



WATERWAYS OMBUDSMAN COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held at
Canal & River Trust, The Toll House, Delamere Terrace, Little Venice
London, W2 6ND
on Wednesday 25 May 2016 2.00p.m.

Present:

Steve Harriott (SH)	Chair (Independent)
Jackie Lewis (JL)	CRT General Counsel
Kevin Fitzgerald (KF)	Independent Member
Jenny Murley (JM)	Independent Member

Apologies

Tom Franklin (TF)	CRT Trustee
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In attendance:

Andrew Walker (AW)	Ombudsman
Yetunde Salami (YS)	CRT Assistant Company Secretary (minutes)

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1. Welcome & Apologies

Apologies noted as above. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

It was noted that notice of the meeting had been given to all members entitled to receive it and that a quorum was present. The meeting then proceeded to business.

Declarations of interest

Jackie Lewis declared her interest as the Trust's General Counsel and Company Secretary.

The register was noted and no other interests were declared.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 February 2016

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016 were adopted.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 (*Minute 5.1*): It was noted that AW had revised the survey questions such that not all questions must be answered.

4. Report of the Waterways Ombudsman to the Committee

4.1 AW gave highlights of his report and talked through his caseload from April

2015 to 31 March 2016.

AW explained that his workload was manageable and that to date there are no open enquiries, and four investigations are open.

The rest of the report was noted.

5. Update on tracking customer satisfaction with the scheme by way of customer survey

5.1 The survey is ongoing.

6. Criteria for an Effective Scheme

6.1 Members extensively discussed the criteria, the report on the review of casework files and the schemes' standards and policies. Following discussion it was agreed that:

- the Trust should put a process in place to ensure to track the implementation of Ombudsman decisions in individual cases. JL will take this forward. AW
JL
- AW would periodically update the Committee on whether his recommendations were carried out by the Trust. AW
- the Ombudsman's decision letter to the complainant should make it clear that if the recommendations have not been implemented within the time specified in the decision letter, the complainant should contact the Ombudsman. AW will send a draft of the paragraph to members for comments. AW
- AW would email the draft annual report to members for comments. If need be a conference call meeting would be arranged to approve the report AW/JL

It was noted that AW is progressing steps to ensure that his recommendations to the Trust sets out the anticipated timescale in which he expects action to be taken. AW

7. Financial Update

7.1 JL presented the report and gave the Committee assurance that the budget for the Scheme was adequate to meet current needs.

(AW left the meeting.)

8. Ombudsman – Term of Office

8.1 Members noted that AW's initial term of office is due to expire on 31st October 2016 after which, as provided by the Rules, the role could either be open to competition or AW could be reappointed for a second term.

Exercising its discretion under the Rules the Committee agreed an extension of AW's term of office for 3 years from 1 November 2016 (until 1 November 2019). The recruitment process for a new Ombudsman would

Action

commence in 2018.

It was agreed that SH would discuss the Committee's proposal with AW outside the meeting and would also inform members of the outcome of the discussion.

SH

(Post Meeting Note – AW accepted the Committee's proposal.)

9. Any Other Business

9.1 It was noted that this would have been TF's last meeting as he would retire from the Trust in September. Committee members asked JL to convey their appreciation for his contribution during his tenure.

JL

(AW rejoined the meeting.)

10. Date of Next meeting:

10.1 It was agreed that the meeting scheduled for 5 July should be cancelled and the next meeting would be held on 3 October 2016.

11. Close Of Meeting

11.1 There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 3.30p.m.

Chairman