

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee held at Woking Borough Council Offices, Woking, at 10.00am on Friday 21 October 2005

Members

Hampshire County Council	Surrey County Council
Councillor K G Chapman (Chapman) a	Mr John G Ades
Councillor B T Gurden	Mrs Elizabeth Compton (Vice-Ch)
a Councillor P Hutcheson	a Mr John Doran
a Councillor R J Kimber	Mrs Diana Smith
Hampshire Districts:	Surrey Districts:
Hart District Council	Guildford Borough Council
Councillor Kenneth Crookes	Councillor Angela Gunning
Councillor Wallace Vincent	
Rushmoor Borough Council	Runnymede Borough Council
Councillor C Balchin	Councillor J R Whiteley
a Councillor J J Wall	
Co-opted Member Appointed by Committee	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Cllr Alan Rice TD	a Councillor Mrs C M Whitcroft
Mr Michael Gammon	Woking Borough Council
	Councillor N Hinks

Special Interest Groups:

English Nature
a Ms Vanessa Burley

Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society
Mr P Redway

a = Absent

[All references to Items and Appendices refer to the Agenda for the meeting bound with the Minutes]

12/05 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN** [Item 1]

Resolved: That Cllr Chapman be appointed Chairman for 2005/06.

13/05 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN** [Item 2]

Resolved: That Mrs Compton be appointed Vice-Chairman for 2005/06.

14/05 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS** [Item 3]

Apologies were received from Councillor Hutcheson, Councillor Kimber, Councillor Whitcroft, Mr Doran, Vanessa Burley and Louise Bardsley.

15/05 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 18 March 2005** [Item 4]

Confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

16/05 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** [Item 5]

Mrs Smith declared that she is a life member of the National Trust.

17/05 **PROCEDURAL MATTERS** [Item 6]

No questions or petitions were received.

18/05 **VOTING RIGHTS AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE JMC** [Item 7]

Noted that the liability of £200,000 referred to in the report relates to retrospective liability if such an exemption from the Secretary of State was requested. If the exemption was on a non-retrospective basis the liability would be of the order of £30,000 per annum. Any VAT liability would fall on the Canal and not on a particular local authority.

Mr Redway indicated that the Canal Society accept the analysis of the VAT issues and feel that they have no option but to accept that the Society does not have voting rights. However, the Society wish to reserve the right to make a bid for the restoration of voting rights if the constitution of the Committee changes.

Resolved: That the constitution of the Joint Management Committee should remain unchanged and that no application should be made to allow non-local authority members to have voting rights.

19/05 **SECURING THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF BASINGSTOKE CANAL** [Item 8]

Members debated the proposals in detail and gave their full support to the process. Whilst not all the options suggested for further investigation had the support of members, it was felt to be important to consider all possible options at this stage so that when the final decision is put to the constituent authorities they can be assured that everything has been considered.

Noted that a progress report would be brought to the next meeting, but it was unlikely that the analysis would be completed by then. It may be necessary to hold a special meeting of the Committee to discuss the final proposals.

Cllr Rice indicated that he had contact with a Member of the British Waterways Board who may be of assistance.

Resolved:

- (a) That the key success criteria established to assess possible future management options be ratified and supported.
- (b) That detailed evaluation and feasibility work be carried out on the following options (numbers and lettering related to Appendix 2 of the report):
 - 1. Revised management arrangements
 - (a) cutting level of service
 - (d) formalise funding arrangement
 - 2. Management by a third party
 - (a) British Waterways
 - (b) National Trust
 - (d) Set up an independent body such as a charitable trust or private company
 - 3. Stop or limit navigation
 - (b) Retain water but stop boat movements

20/05 **CANAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT** [Item 9]

Noted that Tony Beecher was acting Canal Director whilst a replacement is found for Leigh Thornton.

The following comments were made in relation to the report:-

Noted that as a result of recent rainfall the canal is filling up, but levels are still below normal.

The Canal Management Plan was not yet ready for circulation, but would be sent to Members soon.

The Committee indicated that they wished to proceed with work on the Mooring Basin.

Tenders were currently awaited for repairs to the Deepcut Flight.

The SSSI has been in decline. Mr Tickle referred to a letter sent by Ms Vanessa Burley of English Nature highlighting the actions underway to review and respond to this.

Noted the report.

21/05 **REPORT OF THE HONORARY TREASURER** [Item 10]

In relation to licence fees it was requested that the special licence for the 2006 Rally to allow access to the Wey and the Basingstoke Canal should be continued into future years.

Resolved:

- (a) That the final accounts of the Basingstoke Canal Authority for the year ended 31 March 2005 be approved.
- (b) That the revised budget for 2005/06 be agreed.
- (c) That the proposed forward budget for 2006/07 be agreed and submitted for consideration to the constituent authorities.
- (d) That the proposed licence fees for 2006/07 be agreed.
- (e) That £10,957 of unallocated reserves be transferred to Canal Infrastructure work.

22/05 **EXPLANATION OF VAT POSITION** (Item 11)

Noted that there would also be additional accounting costs of separate VAT registration.

Resolved: That the current VAT arrangements continue.

23/05 **REPORT OF THE SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY**
[Item 12]

In relation to Paragraph 5.0 water supply, Mike Dawson reported that he had been in contact with the Environment Agency in relation to the granting of a licence and that this would be pursued rapidly.

The Committee thanked the Society for their hard work.

24/05 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** [Item 13]

Woking Pound – It was reported that there has been difficulty in moving boats in the Pound due to the growth of reeds. It would be appreciated if these could be cut back in July.

Rangers Work Programme – The acting Director circulated the forthcoming rangers work programme and graphs of water levels and weather predictions for information.

25/05 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS** [Item 14]

Agreed that the meeting would alternate between the Canal Centre and District/Borough Council Offices.

The next meeting would take place on 17 March at 10.00 am at the Canal Centre and the following meeting would take place on 20 October at a venue to be agreed.

[Meeting Ended: 11.35 am]

Chairman