

Lowland User Group Meeting, The Falkirk Wheel, Saturday, 21st March 2026

In Attendance:

Name

Marcin Werfsa
Robin Fryer
Ian Law
Karen & Ian
Andy Milner
Trevor Martin
Jacalyn Reid
Kenny Reid
Robert Morrison
Chris Ludlow
Claudia McPhail
Shaheen Syedail
Gus Quinteta
Robert Archdeacon
Stuart Campbell
David Charleston
Ian J Young
Rory Matthews
Karen Matthews
Gordon Daly
Anne Snedden
Ian White

Interest

The Bees Knees
Steinway
Ropitaro
Toff Huff
Seagull Trust
Lazy Days
Amboina King
Amboina King
Ratho Marina
Milly / Bridge 19 to 40 Canal Society
Bridge 19 to 40 Canal Society
Barcasa
Barcasa
Go Forth & Clyde
Emma Louise
In Too Deep
Seagull Trust Cruises
Annies Song
Annies Song
RYA Scotland / Seagull Trust Cruises / SWfA
Forth Yacht Clubs Association
EUCS/St Andrews Boat Club

Scottish Canals

Mark Smith (Chair)
Richard Millar
Tommy Thomson
Davie McRoberts
Ian Wilson

Welcome:

Mark Smith (Chair) welcomed all present and thanked them for their time and commitment to the canals.

- Investment in our canals
- Falkirk Flight Works
- Kelvin Aqueduct Works
- Upcoming Works
 - Lock 20 Bypass
 - Almond Feeder inspection and design
 - Townhead Reservoir
- Southbank Marina - Anti-Social Behaviour
- Assisted User Operation
- Scottish Waterways for All

After a break there was a session of three Break-out topics:

Group 1 – Assisted User Operation Process

Group 2 – Locks & Bridges Operation

Group 3 User Experience Certification

Feedback:

Group 1

- User Operation is a Good Idea
- User operation should extend opportunities for navigation
- Boaters will bring their own crew
- Priority Route – 1. Glasgow to Edinburgh, 2. Kelpies, 3. Bowling

Group 2

- Is there an opportunity for a Pilot Scheme like Crinan
- Safer overnight moorings
- Signage informing for sequencing gates
- Online Guide
- You Tube Channel – actual videos of locking, bridge movements and boating generally
- How long will it take, physical expectations and understanding boater's limitations
- Accessing power on journeys

Group 3

- Building a clear record of boater experience
- Accessing locked sluices and gates
- Experience can be locational e.g. a Boater may have a high level of experience on the Union Canal but lesser experience on the Forth & Clyde Canal, so may require more assistance in less experienced areas
- Generally supportive moving forward but we need to continue to consider equity of users, capability, and desire for certification
- Experience and confidence
- A video of leach lock showing the operational sequences
- A community boats association where crew can be accessed through volunteering

Conclusions:

- User Operation is a good idea, but assisted passage should not be discontinued
- The goal should be to increase opportunities for navigation particularly after hours
- We need to run a trial
- A YouTube channel would be a good resource to see detailed videos of lock and bridge operations
- Certifications of users is not required more a record of experience through active use

A trial is proposed for summer 2026.

Meeting closed with thanks from the Chair.