Welcome to all the Skippers and interested parties gathered here today.

A difficult start for this year for me personally but working on Project matters has focussed my attention beneficially. There have been lots of changes within the Structure of the Project behind the scenes as retiring members with key roles have had to be replaced.

Chinyere and Charity have taken over the Financial side and Karl has done sterling work in an area which has proved troublesome in the past – nevertheless essential to the future of the Project, namely the Marketing side.

These together with Nigel’s work on the Bookings and associated aspects have incorporated new responsibilities which have been needed to drive the Project forward into a very ‘competitive’ Market Place.

We are more and more conscious of vying for position within our prospective Clients criteria of Activities and have consciously tried to be more compliant, within reason, to their changes in perspective, as newer ideas have emerged for our boats’ usage.

Denise has also been exploring new access to the DBS System as we need to re-establish our compliance with our own DBS renewal policy which requires personnel who work with children and vulnerable adults to have regular Police (etc) data check. A new enabling organisation has been located and the process is now in train.

Denise has also been taking over the Fundraising Role within the Project from Dave – an area in which he has gained expertise over the years in which he has occupied this role. This will necessarily take some time but such an essential job needs careful planning!

Paul and Denise have kindly stepped up to take over our Crick Show Activities – another of Dave’s legacies. More about that later.

A slimmed-down Marketing Committee led by Karl is now capitalising on all the efforts made last year and continuing into this year by the group not least by Nigel in his efforts to bring the Project to the attention of Clients ‘first-hand’. The proof of all this work has been a dramatic increase in Bookings.

This increase in demand for our Boats together with greater flexibility will inevitably put pressure on our ability to provide Skippers for our non-self-steer activities. Our present corps of Skippers have done sterling work over the years but some of us are not getting any younger and ‘new-blood’ is definitely needed. We have actively followed up any enquiries/interest expressed in this direction and we welcome Fiona and other prospective volunteers to the fold.

Also, any of our present Skippers who feel they want to be more involved with the running of the Project will be more than welcome. Please talk to any of the Executive.

Huge progress has been made in our compliance with GPDR (Data Protection) which became a legal necessity from 25th May 2018. Many thanks to Don and Graham for formulating The Project’s Policy and how we interact with our Clients. Liz has also been busy providing Client Data ( as everybody about whom we hold data has to be contacted in order that they are happy with the information we hold on them).

The Hampshire Scout Leaders Event took place on Saturday 28th April. Our efforts were well received by the Organisers and we were one of the leading attractions amongst the Indoor Display. Despite the weather not being kind this event was well attended.

The Crick Show had better weather and concentrated the eccentricity of our climate to the evenings/night complete with electric pyrotechnics & noisy heavenly furniture movement!

Good attendances meant our Trip Boat tickets, despite an additional boat, were sell-outs as usual. My thanks to all the Skippers whose professional performance enhanced our profile, as did the nearby Face-Painting Team.

From 10th July to 12th July inclusive, myself and 3 other Skippers undertook ‘Taster Days’ familiarising local Societies and Agencies with the Project’s Activities and Purposes by using the boats as floating displays to engender goodwill and interest together with expounding the benefits of booking our boats in the future.

All 3 days had daytime and evening cruises so it was intensive for our Skippers. Many positive reactions (and donations!) have been received. Some of these are on display on our Facebook page. The Wolvey WI were particularly generous and a serious booking enquiry has been received.

There appears to be a market for ‘day-trips’ giving organised groups a more formal option of ‘Paid-for’ Trips during weekdays.

Many thanks to John Moore, John Driver and Nigel Smith for their help over this period.

Another promotion involving the local Braunston C of E Primary School took place 3 weeks ago where about 30 pupils were taken from the Stop House to the Puddle Bank winding hole and back in 3 batches tying in to the school curriculum within the school day span. This was well received and we are promised photos which we can use for publicit

Production of a Promotional Video took place last month with Simon Ainley of ‘Pinpoint Video’ a local Rugby-based Marketing/Publicity company, after delays finding suitable ‘stooges’, as Nigel calls the ‘actors’ involved!

The weather on the day started fairly brightly but turned dull later on. Up the locks, through the tunnel then the pound to Norton Junction and return. Simon seemed to be everywhere and seemed pleased with his shots. A few contrived ‘retakes’ were included plus ‘background’ sounds and ‘piece to camera’.

Looking forward to the finished product.

Thank You All

PP