

Report from the Resources Working Group

1. The Resources Group was reconvened to look at Canal resourcing and funding issues in February 2005. The Group consists of officers from Hart, Woking, Hampshire County and Surrey County Councils plus the Canal Society. The IWA were invited to this meeting to look at issues regarding boat licensing.
2. The Canal Director provided an update at the meeting of recent achievements and ongoing works relating to funding and income generation. Further ideas were discussed. In summary these are:
 - 2.1. TAG / Rushmoor Borough Council(RBC). Money may be available from a fund provided by TAG (managers of Farnborough Airfield) for environmental improvements around the Borough. An application had gone to RBC. Rushmoors Strategic Partnership will be discussing a project to fund towpath improvements, in partnership with the Army (providing labour) at its April meeting. A similar fund operates in Hart and access to it is being investigated.
 - 2.2. Surrey Heath have provided information on a Community Grants Scheme in the Borough. Funds have to be match funded by 50%. BCA are working up a project in consultation with the Borough Council to improve access and the towpath from the Canal Centre to Frimley Lodge Park. It is understood that bids should be around the £5,000 mark.
 - 2.3. Section 106 Planning Gain money may be available for canal improvements from Dogmersfield Park via Hart DC Planning system. BCA have been discussing details with Hart Planners and have put forward proposals for some £20,000. An outcome is awaited.
 - 2.4. MEP Daniel Hannen visited the Canal with Hart Councillors to discuss opportunities for Euro Funding. He will be providing information on funds available and will support any applications. Euro funding was discussed. Generally a partner in another country is required. Existing twinning with Canal D O'rlans is a possibility, although we should look wider. BCA are members of the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) who have contacts with the pan - European navigation body PIANC. The Director will be pursuing this through AINA.
 - 2.5. DEFRA. LT had met with Jayne Redrup from DEFRA. She confirmed no funding is available, and waterways funding to BW is being cut. There may be opportunities in the future with assistance for extra work coming out of new legislation relating to dredging disposal and the Water Framework Directive.
 - 2.6. Both Hampshire and Surrey County Councils are actively seeking additional Capital funds for canal structural works. BCA have worked with both Counties to prioritise where funds are required.
 - 2.7. HCC are to provide in house business advisers through the Treasurers Department to review management options for the Canal and future funding.
 - 2.8. Additional help has been offered by Hampshire County Council's External Funding Manager. The BCA and the Canal Society will be looking at partnership funding opportunities.

- 2.9. New Surrey CC HQ, Woking. A capital sum is available for canalside improvements within the Woking pound through the Planning process. The details of this have yet to be finalised, and BCA are meeting with Woking BC to discuss further. As previously raised at the JMC, there are demands on the pot of money available from the Galleries Project.
- 2.10. Moorings: various sites on the Canal which offer potential for mooring on BCA land on the non-towpath side had been investigated. These sites will now be narrowed down to those which offer a practical option. Nationally, AINA are carrying out research in to the legalities surrounding moorings, residential moorings and houseboats on Canals with a view to establishing national standards. This project is due for completion in March and we will await its delivery before progressing moorings further. We anticipate coming to the next JMC with firm proposals along with any costs and associated income.
- 2.11. Whilst the current charges for boating were considered to be in line with other waterways, there is capacity for accommodating more boats on the Canal, whether resident or visiting, and remaining within the movement and licensing thresholds set by English Nature. Boats on the River Wey – our immediate neighbour – were considered as a key target audience for positive promotion. More boats would show more income on the “books”. However it has to be borne in mind that there is a cost associated with more boats using the Canal in terms of staff time, water usage and “wear and tear”.
- 2.12. Charging for car parking at, in particular, the Canal Centre will also be investigated. Contacts are to be made with existing country parks to discuss issue around the provision.

3. Value for Money Report

- 3.1. A report has been prepared by the Director, and approved by the Group, which outlines reasons why the Canal provides value for money and highlights some of the lesser known roles it performs. This will be presented to the JMC and is attached as Appendix 4.
- 3.2. It is aimed to circulate the report in its current format to partner authorities and organisations. The Director will be happy to follow this up with a presentation to any relevant committees.
- 3.3. Subject to approval from the JMC, a version for public circulation will be produced to help inform Council Tax payers and potential sponsors and funders.

Recommendations:

1. The above Report is noted and that the Canal Director continues with the projects outlined above as well as identifying new opportunities.
2. The “Value for Money” Report is endorsed by the JMC and circulated by Members to all relevant Members and Officers at respective Authorities.
3. Members continue to consider the needs of the Canal when the business of their Council is undertaken and potential opportunities for income – as per some examples above - are reported back to the Canal Director for action.
4. A full update on resourcing is provided at the next JMC.