

MINUTES of the meeting of the **BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at 10.05 am on 31 October 2012 at Mytchett Canal Centre, Mytchett Place Road, Mytchett, Surrey, GU16 6DD.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting.

Hampshire County Council

Councillor Keith Chapman (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Brian Gurden (a)
Councillor Roger Kimber
Councillor Jenny Radley

Hampshire Districts:

Hart District Council
Councillor Simon Ambler
Councillor Sara Kinnell (a)
Rushmoor Borough Council
David Welch (a)
Councillor J H Marsh (a)

Special Interest Groups

Basingstoke Canal Society

Roger Cansdale (a)

Martin Leech

Mr P Riley

Parish Councils

Alastair Clark (a)

Basingstoke Canal Houseboat Owners

Mr Denis Betro (a)

Ms Kathy Williams (a)

Surrey County Council

Mrs Linda Kemeny

Mr Chris Pitt

Ben Carasco (a)

Diana Smith (a)

Surrey Districts:

Guildford Borough Council

Councillor John Randall

Runnymede Borough Council

Councillor J M Edwards

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Councillor Bob Paton (a)

Woking Borough Council

Councillor K Davis

Natural England

Adam Wallace (a)

Inland Waterways Association

Paul Roper/Gareth Jones

Business Interests

Galleon Marine – Jan Peile (a)

Basingstoke Canal Boating Club

Steve Dallen (a)

Residential Boat Owners Association

Julia Jacs

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Diana Smith, Sara Kinnell, John Marsh, David Welch, Cressida Wheelwright, Alastair Clark, Jan Peile, Ben Carasco and Gareth Jones.

The Chairman advised that Paul Roper, Regional Chair of Inland Waterways Association, was acting as substitute for Gareth Jones.

It was noted that Natural England had been requested to resume their attendance at Joint Management Committee (JMC) meetings. The Committee were advised that Adam Wallace will now replace Cressida Wheelwright as their representative, and had been expected to attend, but unfortunately could not do so. It was hoped that he would be able to attend the next JMC meeting.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 21 JUNE 2012 [Item 2]

It was requested that officers that present reports to the Committee are named within the minutes.

The minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interests.

4 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions.

5 RESPONSE FROM NETWORK RAIL [Item 5]

The Committee was asked to note a response from Network Rail. This outlined the company's position with regards to works that may have an impact on Basingstoke Canal.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee thanked Andy Smith, Head of Countryside Hampshire County Council, for sharing the response.
2. It was noted that the letter had not included an email address or responsible local contact.
3. It was expressed that there was often little consultation from Network Rail with regards to works being undertaken that may impact upon the Canal.

Actions/further information to be provided:

Andy Smith to share contact information for Network Rail with Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager and for Fiona to establish contact with the appropriate local manager for Network Rail.

Recommendations:

None.

6 WATER SUPPLY UPDATE [Item 6]

John How, from the Water Strategy Group, gave a verbal update on the work undertaken to address the issue of water supplies in the Basingstoke Canal.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. John How expressed thanks to James Taylor and Philip Allen for their support of the Water Strategy Group.
2. It was explained that the Water Strategy Group's work was an iterative process; the expectation was that it would take 9-12 months before they would be in a position to report on likely solutions.
3. The Water Strategy Group had made contact with Dr Derek Clarke, a research fellow at Southampton University. Work was being undertaken by four undergraduate students at the University in collaboration with the Water Strategy Group. This work was intended to effectively audit and review the Water Strategy Group and the solutions it was proposing. A report was being prepared by the graduates with the expectation that it would be shared in May 2013. An interim report would be published in November 2012.
4. An application to the Environmental Agency had been made by Surrey County Council to increase the amount of water being drawn from the Woodham pump. The extraction licence was for 1.7 megalitres a day, and it was hoped that this would be increased to 3.4 megalitres a day. The Environmental Agency are due to give their response by December 2012.
5. Natural England had contributed money for boat counters to be installed at Lock 6, with a second set due to be installed at Dogmersfield by November 2012.
6. There was a discussion as to the benefits of developing the telemetry systems in order to improve the automation of processes on the Canal. Work was being undertaken to set up a hosted website and smartphone app that would provide key information to rangers. This would be facilitated by an external company and the bidding process was underway.
7. A Water Prognosis Report by British Geological Surveys had been commissioned and was to be made available by November 2012. This Report would inform any future decisions about the placement of boreholes. Southampton University undergraduate students would be involved in identifying suitable borehole sites.

