



Megan & Tinks

Annual Report 2023

Nottingham Narrow Boat Project LTD

SUMMARY

2023 was a year where we again increased our level of activity. At the beginning of the year, our volunteers completed boat handling and First Aid refresher training, to ensure they're confident in taking our service users safely onto the canal and river. We use our moorings at the CanalHouse Bar, Colwick Park and the Canal Heritage Centre at Beeston with the latter offering access via a purpose-built pontoon, allowing for us to provide wheelchair access directly to the centre. The pontoon recently underwent some additional structural support to combat buoyancy issues that were initially experienced. This is a positive outcome for all our users with reduced mobility and we're looking forward to making use of this in the coming years.

Our application for a second Lottery Fund grant was successful and this will be used to increase participation of the harder to reach Communities who are currently underrepresented in our user demographic. This would be achieved through the role of the new Community Liaison Officer (funded by the lottery Fund) who joined the charity in September 2023.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Lottery commission and all those involved, as this funding will allow us to continue to operate for the next three years. Going forward the board of Trustees are in the process of putting together a strategy to become more self-sufficient and will begin to pursue alternative funding streams which will be vital in securing the charity for the future.

As a small charity we rely on our volunteers. Our online portal provides a platform for sharing information and capturing feedback directly from them and we create best practice and training from their invaluable contributions. It is vital that we continue to create an inclusive environment for all involved, to have a say in the activities and the future of the charity. We as an organisation maintain our pledge to support the involvement of volunteers who choose to dedicate their

time and skills to us by providing ongoing training and creating a welcoming and appreciative workplace and culture.

Groups have a variety of reasons for embarking on trip with us, below are some of their reasons captured from our website's online booking page:

'To try and get some elderly people out who are still too nervous to go anywhere on their own'

'A group of great SEN young adults to enjoy being on the water.'

'Mental, Wellbeing, Homeless young people'

'Nottingham Mencap Day Centre Outing'

'Summer activities for a group of adults with Learning Disabilities'

'Syrian Repatriation Scheme with Maun Refuge Charity Families Day Trip for them to see what happens on a canal and get to see local life along the river.'

'Young Onset Dementia group. They LOVED the boat trip last year.'

'Take our disabled members and older people out on a trip.'

'D of E Bronze Expedition'

'Our group meets every month to talk about living with a stoma and encourage our members to live life to the full. This will be a rare opportunity to do something fun and outside with the group.'

'To bring local voluntary organisations together to discuss racism and how we can work collectively to overcome it. Up to 50% of those attending will be from the BAME community.'

'Residential experience for young people with autism'

'We are a youth group from St. Ann's. Children are aged between 9 and 12. This will be the first time on a boat for many of them. They would like the opportunity to have a go at being on a boat and to record some nature/water sounds for their music project.'

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

109 TRIPS

2400+
VOLUNTEER
HOURS

7 RESIDENTIAL
TRIPS

99 GROUPS



TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees continues to meet bi-monthly throughout the year, however, with the easing of restrictions and return to a new “normal”, in July the decision was made to move back to face to face meetings with the option for virtual attendance if required.

The Trustee Board now comprises:

Amber Tipper has worked in education for over 10 years and is currently Senior Partnerships Manager at Kaplan International. She has an MBA from Nottingham Business School and a Level 7 qualification from CMI in strategic management and leadership. She is interested in strategy development and planning. She is currently Acting Chair.

amber.tipper@meganandtinks.org.uk

Paddy Emmerson is a former Chartered Accountant with extensive commercial experience in the UK and Europe. He was latterly the Finance Director for VF UK and Scandinavia (Wrangler, North Face, Timberland, Vans, et al). Paddy is Vice Chair of the Nottingham Credit Union and a regular Volunteer crew. He was instrumental in setting up the Charitable company in 2017 and currently leads on Finance and bookings.

paddy.emmerson@meganandtinks.org.uk

Carol Greaves is a full-time youth worker and team leader with Notts County Council and is a regular user of our boats. Carol has a BA Hons degree in working with young people and communities and has extensive experience working with statutory youth provision and has a specific interest in Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Diversity in communities. Carol has significant expertise in Safeguarding and takes the lead on Safeguarding for the Board of Trustees.

carol.greaves@meganandtinks.org.uk

Gary Bramley had a distinguished Army career in the Royal Engineers before joining Royal Mail and served in several senior management positions. Gary is qualified in Mechanical Engineering, Health & Safety and Environmental Management and has extensive experience in operations and logistics. Gary lives on a narrowboat, is one of our regular volunteer Skippers and takes the lead on Operations, Health and Safety and Risk Assessment for the Board of Trustees.

