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The Lancaster Canal Trust

c/o Lancaster District CVS, The Cornerstone, Sulyard Street, Lancaster LA1 1PXA
Charitable Incorporated Organisation with limited liability
Registered Charity No 1167020
www.lancastercanaltrust.org.uk
Corporate Member of The Inland Waterways Association
Member of Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership

Chair's Annual Report 2025-26

Author: Peter Jones (Vice Chair)
Date: 09/07/26

Yet again I am presenting this report as acting chair; we thought we had a replacement chair but, unfortunately, it did not work out for personal reasons.

This lack of either a chair or secretary has now been compounded by the loss of our treasurer and, as mentioned below our Waterwitch magazine editor. This is not really sustainable for the long term, and the trustees are looking for assistance from members in filling these posts. Any contribution, even part time, would be welcome.

In terms of membership, we are getting a few new members but the trend seems to be downwards. It is sad to have posted copies of Waterwitch magazine returned because the member has passed away or is no longer at the address we have.

The financial status of the Trust continues to be solid, as seen in the accounts. Little has been paid out for restoration recently (as will be referred to) and we continue to benefit from legacies.

In the recent past the Trust had quite a pool of members with engineering experience to design and supervise projects. Sadly, age and (lack of) physical abilities has significantly reduced this pool and without the input of 'new blood' we may lose it altogether.

In terms of smaller scale restoration, the reduced availability of this technical expertise and volunteer effort within the Trust led to the consideration of whether further work (after the First Furlong at Stainton) should be suspended until resources became available. However, in view of the fact that we have funds and out of respect for the the donors who wished to support restoration it is proposed to continue and restore the next (f2an3) length to Wellheads Lane. This may require a greater use of contractor's external expertise. This can be financed from existing funds but going further will require considerably more.

Progress towards the final First Furlong connection to the canal (removal of the bund) is grindingly slow and more bureaucratic. To such an extent that the Trustees are considering not progressing with it at all. Details of this will give in a presentation after the AGM and in a communication with members. Input from members will be encouraged.

In terms of our general Working Party activities we are refocussing on the general maintenance along our own length and working with CRT and LCRP further south. It has not proved possible, so far, to continue the regular volunteers bulletin that Robin produced but the mailing list is used to notify volunteers of future activities etc. We do not believe it is necessary to recruit a volunteer co-ordinator to increase and manage our pool of volunteers.

As was presented at the last AGM the Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership (LCRP) has completed the extension to the Towpath Trail as far as Holme and are actively working on plans to go further. As part of this partnership the Trust has been able to contribute its knowledge and expertise. A main aim of LCRP activities is to make the Northern Reaches a multi-user attraction with events and general publicity. This coincides with one of the objectives of the Trust itself so it is beneficial for us to work together.

The Trust continues to have a presence at the annual Country Fest and the County Show at Crooklands. We continue to sell books and other merchandise. They are good times for meeting members and other useful contacts.

Our Waterwitch trip boat continues to be an attraction both at the shows and the regular weekend sessions during the season. We must thank Ian and his enthusiastic crew for the efforts they put in, regardless of the (possibly few) number of passengers they have. There is a need for more skippers for the enjoyable task of motoring up and down our lovely canal!

The lack of a magazine editor obviously resulted in difficulties and delay in the production of the Spring edition of the Waterwitch magazine. Many thanks to JM for stepping in. The future of the magazine is being seriously considered by the Trustees including not having a printed version but relying on a new web site (as below) to have the material (possibly on a member-only basis). Feedback from members is requested.

On a positive note, work is progressing well with a new web site after our own review (and the comments of members) noted that it was not really fit for purpose. The developers are a very enthusiastic local company who share our enthusiasm for the canal. It should be much brighter and attractive as well as easier to navigate. It should be much easier to manage the content ourselves. Watch this space!

To repeat…

Although we can ‘muddle through’ and continue with the activities just covered there is a shortage of effort to fulfil the statutory responsibilities of a charity as would be provided by a chair and a secretary, e.g. the formal retention of records etc. We need to pursue internal or external recruitment although the latter has not proved successful in the past.

I will continue as acting chair on a caretaker basis and, hopefully, progress the design and implementation of the f2an3 work.

This is not the cheeriest of reviews, but we must not forget the efforts of our active members without whom we could not do anything at all, many thanks to them.

The Lancaster Canal Trust
Balance Sheet

	31/03/2026	31/03/2025
Fixed Asset		
Tangible assets		
Trip Boat		
Cost	8,962.75	8,962.75
Cum. Depreciation	3,037.25	3,037.25
Revaluation Reserve	15,500.00	15,500.00
Total Trip Boat	**27,500.00**	**27,500.00**
Total Tangible assets	**27,500.00**	**27,500.00**
Total Fixed Asset	**27,500.00**	**27,500.00**
Cash at bank and in hand		
CAF Bank	14,987.33	21,320.11
NatWest	68.60	1,265.60
PayPal	49.49	0.00
Stripe	40.09	21.26
Floats	25.00	
United Trust Bank	134,316.59	118,903.39
Total Cash at bank and in hand	**149,487.10**	**141,510.36**
Debtors		
Accounts Receivable	96.00	0.00
Total Debtors	**96.00**	**0.00**
Current Assets		
Stock	3,566.81	3,725.23
Total Current Assets	**3,566.81**	**3,725.23**
Net current assets	**153,149.91**	**145,235.59**
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		
Trade Creditors		
Accounts Payable	1,632.00	454.10
Total Trade Creditors	**1,632.00**	**454.10**
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**1,632.00**	**454.10**
Net current assets (liabilities)	**151,517.91**	**144,781.49**
Total assets less current liabilities	**179,017.91**	**172,281.49**
Total net assets (liabilities)	**179,017.91**	**172,281.49**
Charity funds		
Share Capital Account	94,896.75	94,896.75
Surplus/(Deficit)	84,121.16	77,384.74
Total Charity funds	**179,017.91**	**172,281.49**