8. Concern was expressed regarding the level of water extraction carried out by South East Water at Greywell. The Committee was informed that South East Water would be reviewing this by Spring 2013.
9. There was a discussion regarding a pumping station that had been relinquished by South East Water and sold to the Mitie Group. The Mitie Group had been approached about the use of four of their boreholes, and the Committee was informed that the Mitie Group would make a decision about whether these could be used as a water source for the Canal by March 2013.
10. It was felt that the Water Progress Report would be an initial step in the process towards approving any further boreholes, and that such a process would likely take a long time.
11. Officers confirmed that a tree survey for the Canal was due to take place within the next 12 months.
12. The Chairman thanked John Howe for his presentation.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Water Strategy Group will share with the Committee the interim and final report prepared by Southampton University upon publication.

The Water Strategy Group will share with the Committee the findings of the Water Prognosis Report upon publication.

Resolved:

- a) The Committee continue to endorse the work of the Water Strategy Group and support the implementation of the work on a Water Strategy.
- b) The Committee thanked the Water Strategy Group and thanked Southampton University for their contribution to the work.

7 NAVIGATION POLICY [Item 7]

The Committee considered the report of James Taylor (SCC Senior Countryside Management Officer). The purpose of this report was to outline and approve a Navigation Policy for the Canal.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was noted that the word "tramp boats" used in Paragraph 6.1 and Appendix 1 was to be replaced with the term "Non-Compliant Continuous Cruisers"

2. The Committee was asked to consider the options provided by the report, with the intention of approving one. Once this was approved the detail of the policy would be set by the Basingstoke Canal Authority.
3. Officers recommended that the Committee endorse a navigation policy that limited navigation through all locks by powered craft and unpowered craft which are permitted to use locks (except Ash Lock) to a restricted number of places and certain days of the week. Members of the Committee accepted that some restriction on the Canal was necessary.
4. It was noted that both County Councils fully supported an increase in boat traffic.
5. There was some discussion around the potential to involve boat owners in a voluntary capacity as pilots. Officers stated this would be investigated along with other detail once a Navigation Policy was implemented.
6. The necessity to ensure that restrictions were managed effectively was highlighted, as they could present a potential barrier to encouraging people to use the canal. It was also suggested that restrictions take into account the needs of local users.
7. The Committee discussed the need to ensure a Policy was in place by December 2012 in order that there was suitable clarity for visitors to the Canal during the summer 2013 season.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None

Resolved:

- a) That the BCA adopt a Navigation Policy limiting navigation through locks by all powered craft and unpowered craft which are permitted to use locks (except Ash Lock) to a restricted number of places and certain days of the week.
- b) That the BCA be authorised to determine the details of how the policy operates practically in consultation with user groups. These details to include the number of days and places available, plus any variations according to time of year, weather conditions, staff/volunteer availability and water levels and set notice periods for any variations in conditions.
- c) That the BCA be required to keep the policy under review in the light of changed circumstances.

8 VISION AND UPDATE OF WORK ON THE MYCHETT SITE [Item 8]

Lisa Creaye-Griffin (Head of SCC Countryside Service) and James Taylor (SCC Senior Countryside Management Officer), gave the Committee a verbal update regarding the vision and work being undertaken on the Mychett Site.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Vision had been shared with the Committee in advance of the meeting and as result of feedback the wording had been changed from "Central to the Vision is to create an accessible waterway serving the public." To "Central to the Vision is to create a navigable waterway serving the public." The Vision was to be published after the meeting.
2. A discussion was held around the potential of using media teams to publicise the Vision and increase awareness. A feature had appeared in Explore Surrey.
3. Colliers International had undertaken work to look at the income potential of the Canal Centre including alternative uses for the site. An interim report had been published but was pending a number of amendments. This report would be completed at the end of November 2012. The intention would be to complete a draft business plan in response to the report and then proceed to approach funding sources.
4. Concern was expressed at the fact that the Canoe Club's amenity block had not yet been built. Officers confirmed that a final report on this topic was due to be completed by the end of November. It was suggested that discussions be held with the Canoe Club regarding this matter.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Countryside Group Manager (Surrey County Council) to share the Vision with the BCA and new Canal Manager.