gary.bramley@meganandtinks.org.uk

James Barron is a very experienced IT and Computer Security Systems expert, with 30 years' experience in Information Systems covering hardware, software, information security, governance, risk and compliance. Now self-employed, James was formerly the Head of Information Systems and Site Security for the Players Horizon Factory in Nottingham. James takes the lead on IT and Computer Systems security for the Board of Trustees.

james.barron@meganandtinks.org.uk

Susan Pynegar is a retired lecturer and school teacher, having experience in tertiary, secondary and primary education, with a particular interest in modern languages and linguistics. She is a regular volunteer on the narrow boats and will be taking the lead on information and outdoor learning.

susan.pynegar@meganandtinks.org.uk

The Trustee Board is utilising our Trustee Recruitment Policy to add more members. We are dedicated to ensuring our board is reflecting diversity and equality and comprises a variety of skills to ensure the current and future success of the charity.

VOLUNTEERS



Our activities are run and led by our Volunteers, without whom we would not exist.

We have 15 qualified skippers, and all our crew have completed an accredited National Community Boats Association boat handling course. We now have 7 qualified boat handling trainers who can supervise the on take of new volunteers.

This year our volunteers delivered training to new Skippers and crew and we ended 2023 with 40 volunteers - a 30% increase.

Our volunteers continue to play a major role in boat maintenance, they employ their unique and diverse experience and skillsets to keeping the boats in good working order. This year has seen volunteers utilise their joinery, metal working, mechanical and electrical skills to complete repairs on both of our boats. Without their input the charity would endure many extra costs, so again we're very fortunate to have such talented, skilled and dedicated individuals on board.

The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them for their individual contributions in 2023, we could not have got through the year without your time and dedication.



OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The following provides an overview of the operations of Nottingham Narrowboat project during 2023. The charity continues to provide people from all walks of life, ages and abilities the opportunity to access the historic Canals and waterways of Nottingham and beyond.

We as a charity strive to create enjoyable and memorable experiences for the groups we work with. Our service users have included SEND youth, the elderly and individuals experiencing mental and physical disabilities.

The charity has made some significant achievements over this last period. We've overcome operational challenges which have highlighted many more opportunities for future growth and improvement. Our volunteers remain loyal and dedicated to continuing the work of the charity, delivering a worthwhile service to the communities of Nottingham.

Our full time Operation's Manager coordinates the volunteers, provides skipper training and oversees the daily running of the project.

1. Operational Highlights

1.1. Service Delivery

- Trips - 109 Day trips, 7 Residential Trips, Serving 1500 individuals.
- Community Engagement: Collaborated with over 70 local schools, care homes, and community groups.
- Special Events: Organised/participated in events including educational KS2 Geography river trips, Easter, Summer and Christmas celebration trips.

1.2. Fleet Management

- Boats Operated: 2 narrowboats in regular operation.
- Maintenance: Regular maintenance performed, including engine overhauls and replacements, safety inspections and hull blackin

1.3. Volunteer Involvement

- Volunteers: 40 active volunteers contributing over 2400 hours of service.
- Training: Refresher, Boat Handling and CCBM training for volunteers focusing on safety, customer service, and boat handling.

2. Impact Assessment

2.1. Beneficiary Feedback

- Surveys: participants reported high satisfaction with the service.
- Testimonials: Positive feedback highlighted the unique and relaxing experience of narrowboat trips.

2.2. Community Impact

- Social Inclusion: Increased participation from marginalized groups.
- Education: Enhanced understanding of local waterways and environmental conservation among young participants.

3. Challenges and Solutions

3.1. Operational Challenges

- Weather Dependence: Adverse weather affecting trip schedules.
- Maintenance Costs: Rising costs of boat maintenance.

3.2. Solutions Implemented

- scheduling: Implemented an Automated booking system.
- Cost Management: Created working relationships and accounts with local and national companies to receive support and discounts on maintenance expenses.

4. Future Plans

4.1. Expansion Goals

- Enhance Services: Introduce more themed, educational and health and wellbeing trips.

4.2. Strategic Initiatives

- Volunteer Engagement: Expand volunteer base and enhance training programs.
- Community Outreach: Strengthen partnerships with local organisations and schools.

