

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee held at the Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett, at 10.00am on Friday 23 March 2007

Members

Hampshire County Council	Surrey County Council
a Councillor K G Chapman (Chairman)	Mrs Elizabeth Compton
a Councillor B T Gurden	Mr John Doran
a Councillor P Hutcheson	Mr David Munro (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor R J Kimber	a Mrs Diana Smith
Hampshire Districts:	Surrey Districts:
Hart District Council	Guildford Borough Council
a Councillor Simon Ambler	a Councillor Angela Gunning
Councillor Kenneth Crookes	
Rushmoor Borough Council	Runnymede Borough Council
a Councillor M J Tennant	Councillor A J Davis
Councillor J J Wall	
Co-opted Member Appointed by Committee	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Cllr Alan Rice TD	Councillor Mrs C M Whitcroft
Mr Michael Gammon	Woking Borough Council
	Councillor Ann-Marie Barker

Special Interest Groups:

Natural England	Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society
Ms Catherine Chatters	Mr P Redway

a = Absent

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

01/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Councillors Chapman, Hutcheson and Ambler and Mrs Smith. In the absence of the Chairman, Mr Munro the Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

02/07 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 20 October 2006 [Item 2]

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chairman subject to clarification of paragraph 4 of Minute 17/06 as set out in Item 8 of this agenda.

03/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None.

04/07 PROCEDURAL MATTERS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

05/07 **BASINGSTOKE CANAL OPTIONS APPRIASAL** [Item 5]

Mike Dawson updated the Committee on the current position as set out in the report. Members generally welcomed the approach set out and felt that making contributions “in kind” could be a good idea provided that any such contribution was credited to their authority at the cost to the Canal Authority rather than the actual cost which could be significantly less due to economies of scale.

It was felt to be important that a balance is maintained between leisure and conservation if the Wildlife Trusts are to become more involved. It was suggested that it may be possible in some areas to designate the Canal as “Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space” which would allow it to attract funding from developers. A report outlining the implications of this would be submitted to the next meeting.

In some areas the Canal flows close to the boundary of the District/Borough and therefore if contributions were based on the population density in close proximity to the Canal, this could include people in Districts and Boroughs who do not currently contribute financially to its upkeep. This would require further discussion and investigation before firm proposals could be put forward.

It was reported that a walking risk assessment would be carried out to try to assess areas of risk from flooding etc.

Noted the report.

06/07 **CANAL DIRECTOR’S REPORT** [Item 6]

The Director highlighted the main points of his report. It was noted that the Strategic Business Plan Review will be presented to the next meeting.

It was reported that on a recent occasion £730 had been spent in one week on clearing rubbish from the Canal. If this type of work could be carried out as work “in kind” by the Boroughs and Districts this would be very beneficial to the Canal Authority.

It was possible that the Canal could attract European funding, but it would be necessary for it to be financially stable before an application could be pursued. Sponsorship from major businesses close to the Canal is also being investigated.

The Director reported that it had been necessary to make the catering manager at the Canal Centre redundant, as it was not economic to retain them. Surrey County Council will be negotiating for a new tenant for a five-year period. Members were concerned that a catering service should be in place for the Easter and summer period. The previous catering manger was happy to take on a temporary tenancy, but would require a minimum 2-year agreement which was not currently acceptable to the County Council. It was agreed that the Vice-Chairman and officers would review the matter outside the meeting with a view to getting a service in place by Easter.

In relation to attracting funding to upgrade the towpath to allow more cycling Members broadly supported maintaining the towpath as a permissive right of way rather than a right of way as this makes working beside the Canal easier as there is no requirement to keep the path open. However, it was

possible that funding may only be available if it is a right of way and this would need further investigation.

Noted that the canal Visitor Centre will require certain improvements in order to meet Health & Safety and Security requirements, which will lead to greater income generation potential. A full summary will be included in the Canal Centre Development Plan with progress reported to the next JMC.

07/07 REPORT OF THE HONORARY TREASURER [Item 7]

Noted the financial position. It was reported that a request has been made to Runnymede Borough Council to consider making any underspendings identified during the year available to the Canal.

Resolved:

That the Canal Director be authorised to take the necessary steps outlined in paragraph 3 of the report to contain the net expenditure during 2007/08 to meet the shortfall in contributions from the partner authorities.

08/07 REPORT OF THE SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY [Item 8]

The Committee accepted the clarification of the minutes of the last meeting outlined in the introduction to the report.

It was noted that the contribution made by the Society exceeds that of any of the riparian authorities. It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would write to the Society on behalf of the Committee to recognise their hard work.

09/07 ANY OTHER BUSINESS [Item 11]

Pollution at St John's, Woking

Mr Redway reported that there is a frequent problem with pollution of the Canal at St John's after heavy rain. Samples taken by the Environment Agency have identified the pollution as cooking fat, but it is not clear how it is getting into the Canal. There is potential for the material to affect the SSSI. Local Members on the JMC agreed to look into the problem. In addition the Canal Director is working with the Environment Agency and will keep the Committee updated on progress.

10/07 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS [Item 12]

Agreed that the next meeting would take place on Friday 19 October 2007 at 10.00 am at the Canal Centre.

[Meeting Ended: 11.35 am]

Chairman