The Chairman to meet with the Canoe Club in order to discuss improvements to their facilities.

The Collier International report and the subsequent business plan to be shared with Committee upon publication.

Resolved:

That the Committee continue to endorse and support the Vision for the Mychett Site.

9 RAPID IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT [Item 9]

James Taylor (SCC Senior Countryside Management Officer) presented a report regarding the Rapid Improvement Project underway on the Basingstoke Canal

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was confirmed that capital receipts totalling £2 million from HCC's sale of properties, and £2 million from SCC's Medium Term Financial Plan would be invested in the canal.
2. The Committee discussed the option of steel lock gates in order to reduce leakage and the necessity for replacement. It was confirmed that this is being further explored, but it would require extensive work to the current locks in order to make the conversions. It was expressed that there was some work scheduled to be undertaken with consultants to identify leakage at locks and identify possible future innovations, such as composite gates.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None

Resolved:

The Committee endorsed the work of the Rapid Improvement Project and supported the implementation of Phase 2 of the work.

10 TREASURER'S REPORT [Item 10]

The Committee considered a report from Colin Hudman (Honorary Treasurer), outlining the Revised Budget 2012/13 and Forward Budget 2013/14.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. In Hampshire, subject to Executive Member approval, it is hoped that up to £1m can be reinvested in the Canal from the sale of former ranger housing and associated land at Odiham.
2. The Committee discussed the decision by some Partners not to make the full contribution requested of them. There were concerns raised as to the potential impact this could have on future funding. It was also highlighted that Odiham Parish Council had chosen to withdraw their funding from the Partnership. The view was expressed that an active campaign to promote the benefits of the Canal to Parish Councils and other local authority bodies could serve to prevent similar withdrawals in the future.
3. The Committee noted the proposed return to reserves of £73,645 which they recognised as testament to the successful income generation by the BCA and the cost cutting measures undertaken.

Actions/further information to be provided:

A Powerpoint Presentation and other promotional materials to be developed in order to promote the Canal to Parish Councils and other Partners. The Canal Manager will act as key representative in outlining the benefits of investing in the Canal to Partners.

The funding formula to be provided to the Chairman, who will consider next steps in encouraging Partners to make their full contribution.

Resolved:

- a) That the revised budget for 2012/13 be agreed.
- b) That the proposed forward budget for 2013/14 is accepted.
- c) That all partner authorities be urged to make their full contributions and to honour the agreed scale contributions for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

11 SITUATION REPORT FOR CANAL [Item 11]

James Taylor (SCC Senior Countryside Management Officer) , presented the Situation Report for Canal for the Committee's consideration.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee welcomed Fiona Shipp who had been appointed to the position of BCA Canal Manager in October 2012.
2. There was a discussion around the likelihood of whether the Deepcut flight would be navigable in time for next season. It was stated that there was need for structural repair and that funding for this work was allocated for the new financial year (2013/14). Concerns were raised that the waterway not being completely navigable would deter visitors to the Canal.

Actions/further information to be provided:

Further consideration to be given to releasing funding in order to ensure repairs on the Deepcut flight are carried out before 2013/14 financial year.

Key Performance Indicators to be included in future Situation Reports for the Canal.

The fact that the Brookwood lock is open to be confirmed on the BCA website.

Agreed:

- a) The Committee noted the Situation Report for the Canal.

12 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 12]

The next meeting of the Committee to be arranged for February 2013.

Meeting ended at: 12.47 pm

Chairman