5. Conclusion

Nottingham Narrowboat Project LTD has had a productive year, positively impacting many lives through its services.

MEASURING OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

In 2023 we've continued to work towards the four outcomes for Children, Young People, Older People and Volunteers. We're currently working on streamlining feedback and data collection. Feedback forms were created to be completed by group leaders during trips, ensuring opportunities to share feedback were provided. However, we found that these were not always completed and collating data from them was time consuming. Currently the Project is working on a digital solution to streamline data capture allowing for smoother analysis in the future.

User feedback comments:

"The trip was wonderfully organised and provided a unique experience for all. The scenery along the canal was stunning, and we appreciated the knowledgeable guide."

"We thoroughly enjoyed the Narrowboat Canal & River Experience. The pace was relaxing, and it was a fantastic way to see the local area."

"Thank you for organising such a delightful day out on the canal. The boat was comfortable, and the crew were friendly and accommodating."

"We had a marvellous time on the narrowboat and the journey was very enjoyable."

"The canal trip exceeded our expectations. It was a peaceful escape, and the driver was attentive to everyone's needs, ensuring a smooth and pleasant experience."

"We had a great day on the canal thanks to Megan and Tinks. The scenery was beautiful!"

"I had a fantastic time on the canal trip. The scenic views and the relaxed atmosphere were just what I needed. Kudos to the organisers for such a memorable experience."



FINANCIALS

Our finances remained strong throughout the year, mostly because we had the first 2 of the 6 tranches of our new Lottery Funding. We have also implemented increased charges to our users as we try to reduce our reliance on Lottery Funding.

Our raison d'être is to provide our services at a cost which will allow our target Groups and Charities to make use of our services. Our challenge is to balance these fees with other sources of income whilst minimising our running costs. The number of trips this year is very similar to 2022 but our fee income is nearly double.

Our costs this year are higher this year for 4 reasons:

- We've invested in digital systems to make the booking process more efficient and easier for our clients to use, allowing for online card payments.
- We've installed security measures to protect the boats when moored up at base.
- We've incurred significant one-off maintenance costs, mostly due to the age of the 2 boats.
- We've been required to replace all our life jackets as an essential health and safety measure.
- Employee costs have increased due to the creation of a 3-year Community Liaison Officer role.
- We have a Funding policy that requires sufficient funds for 6 months of trips. We have reserves to achieve this.

Paddy Emmerson – Trustee and Finance Director

SUPPORTERS

We are fortunate to have several companies and organisations who support our work. We remain indebted to the National Lottery Community Fund for the 'Reaching Communities' Grant and received payment for the new funding in April 23.

The project continues to be based at the Canalhouse pub, run by Castle Rock Brewery, we are very grateful to them for their ongoing support. Our operational costs are reduced significantly by their provision of moorings, workshop and of-fice space.

We would also like to thank Nottingham City Council who provide us with our mooring at the Colwick Park Marina, this mooring is also accessible, and we have enjoyed an excellent relationship with the park rangers and thank them personally for the maintenance and upkeep of our pontoon.

We also maintain excellent working relationships with both The Canal and Rivers Trust and The Canalside Heritage centre. We will continue to engage with them over the coming year; by strengthening our connections through collaborations, we can enhance our offerings and support one another's work wherever possible.



The Jones 1986 Charitable Trust





The Nottingham Narrowboat Project Ltd

registered charity number 1176252



OUR BOAT TRIPS

We provide a unique Canal and River waterways experience for diverse local communities.

Located on the canal in Nottingham City Centre, Megan and Tinks Leen are two 70ft accessible narrowboats which can offer half day, full day, residential and summertime evening trips for groups of up to 12 or 24 people.

We provide a waterways experience along the Nottingham & Beeston Canal and River Trent including boat steering, working the canal's locks, water safety and a general taste of waterways life.

Each boat is staffed by our highly experienced and qualified skippers and crew. Whichever direction of travel takes in a mix of scenery, both urban & countryside.

Primarily we cater for primary and secondary Schools, Academies, Scouts Guides and Brownies, Youth Clubs, people with autism, disabilities and learning difficulties, community friendship groups and care homes, most of whom can benefit from a reduced qualifying community group fee.

We can also arrange trips for corporate groups as team building exercises or families for celebrating a special event.



CONTACT US

For bookings and enquiries please contact us:
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A booking form can be downloaded from our site: www.meganandtinks.org.uk
@meganandtinks



Registered Charity 1176252

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