

# **BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

## **SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY REPORT – February 2010**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As recorded in my last report, the Canal enjoyed a very brief period of use in 2009 - late May to late June. The Navigation then closed due to water shortage and lock gate failures at Deepcut.

Once again closure has resulted from lack of capital funding. The data available from the Canal Authority checklists and the Structures Survey provides both condition monitoring and prediction of failure.

The Structures Survey reports, one per lock, commissioned by Surrey County Council, are now available for evaluation. At the time of writing this report the information has been circulated but not yet reported to the J.M.C.

In the Society's opinion, the Structures Surveys should include all data on all aspects of the waterway - locks, accommodation bridges, embankments, culverts and depth profile. The current data on structures is a significant step forward in managing and prioritising identified repair works. Potential voids and leakage at locks should, in the Society's opinion follow the culvert and embankment surveys. Little information on potential voids around locks is on record

The depth profile of the channel is also required for any dredging programme.

Estimates need to be prepared and capital funding programmes authorised for 2010/11 and following years. A hand-to-mouth wish list is not acceptable and a firm policy for future expenditure on repairs should be formulated, authorised and supported by this Committee.

The following work party report confirms the Society's commitment in supporting repairs, but on works compatible with volunteer programmes.

The owners must accept their responsibilities for years of deterioration.

### **2.0 WORK PARTY REPORT**

#### **Brookwood**

A water supply planned for Brookwood has progressed. A secure structure is provided on the towpath verge (a Water Board requirement). A soil analysis, supplied by Woking BC, has been forwarded to the Water Board and we are waiting a date for connection.

#### **Woodham**

Visiting Groups have continued work on Lock 4 Lower Landing. Completion is delayed as boat movements are restricted by ice, and the BCA has cautioned users on the additional hazards created by ice and snow.

Working only from the towpath involves wading in very cold water and is not acceptable on safety grounds. Alternative work for the group is being explored, but weather conditions may justify cancellation of some weekend works.

### **Work Boat**

The fitting out of an ex-British Waterways work boat has been resumed. Modifications are almost complete and fitting out is progressing. It is intended to operate this craft for waterway tasks as a multi functional construction and maintenance facility, such as access for off bank work and other enhancements on the canal.

### **Future Programme**

Negotiations on Society support for structural repairs have identified work at Lock 1 and Lock 17. It is possible that anti-scour protection work (piling), identified by the structural survey as a requirement at every lock, could be carried out by volunteers.

These works are subject to our Health and Safety practices, Method Statements and Risk Analysis being acceptable to the County Councils. We also carry our own Insurances for liability and Contractors All Risk policies.

## **3.0 RESOURCES**

Volunteer support for the period September 2009 to January 2010 includes visiting groups and Society volunteers.

SHCS WORK PARTIES	112 days
Visiting Groups	11 days
TOTAL VOLUNTEER INPUT	123 days (4 month period)

## **4.0 FINANCE**

### **4.1 Direct Contributions**

Society contributions for the year ended December 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 have been compiled from our end of year accounts and are subject to audit.

Fuel	£ 1,400
Work Parties	£25,342
Insurance	£ 3,332
Maintenance	£ 7,190 (includes replacement) (vehicle)

Projects - Lock 22	£ 7,250 ( £22 K Cumulative )
Brookwood	£ 2,538
Frimley Pump Donation	£ 900
<b>Total Direct</b>	<b>£47,952</b>

#### 4.2 Contribution in Kind

Contribution in kind for period ended Jan 2010

123 Volunteer days at £50 per day	£ 6160
<b>Total contributions</b>	<b>£ 54,112</b>

### 5.0 WATER SUPPLY

The BCA have re-commissioned the Frimley Pump. Data on supplies available from Frimley indicates a shortfall for summer navigation of some 4 Mltr per day (Million Litres/day ).

A total of 5Mltr per day is a requirement for summer navigation of the Mytchett, Deepcut and Brookwood pounds of the canal.

The need for providing a sustainable water supply is critical for Navigation, ecology, including recovery of the SSSI, and structures stability, all require sustainable water levels.

The need to progress sustainable water supplies for achieving a viable, diverse and attractive waterway is emerging as a key factor in canal management.

Potential sources of new supplies have been identified, and the Society and BCA are jointly exploring the feasibility of new supplies from Bourley Reservoirs, and a possible borehole at Deepcut.

We have requested provisional costs, from a reputable Engineering Consultant, for investigations at Deepcut.

## 6. NAVIGATION ISSUES

### 6.1 General Comments.

The canal is recognised as a multi user asset, benefitting the population along the canal corridor and a substantial number of visitors. A wide range of leisure interests facilitated by the canal support Government and Local Authority targets; the value for money invested by authorities is considerable and provided in some detail at our last meeting. Activities contributing towards

health and wellbeing, environmental, SANG and leisure targets are provided by the canal and should be included in any evaluation on capital expenditure pay back.

## 6.2 Structures

The evaluation of the Structures Survey will be presented to this meeting. Some long- standing repairs have commenced in this financial year, and we fully support and commend this decision.

This committee should now study the condition survey report and recommendations made for a recovery programme, endorse the need for capital funding and fully support a budget application for 2010 and later years.

The timing of this report is critical as budget preparation is well advanced. The bid made by officers should be fully supported by members, and appropriate Portfolio Holders need to be lobbied if we are to achieve positive results

We have written to our Society President and Vice Presidents requesting their support in contacting the respective County Council Leaders, stressing the importance of the canal, its amenities as a working waterway and the importance of a fully funded repairs policy.

The Society recognises that continued support is essential, and the voluntary sector has invested considerable resources in repairing the lower wing walls of lock 22, an effective partnership with the BCA. We expect this commitment to be recognised with appropriate action by the canal owners.

I recommend that members fully support the Capital investment required for the Canal in 2010 and subsequent years

## 6.3 Events

The perception that the Basingstoke Canal is closed during the accepted cruising season is widely held and unless this view is changed then boating within the agreed movements will not occur.

The canal needs to become recognised as an attractive sustainable waterway well worth a visit.

Venues for events will vary as more of the same can create stress on a given locality and varied venues create visitor interest.

In considering this year's event, at Bridge Barn, Woking, and possibly at St. Johns in June, we accept initial restrictions imposed by the Deepcut works; we do however, advocate completion of the serious defect repairs and re-opening of the Navigation. Stoppages for other repair works should be programmed to allow maximum use of the canal and income generation for the BCA.

Peter Redway  
February 2010