Income and expenditure year ending 31/03/2026

Income	**Year Ending**	**Year Ending**
Sales	**March 31, 2026**	**March 31, 2025**
7th Ed Guide Book Discount	-186.40	-280.80
7th Ed Guide Book Sales	1,576.20	1,351.00
Other Book Sales	85.90	23.00

200 Years of the Lancaster Canal	228.50		115.50	
Plaque Sales	33.00		16.50	
Post & Packing Sales	0.00		3.00	
		1,737.20		**1,228.20**
Fundraising & Interest on Balances				
Buy a Block	100.00		120.00	
Interest	5,449.95		4,800.14	
Talks	315.00		263.91	
		5,864.95		5,184.05
Membership and Donations				
Membership Subscriptions	3,319.00		3,376.65	
100 Club Subscriptions	242.00		444.00	
Other Income	0.00		65.00	
Gift Aid	0.00		1,652.38	
Donations	11,106.15		25,624.30	
		14,667.15		**31,162.33**
Trip Boat				
Regular Boat Trips	0.00		0.00	
Chartered Trips	950.00		465.00	
Trip Boat Tickets	2,110.00		1,970.15	
Boater's Dinner income	652.00		569.50	
		3,712.00		3,004.65
Total Income				
		25,981.30		**40,579.23**
Expenditures				
Promotion & Events				
Country Fest - Current Year	309.60		0.00	
Westmorland Show	675.60		0.00	
Web Site	2,023.20		520.39	
		3,008.40		520.39
Memberships & Subscriptions				
LCRP	0.00		0.00	
Subscriptions Paid	137.00		133.00	
		137.00		133.00
Restoration and Working Parties				
Consumables	97.88		0.00	
F2&3	1,620.00		0.00	
Miscelllaneous	1,873.79		0.00	
Equipment	650.52		339.00	
General	618.84		0.00	
Working Party Materials	37.55		332.98	
		4,898.58		671.98
Trip Boat Expenses				
Boat Fuel	252.95		339.82	
Boat Licence (C&RT)	1,002.65		944.70	
Boat Other Running Costs	500.37		905.51	
Boat Refurbishment	1,464.20		2,803.48	
Boat Training	468.00		454.10	
Boater's Dinner Costs	608.00		554.50	

		4,296.17		6,002.11
Waterwitch Magazine				
Distribution	1,854.80		0.00	
Printing	1,401.52		578.00	
		3,256.32		578.00
Governance Costs				
Accountancy	60.00		33.60	
AGM	495.00		257.50	
Insurance	2,071.96		2,653.49	
Bank Charges	125.27		80.20	
		2,752.23		3,024.79
Running Costs and Costs Of Fundraising				
Millness Building & Wharf	100.92		115.84	
Utility Costs	0.00		10.14	
Repairs and Maintenance	0.00		94.66	
Small Tools and Equipment	164.38		0.00	
Cost of Sales	408.42		338.97	
Postage	222.46		669.33	
		896.18		1,228.94
Total Expenditure		**19,244.88**		**12,159.21**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		**6,736.42**		**28,420.02**

Treasurer's Report:

Sales up this this year compared to last by £509 with increased sales across all items. Interest received was over £650 higher reflecting the increased balance in the reserve account during the year and, as the interest is paid annually, on the higher balance in the prior year – this despite interest rates falling in the period.

We received a bequest of £10k from Anthony Woodhouse, a former member and active volunteer prior to his relocation to London. This is the interim distribution. Trip boat income was largely unchanged with a fall in trip income offset by a rise in charters. Trip boat income was over £700 higher last year. The income from charter trips more than doubled and there was a 7% increase in takings on the trip boat which can be attributed to the tow path trail attracting greater footfall and our increased promotion.

In terms of expenses we have spent more on the website this year and this is due to the costs in developing the new website that will be launched soon. We spent over £4,200 on restoration in the year - this year including a contractor to clear the bed on F2&3 and supporting LCRP to develop their proposal for the Hincaster tunnel. Boat running costs were lower overall as we didn’t take the trip boat out of the water for maintenance over the winter this year but does include the second instalment of the new boat cover. We saved another £600 by switching our insurance provider, back to the previous firm. Overall, we had a surplus of £6,736 in year.

Scrutineer's Report to the Trustees of the Lancaster Canal Trust

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 March 2026

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Scrutineer

As the trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that neither the audit nor independent examination requirements of the Charities Act 2011 apply. It is my responsibility without carrying out an audit or independent examination to scrutinise the accounts and to report to you.

Basis of Scrutineer's Statement

In accordance with the directions given in the Trust's constitution, I have scrutinised the records and the accounts set out on pages 3 to 5

Scrutineer's Statement

In my opinion the accounts are in accordance with the records produced to me and comply with the constitution.

Name: .....Jethro Niven.....
Address: .....6 Wilton Close, Lancaster.....
.....LA1 2TL.....
Date: .....09/07/2026.....

Lancaster Canal Trust Membership Report 31 March 2026

As of 31 March 2026, the membership of Lancaster Canal Trust stands at 287 Memberships. This is 9 fewer than on the 30 October 2025 report.

Individuals	92
Concessions	7
Joint/Family	82
Life Members	88
Hon Members	15
Affiliated	3

Carol Haigh

LCT Membership Secretary

31 March 2026