

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee held at Rushmoor Borough Council, Farnborough at 10.05am on Friday 22 October 2010

Members

Hampshire County Council Cllr Keith Chapman (Chairman) a Cllr Brian Gurden Cllr Roger Kimber Cllr Jenny Radley	Surrey County Council a Mrs Elizabeth Compton Ben Carasco Mr Chris Pitt (Vice-Chairman) Mrs Diana Smith
Hampshire Districts: Hart District Council Cllr Simon Ambler Cllr Sara Kinnell	Surrey Districts: Guildford Borough Council a Cllr Pat Scott
Rushmoor Borough Council Cllr R Hughes a Cllr J H Marsh	Runnymede Borough Council Cllr J M Edwards
	Surrey Heath Borough Council Cllr David Whitcroft
	Woking Borough Council Cllr G Preshaw

Special Interest Groups:

Natural England a Cressida Wheelwright	Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society Mr P Redway MBE Mr P Riley
Parish Councils a Alastair Clark	Inland Waterways Association Gareth Jones
Basingstoke Canal Houseboat Owners' Association a Ms Kathy Williams	Business Interests Galleon Marine - Mrs Peile

a = absent

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

PART 1

IN PUBLIC

24/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Councillors Marsh and Scott and Mrs Compton. Gareth Jones substituted for Paul Roper from the Inland Waterways Association.

25/10 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 25 June 2010** [Item 2]

Subject to the following amendment, the minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chairman:

Cllr Ambler was present Cllr Kinnell should be marked as absent.

Minute 19/10 – Resolution (b) 4th line after “Association” add “to assist the Canal Director”

26/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** [Item 3]

None.

27/10 **QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS** [Item 4]

No petitions or questions had been received.

28/10 **BASINGSTOKE CANAL ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN** [Item 5]

Key Points Raised during the Discussion:

- Noted that there will be a Risk Workshop for the Asset Management Plan Steering Group in mid November. It was queried whether the security of the water supply to the top pound would be considered at the risk workshop as it is crucial to the operation of the Canal. Officers responded that it would not be considered in this context, but would be taken account in the use of resources.
- It was suggested that reference should be made in the Plan to raising the condition standards of the Canal to possibly allow it to join British Waterways in the third sector in the future.

Further Information to be Provided/ Actions:

None.

Recommendations:

None.

29/10 **CANAL DIRECTORS REPORT** [Item 6]

Key Points Raised during the Discussion:

Asset Management

- There was concern at the time taken to appoint a term contractor which was affecting the morale of volunteers working on the Canal. However, it was noted that despite the delay there will be visible work carried out this calendar year by existing contractors. It was reported that the delay was as a result of having to follow procurement rules and also the need to make the specification clear to ensure value for money.
- The need to spend the money carefully and ensure value for money was stressed as budgets were limited. There was also a need to

ensure that not too much was allocated to fix problems in phase 1 meaning that other priorities not yet identified cannot be dealt with. Ensuring that the Canal is navigable should be a priority as this will allow income to increase.

- Members were generally supportive of the approach, but urged officers to complete the work to appoint the term contractor as soon as possible. They also felt that officers could be better at publicising what is being done and the reasons behind decisions so that volunteers and Canal users have a better understanding of the issues.

Canal Visitor and Recreation Development Plan

- Noted that the resources available to complete this work are very limited. Work is being concentrated on the objective of increasing income from hire facilities. A full planning application has been submitted to Surrey County Council to construct a shower and toilet block at the Canal Centre and to regularise the use of the camping field which, it is hoped will be approved in December. An application will also be made for landfill tax credit in January/February 2011. The work has the support of Natural England.
- An Income Generation Group will be established and help will be sought from both County Councils to support its work. A draft Plan will be produced which will be circulated as soon as possible.
- A Member asked whether the new camping facilities would include electric points to attract campers who are prepared to pay a premium for this type of facility.

Financial Expenditure and Budget Control

- Noted that a Ranger had appealed against their dismissal earlier in the year and the Canal Authority had been required to reinstate them adding to budget pressures. Work will be taking place to review the structure of the Authority.

Towpath Improvement Projects

- The Director reported that due to financial constraints it will not be possible to carry out as much work as was originally intended. A further application for TAG funding will be submitted.
- The recently installed cycle signs would be replaced with signs set into the ground which will not be so intrusive. Members were pleased that this is being done in a small area, but felt that there was a need to be vigilant to ensure that inappropriate signs do not proliferate in other areas of the Canal.
- It was suggested that in areas where the District/Borough do not make their full contribution they should be made aware of the significant investment taking place in their area if work on the towpath is taking place. Noted that the Chairman will be meeting with the Leader of Surrey Heath Borough Council shortly.
- Members noted that the Chairman had received a reply to the letter sent to Network Rail asking for the Canal Authority to be consulted on work

taking place that will affect the operation of the Canal. The reply was felt to be totally inadequate and the Chairman agreed that he would seek a meeting with Network Rail. It was suggested that local MP's including the Transport Minister, Philip Hammond may be of some assistance in resolving this matter.

Further Information to be Provided/ Actions:

- It was requested that the next report should include information on work taking place to ensure that the Canal is fully navigable including a timeline to ensure that it is fully open before the rally planned for 2012.

Resolved:

- (a) That Officers at Hampshire County Council be urged to complete the process for appointing the term contractor at the earliest opportunity.
- (b) That the Director be supported on items as suggested and discussed in this report.
- (c) That the partnership continues to support the canal through the adopted Service Level Agreement approach in this critically challenging time.

30/10 **REVISED BUDGET 2010/11 AND FORWARD BUDGET 2011/12** [Item 7]

Key Points Raised during the Discussion:

- Noted that the Budget for 2011/12 will be redrafted when the contributing authorities have had time to consider the implications of the spending review and will be brought to the February meeting of the Committee. It was suggested that members from contributing authorities should be invited to visit the Canal.
- Noted in relation to Appendix B that the full contribution had now been received from both County Councils.

Further Information to be Provided/ Actions:

None.

Resolved:

- (a) That the revised budget for 2010/11 be agreed.
- (b) That the proposed forward budget for 2011/12 be agreed in principle subject to further discussion at the next meeting when the budget position should be clearer.
- (c) That the proposed licence fees for 2011/12 be agreed.
- (d) That progress on the capital programme be noted

31/10 REPORT OF THE SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY [Item 8]**Key Points Raised during the Discussion:**

- The difficulty in attracting volunteers to the Canal in competition with other waterways near by was highlighted. The volunteer base must be maintained and the Canal needs to maintain a good reputation by keeping volunteers aware of what is happening on the Canal. The Canal Society has a monthly bulletin which could include updates, they also have access to news media. This proposal was welcomed by officers.
- It was noted that the Canal Society have set up a trial to work with residents associations in the Brookwood area. If this proves successful this could be extended to other areas
- The Committee thanked everyone involved with the Society for their continued hard work on the Canal.

32/10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS [Item 9]

Friday 11 February 2011 at 10.05am at the Canal Centre.

[Meeting Ended: 11.55am]

Chairman