

BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY REPORT – 3rd OCTOBER 2006

INTRODUCTION

The Campaign Rally set for the Late May Bank Holiday, concentrated minds on the coming event and preparations still to be completed. The St Johns Pump was fitted and commissioned with a hired generator for the event. Our member Maurice Adams of Langmans house agreed for the generator to be set up in his grounds, providing security for the month's hire.

With the pump commissioned, preparation of the site and site services became the priority, site offices arrived and we had a base to work from.

The rains came, the canal was full and boats started to arrive, our drought contingency plans were not implemented. .

Access into the site became more waterlogged even with wood chips and barrier underlay, by Thursday it was at its worst and only tractors could negotiate a way across the park.

The sun came out, the site dried, and we were in with a chance. Stallholders arriving on Friday and Saturday were assisted onto the site; some food stall trailer units did not attend due to the conditions.

The official opening by Woking's Mayor and other dignitaries was in dry conditions with good public attendance. Our Campaign message was well publicised by the speakers and organisers during the event. The rally was a great success, with 130 boats lining the canal, Community Groups providing entertainment and a good mix of stalls promoting various waterways and activities.

The canal is going through a difficult period and the Campaigning message of the rally is crucial to its future sustainability.

I urge members to support the recommendations for the future of the canal, a considerable effort by many people has provided a way forward which will establish positive management and sustainable finances. The benefits for all users of the canal are legion, a true value for money environment and accessed by all interest groups.

1.0 WORKING PARTIES

BROOKWOOD

Site preparation works and the provision of site services were arranged for the week prior to the event and also for reinstatement of the site the following week.

Wet site conditions complicated the setting up with a last minute panic when the water supply arrangements were changed due to circumstances out of our control, the final water supply was excellent thanks to the multi-skilled volunteers helping.

Reinstatement after the event was mainly filling the ruts and hoping the grass would grow, it did.

ST. JOHNS BACK PUMPING

The pump was installed by the contractor for 18th May operational date, was powered by a generator. Boat movements to Brookwood were scheduled at 10 Locks per day as part of the water management, agreed with the River Wey and the Basingstoke Canal Authorities.

Electricity estimates for the pump supply has been accepted and the advance payments made. The cable work is programmed for October when the pump will be fully operational.

Towpath upgrade works will be scheduled for later this financial year as part of the final reinstatement.

2,0 RESOURCES

Volunteer working parties for the period March 2006 to September 2006 continued on a regular 2-week cycle. HSBC and visiting Waterway Recovery Groups have also assisted on the projects, volunteer days are;

SHCS WORK PARTIES	202 days
VISITING GROUPS	119 days
HSBC	5 days
TOTAL VOLUNTEER DAYS	326 days

3.0 FINANCE

3.1 CONTRIBUTIONS

Society direct costs as at September 2006

Work Parties	£ 3,092
Backpumping	£ 12,764
Insurance	£ 2,520
Maintenance	£ 739

Contribution in kind – March to September 2006

326 Volunteer days at £50 per day	£ 16,300
Contributions, direct and in kind	£ 45,398

3.2 BACKPUMPING

With the St. Johns pumps nearing completion, we have commenced survey works for pumping the Brookwood Locks. Levels and gradients will enable the pipeline to be constructed within the towpath, Lock 12 is restricted in working space by the Total Garage boundary wall, as a result lock furniture will need to be removed for the duration of the work. A change in levels of the Bye wash and Weir Interception chamber at the top end of the lock will also be required.

St Johns Pumps	
Expenditure to date	£ 131,025
Expenditure to complete.	
Electricity supply / Consents	£ 13,101.13
Towpath enhancement works	£ 8,000
Shortfall	£ 21,101.13

4.0 CANAL FUNDING

The Society has been represented on three of the Option Working Groups; the IWA at National level has also been represented providing valuable input from other waterways. Both organisations have challenged aspects of the alternatives discussed within the working groups and recognise the need for full and frank exchange of views

The presentation and recommendations by the Two County Councils are endorsed by the Society as a way forward in achieving a sustainable and secure future for the canal. We recognise that detailed work to achieve the final organisation will take some time and effort.

We must improve this valuable asset for the enjoyment of all user groups based on the unique partnership, which gave birth to restoration and re-opening of the waterway in 1991.

5.0 WATER SUPPLY

The granting of the abstraction licence for pumping from September to April period has not been processed.

The issue of the appropriate consents was discussed at the recent Conservation Steering Group and a number of concerns were resolved in discussion. An exchange of letters should resolve the impasse. Pumping will be required for operation of the navigation after September until such time as rainfall fills the canal. The urgency of the consents being issued should be recognised by the authorities involved.

Peter Redway
Chair SHCS
October 2006