something unique and transfer ideas onto your personalised pebble. The workshop is for all ages, costs **£3 per person** and includes 3 pebbles and sharpie pens to decorate. No need to book, just turn up on the day. A small waiting time may occur if the room is full to capacity.

COUNTRYSIDE WALKS

LOCAL BLUEBELL WALK – SATURDAY APRIL 27TH

TWMBARLWM RIDGE TO CWMBRAN WALK – SATURDAY MAY 25TH

Full details of these walks can be found on our website - www.fourteenlocks.mbact.org.uk. Both walks will be over tough terrain, uneven paths and involve obstacles to climb, including stiles. This time of year, paths are extremely muddy and overgrown, and both walks will be around 8 miles. You **MUST** check the full description of the walks before attending. You will need a high level of fitness and mobility, and have the correct walking equipment. Just a reminder that **Fourteen Locks Countryside Walks** are usually scheduled for the **last Saturday** in the month. All walks leave from the centre at **9.30 am**.



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FOURTEEN LOCKS CANAL CENTRE

WELL BEING COFFEE MORNING

SATURDAY MAY 11TH and SATURDAY JUNE 1ST 10am – 11.30am

Would you like to do more to improve your **wellbeing**?

Are you looking to make positive **changes**?

Do you want to experience more positive **emotions**?

Do you want to respond more positively to **challenges**?

Each month will focus on a different topic - you can choose the topics that best suit your needs.

Each session costs **just £6.50**, which will include refreshments.

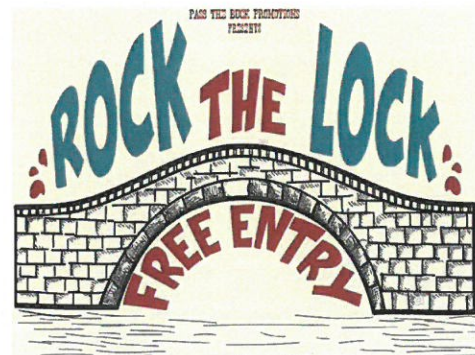
No need to book, just turn up on the day before the start time of **10am**.

For further information, please email Rachel at datrainingssolutions@gmail.com

ROCK THE LOCK - 2019

This popular music event is back for another year on **Saturday 15th June from 11am till 6pm**.

Acts on the day will include: **The Flying Spider Revival, No Direction, Oxbowlake, Bryony Sier, Ian Lynn Palmer, Lewis Leighton, Huw James, Ruby Kelly, Broken Karma and Graham James**.



Although this event is free, donation buckets will be positioned around the site to raise money for **MBACT**.

ARTIST'S PAULINE PRICE AND JUDITH JAMES

Will be the next Artists displaying their work in the Canal Centre and Cafe. The monthly exhibition boards can be booked by sending your work to paupri@gmail.com. Boards cost **£10 a month** to hire and measure 8' x 4' in size. They do get booked out quickly, so waiting times may occur.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE NOW OPEN UNTIL 5PM DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS

Please keep updated on all MBACT events by following us @fourteenlocks on



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NEWS ITEMS

CONVERSION OF MBACT TO A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION (CIO)

MBACT is considering changing its legal entity to become a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)**. The Trust came into existence in **1984** as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. By virtue of its existing governing documents, the Trust itself cannot engage in permanent trading. To circumvent this situation, we have, quite legally, set up two trading companies – **MBACT Regeneration Ltd** and **Fourteen Locks Centre Ltd**, whose profits are donated back into the Trust.

The legal entity **Charitable Incorporated Organisation**, which first came about in **2014**, now offers a new opportunity to allow charitable companies like **MBACT** to convert to become a **CIO**. There would be a number advantages to this, and the Trust's Committee is considering the relative pros and cons in consultation with our accountants and legal advisers. If we decide it is in the Trust's best interests to proceed with this change, the matter would be put to members at the **Annual General Meeting** later in the year for approval, with a view to implementing the change with effect from **1st January 2020**.

THE ADVENTURE TRIANGLE PROJECT

You may recall that, in our Autumn Newsletter, we made reference to the fact the **Adventure Triangle** project had finally received the green light to go ahead with **£4.6 million** worth of funding in place from the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** and the **Welsh Government**. Part of this scheme is the proposed improvement of the facilities at **Pontymoile Basin**, and, with this in mind, **Torfaen CBC** (who are leading the project) are inviting the public's views about the proposed redevelopment. The proposed plans include the removal of the existing boat café and replacing it with a building to include a café and other facilities. This building will be designed sympathetically to the location, and the site will also include outdoor picnic/seating areas and a free car park. **Torfaen CBC** have set up a simple on-line survey to gauge your views. This can be reached via the following link <https://getinvolved.torfaen.gov.uk/neighbourhoods/p-b-a-h-0319/>

INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP FEES – STANDING ORDERS

In our Winter Newsletter, we advised of an increase in Membership Fees for **2019**. Please can we remind all members who currently pay using the **Standing Order** method, that you need to contact your bank to amend the amount payable. We are still receiving payments at the old rate which is necessitating us contacting the member requesting an additional payment. We thank you for your co-operation with this.



Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust

NEWS ITEMS

OAK FROM TY COCH

The restoration team working on the **Waterworks Project** at Ty Coch (see Autumn Newsletter) have been able to utilise some of the excess material used in the scheme in a creative and unique way in keeping with their name. The oak off-cuts, locally sourced from the **Forest of Dean**, were from sections used in the manufacture of the Head and Heel posts on the new modular style lock gates, and have been supplied to a group carrying out restoration of the vessel "*Charlotte*" which is currently taking place at **Cardiff Bay**. The off-cuts supplied have been used to create a new stern post and frames for the restored vessel as shown in the photographs. A good example of co-operation between organisations to promote economic and environmental benefits.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 2019

The date of this year's **Annual General Meeting** has been set for **Saturday 19th October**, to be held at the **Fourteen Locks Canal Centre** starting at **11 am**. In accordance with the Trust's constitution, a notification and agenda will be sent out to all members at least 28 days in advance of the meeting.

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