

**MINUTES: of the meeting of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee held at the Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett, at 10.12am on Wednesday 8 April 2009**

**Members**

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| <b>Hampshire County Council</b><br>Cllr K G Chapman(Vice-Chairman)                                    | <b>Surrey County Council</b><br>Mrs Elizabeth Compton                              |
| a Cllr B T Gurden   | a Mr John Doran  |
| Cllr P Hutcheson  | Mr David Munro (Chairman)  |
| Cllr R J Kimber   | Mrs Diana Smith  |
| <b>Hampshire Districts:</b><br><b>Hart District Council</b><br>Cllr Simon Ambler<br>Cllr Sara Kinnell | <b>Surrey Districts:</b><br><b>Guildford Borough Council</b><br>a Cllr Mike Nevins |
| <b>Rushmoor Borough Council</b><br>Cllr J H Marsh   | <b>Runnymede Borough Council</b><br>a Cllr A J Davis                               |
| a Cllr M J Tennant  | <b>Surrey Heath Borough Council</b><br>Cllr Josephine Hawkins                      |
| <b>Co-opted Member Appointed<br/>by Committee</b><br>a Cllr Alan Rice TD<br>Mr Michael Gammon         | <b>Woking Borough Council</b><br>Cllr G Preshaw                                    |

**Special Interest Groups:**

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| <b>Natural England</b><br>a Carole Mortimer | <b>Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society</b><br>Mr P Redway MBE<br>Mr P Riley |
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a = absent

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

**PART 1**

**IN PUBLIC**

01/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS** [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Councillors, Davis, Gurden, Nevins and Rice and Carole Mortimer. Cllr Browne substituted for Cllr Davis.

Members were also informed that Mr Tickle was on leave.

02/09 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 17 October 2008** [Item 2]

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chairman. The issue of the use of the Reading Road car park had been raised at the last meeting and was not included in the Minutes. It was agreed that the Canal Director would update Members under Item 6.

It was noted in relation to:

Minute 13/08:

Noted that the Asset Management Plan was awaiting the completion of the condition survey.

Minute 16/08

Towpath Improvements – The Canal Director was progressing with discussions about towpath improvements in the Runnymede area.

Actions – Dr Eaton was unable to attend this meeting due to other commitments and would be invited to attend next time.

The Chairman had had a successful meeting with the Leader of Surrey Heath Borough Council.

03/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** [Item 3]

None.

04/09 **QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS** [Item 4]

Noted the answers set out in Item 4. The following additional information was reported at the meeting.

Question 1: Significant improvements will be made in this area following improved structuring of staff in central administration. Last year there had been severe staff shortages as a result of underfunding and illness. However, it is not always easy to get clear information on the start dates of projects from the owners or clients.

Question 2: Progress is being made in this area. The Canal Director has met with representatives of the house boat owners and would welcome further discussions with them as major stake holders on the Canal.

05/09 **BASINGSTOKE CANAL: MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CONSITUTION OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** [Item 5]

Noted the following amendments to the report:

Paragraph 6 – add “of the memorandum” after “paragraph 14.

**Appendix 1**

Paragraph 4 – the Strategic Plan will be brought to the next meeting.

Paragraph 7 – the draft business plan for the next financial year will be brought to the next meeting.

Paragraph 8 – “Annexe 2” to read “Annexe 1”

Paragraph 9 – “Annexe 3” to read “Annexe 2”

Paragraph 16 – “Annexe 5” to read “Annexe 3”

**Key Points Raised during the Discussion:**

- Noted that Hart District Council had been able to increase their contribution by working with riparian parishes who have agreed to contribute. It was suggested that a representative from the Parish Councils could be invited to join the Committee.
- It was noted that the funding formula in relation to Runnymede was being checked to ensure that only residents of Runnymede were included. Initial indications were that the formula had been applied correctly, but the work was not yet complete.

**Further Information to be Provided/ Actions:**

None.

**Resolved:**

- (a) That the memorandum of agreement of the Basingstoke Canal Partnership as set out in Appendix 1 to the report as amended above be adopted.
- (b) That the Canal Director be authorised to amend the working of the service level agreement as set out in paragraph 6 of the report and to conclude agreements with each of the local authorities for 2009/10.
- (c) That up to 8 advisory non-voting individuals and representatives of special interest groups be co-opted on to the Committee as set out in paragraph 8 of the report.
- (d) That the 2<sup>nd</sup> representative from the Canal Society, Mr Philip Riley be invited to join this meeting. The existing representative from the Canal Society (Mr Peter Redway MBE) and Natural England (Carole Mortimer) were reappointed.
- (e) That an appointments Committee comprised of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and a representative from the Canal Society be asked to canvass suggestions for the remaining 5 places and to make recommendations to the next meeting.

06/09 **CANAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT** [Item 6]

**Key Points Raised during the Discussion:**

- Paragraph 3.5 – The Canal Director had had discussions with Runnymede Borough Council. Two significant areas within the Borough had been identified for bank-side work and towpath improvements and the Borough had agreed to pursue funding streams from other bodies in order that this work can be carried out. A meeting with Surrey Heath will take place shortly. Although contributions in kind were welcome they were not a substitute for cash to be used on essential work.
- Paragraph 4.2 – The examination of the viability of a trust to run the Canal will take place over the summer.
- Resource Management – The Director praised the newly appointed Senior Ranger for his excellent contribution and support.

