

Despite a few setbacks but building on our steady progress, we are sure that 2010 will go down as the year in which we really started to move ahead. May we wish all our members and our project a great 2011!

A Review Of The Last Twelve Months:

Meetings and events:

Since our AGM last December one or more of your Council members has attended 77 meetings or events to date; all associated with advancing our cause.

Many of these have involved networking in various degrees of formality with local businesses, councillors and council officials in the Stratford and Warwick areas. This year we have been particularly pleased with the improvement of our relationships at the Warwick end. There is a new manager at Warwick Castle and a new owner of Warwick Castle Park. We hope to maintain and improve relations with both these sites. In the first half of 2010 we were involved in numerous meetings concerned with the planning of the 2010 Stratford River Festival (see below).

Other events have, as in the past, included presentations on our project to organisations as varied as local business and professional associations, and waterway interests across a wide area of the country. Most of these talks have been undertaken by Roger Clay but both Roger Harrison and Ian Fletcher have given radio interviews about our project. We are grateful to them and to all those who do this important work.

Committee Concerns:

It was with sadness that some months ago our Chairman had to accept the resignation from the board of our Treasurer John Bedingfield on health grounds. Knowing John, this was probably only matched by his frustration in having to give up the job. Over the last year John's contribution to our cause has been very substantial, and has amounted to far more than merely counting the beans. John has produced for us a very professional draft Corporate & Business Plan, a seminal document that gives a foundation and guidance as we move forward. His experience, wisdom and good counsel have contributed to many facets of our committee meetings and he will be sorely missed. We are sure that you will join us in sending our thanks and good wishes to John and Helen at this difficult time.

This unfortunate occurrence has only exacerbated a problem that we have been aware of for some time. We do need more practical help and support if we are to advance our project at the pace that we would all wish. We need your help, not just with a few more active bodies on the committee, but with a core (or should it be corps) of 'corresponding members' who are willing and able to undertake specific activities, both regular and random. These include such things as publicity; website maintenance; manning our stand and networking. We hope to discuss this issue further at the AGM.

Stratford River Festival:

The first weekend in July saw the holding of the second Stratford River Festival. Attended by 65 cruising and workboats, numerous small boats and an estimated 20,000 land-based visitors, both boaters and the town interests agreed that it was a great success. The new organisation readily took on the lessons from the 2009 event. The VIP River Cruise was particularly successful. With the MP for Stratford, the Chairmen of WCC, WDC, and SDC, along with the Mayors of Stratford and Warwick and VIPs as the audience, Nick Birch, David Bolton and Roger Clay in a series of presentations, took advantage of this opportunity to put across the message of the Avon and its future.

As at last year's festival, the Trust conducted a public survey, the consistent result of which was again a pleasant surprise. With regard to our project, visitors were asked to choose one of three positions a) Unconditional Support for the extension of navigation; b) Conditional Support, subject to the result of the impact studies; c) Opposition, irrespective of the outcome. Exactly 40% voted for a) and 60% for b) with no votes for c). Total responses were split almost equally between locals and visitors. However in the