- Paragraph 7.2 – The major contribution made by the Canal Society to the work on the Canal, particularly when resources are stretched was acknowledged. The Director suggested that salaries and plant hire should in future be funded from capital as any further cuts in staff could have implications for health and safety.
- Paragraph 8 – the Director was optimistic that the Deepcut Flight would be open for the May festival, but may have to be closed again after for further work. Before then rangers would be installing 4 sets of new lock gates and dredging the locks. The Director agreed to notify the Chairman if a lack of resources was putting the opening of this section in doubt for the festival.
- Paragraph 9.2 – The work on the towpath in Woking had been very successful with 98% of the feedback being positive, particularly from disabled people who were now able to access the Canal more easily.
- Dredging – The Director was investigating an initiative to recycle metal objects dredged from the Canal to avoid the high costs of disposal of this material.
- Paragraph 12.1 – The application for High Level Stewardship funding could amount to additional funding of £80k over 10 years if successful.
- Fleet Car Park – Noted that this car park, intended for use by canal users, was being filled by commuters. The Director reported that the car park was owned by Hampshire County Council and that Mr Tickle was looking into the possibility of installing a charging machine that could give some shared income. Further discussions with colleagues have suggested that this may not be necessary with direct communication with the culprits using the car park on daily basis.
- Members raised the problem of litter on the tow path and suggested that Boroughs and districts could perhaps help with this as a contribution in kind. It was noted that the rangers do several collections a week, but the rubbish still returns. It is mainly in specific areas and the Authority is working with police community support officers and using community payback. Litter bins could be installed in some areas, but the rangers cannot empty these as a specialist contractor is required. If the Borough/District could extend their contract to include these bins it would be helpful.
- Noted that an application had been made for funding from TAG to make towpath improvements at the Rushmoor end of the Canal.
- It was suggested that a formal policy on the procedure to be followed when a canal bridge has to be closed for maintenance should be produced quickly. This should include a period of consultation of months rather than weeks, an agreement for the contractors to pay compensation to affected canal users in the event of over running work etc. The Director reported that this would be included in the Strategic Management Plan that would be brought to the next meeting. The bridges are all owned by either the two county councils or network rail. In the meantime it was suggested that the Chairman could write to these bodies drawing their attention to the consequences of poor planning of work.

- The Committee thanked the Director for his hard work, particularly during his period of ill health.

**Further Information to be Provided/ Actions:**

None.

**Resolved:**

- (a) That the Chairman write to Surrey and Hampshire County Councils and Network Rail asking them to be sensitive to the needs of canal users when it is necessary for bridge works to be carried out.
- (b) That the Director be supported in carrying out the proposals outlined in the report.

07/09 **BASINGSTOKE CANAL STRUCTURES** [Item 7]

**Key Points Raised during the Discussion:**

- The Countryside Contracts Manager apologised if the houseboat owners felt that the report in anyway indicated that the situation with regards to the payment of rent and the allocation of leases was in anyway their fault.
- Noted that an interim report on the condition survey had been requested.
- Cllr Preshaw reported that she had been informed by the Woking Borough Council Planning Department that they were unable to take enforcement action in respect of the two storey houseboats as planning legislation did not cover structures on water. It would be the responsibility of the owner to enforce the conditions of the lease. The Countryside Contracts Manager indicated that she had received advice to the contrary.

**Further Information to be Provided/ Actions:**

- The advice on planning legislation with regard to houseboats to be sent to Cllrs Preshaw and Brown and a further update report be brought to the next meeting. Action: Rose Younger

**Recommendations:**

None.

08/09 **REPORT OF THE HONORARY TREASURER** [Item 8]

**Key Points Raised during the Discussion:**

- The Treasurer reported that work was still ongoing on the final figures for the 2008/09 financial year. Early indications are that the budget could be overspent by between £5 and £25k. It is hoped that it will be at the lower end and be offset by capital contributions from Surrey and Hampshire County Councils

**Resolved:**

- (a) That Guildford Borough Council, Hart District Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council and Runnymede Borough Council be urged to make good the shortfall in their contributions and to implement the formula contributions for 2009/10.
- (b) That the Committee agree that the Canal Director be authorised to take the necessary steps outlined in paragraph 3 of the report to contain the net expenditure during 2009/10 to meet the potential shortfall in contributions from the partner authorities.

09/09 **REPORT OF THE SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY** [Item 9]

**Key Points Raised during the Discussion:**

- Lock 22 – It was reported that the Canal Authority had paid for the majority of the materials, but a contribution of around £10k had come from the Society. The work is progressing well and it should be operational later in the months although there could still be some further work to do above water.
- The Society had met with Sustrans to consider access to the Canal from the Woking sports centre across Brookwood Park to the towpath. The Society would lay the base of the path and Sustrans would fund the top surface.
- Noted the report and thanked the Society for its hard work.

10/09 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS** [Item 10]

Agreed that the next meeting would take place on Friday 25 September 2009 at 10.05 am at the Canal Centre.

**[Meeting Ended: 12.10pm]**

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**Chairman**