

MINUTES of the meeting of the **BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at 10.05 am on 28 February 2013 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
Councillor Roger Kimber
Councillor Jenny Radley (a)

Surrey County Council

Ben Carasco
Mrs Linda Kemeny
Mr Chris Pitt
Mrs Diana Smith

Hampshire Districts:

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

Surrey Districts:

Guildford Borough Council
Councillor John Randall
Runnymede Borough Council
Councillor J M Edwards
Surrey Heath Borough Council
Councillor Bob Paton
Woking Borough Council
Councillor K Davis

Special Interest Groups

Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society

Martin Leech
Mr P Riley

Parish Councils

Alastair Clark

Basingstoke Canal Houseboat Owners

Mr Denis Betro (a)

Natural England

Adam Wallace (a)

Inland Waterways Association

Paul Roper (a) /Gareth Jones

Business Interests

Galleon Marine/Accessible Boating (a)

Basingstoke Canal Boating Club

Mike Adams

1/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Galleon Marine, Jenny Radley, Paul Roper and Sara Kinnell.

2/13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 31 OCTOBER 2012 [Item 2]

It was requested for the Memorandum of Agreement and appendices be circulated to all members of the Committee.

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

3/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interests.

4/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions.

5/13 SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS MEMBERSHIP [Item 5]

The Committee was asked to consider a report on the membership of Special Interest Groups to the Joint Management Committee.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman gave a brief summary of the report and commented that it would be advisable to return to the matter at the next meeting in July 2013. This would enable the new Committee members to give their input on the decision.
2. It was highlighted that there was a lack of clarity regarding how Special Interest Groups would notify the Committee of an expression of interest. Officers confirmed that the process in relation to this would form part of the item at the next meeting.
3. Members expressed the view that there was a need to review the Memorandum of Agreement. It was agreed that this would be an item at the next Joint Management Committee (JMC) meeting. The Chairman highlighted that the June 2013 meeting would be a good opportunity to share it with any new Members.
4. The Committee held a discussion around the need to think about the structure and membership of the Committee given the improvements being undertaken on the Canal. It was noted that an increase in popularity and public awareness would have an impact on the scrutiny the Committee undertook and the decisions it made.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Memorandum of Agreement for Committee is to be circulated to members.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will review the Membership of Special Interest Groups as part of its next meeting.

**6/13 CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION AND PROJECTED OUTTURN 2012/13
[Item 6]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers: Colin Hudman, Honorary Treasurer, Basingstoke Canal Authority

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was presented with a report on the financial position of the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) for 2012/13. It was highlighted that the BCA anticipates a £127,409 contribution to its reserves by the end of the financial year. It was noted that this was £53,764 more than originally projected due to exceptional one-off additional budget savings in 2012/2013. The Committee was informed that these were result of a reduction in expenditure, and savings made due to staff vacancies.
2. The Honorary Treasurer informed the Committee that expenditure was anticipated to be £40,231 less than projected. The income for the BCA had increased by £13,533. This was attributed to an additional income from boat licences, mooring fees and campsite fees.
3. The Committee was informed that both Surrey County Council and Hampshire County Council had agreed an additional £2m contribution each to the BCA capital budget over two years.
4. A question was raised regarding the additional fund set up to hold property receipts of £398,210. It was confirmed that this was from the sale of Hampshire County Council canal-side properties. A portion of this money would be reinvested in improving rights of way alongside the canal. The Committee was informed that there were no current proposals for the sale of canal-side property in Surrey.
5. The Honorary Treasurer highlighted the funding contributions from the District & Borough Councils, and the variance between the forecast figures and those received. It was noted that the Memorandum of Agreement for the BCA was due to be reviewed in 2014, and this would allow the funding formula to be adjusted to account for changes in population figures. It was noted that this change in the funding formula would provide an opportunity to engage with District & Borough Councils and encourage them to invest. The Canal Manager acknowledged that she would take this new funding formula as part of her engagement with the District & Borough Councils.

6. The view was expressed by some Members that visitor statistics would be useful in demonstrating the value of the Canal to the contributing Councils. Officers informed the Committee that cycle counters were in operation in both Runnymede and Woking. It was agreed that this information would be shared with the Canal Manager as part of the work being undertaken to engage District & Borough Councils.
7. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked the District & Borough Councils that had made their full contribution.
8. Jane Lowett was introduced to the Committee. It was noted that she would be taking on the role of honorary treasurer before the Committee meeting in June 2013. The Committee thanked the Colin Hudman for his work while in post.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Surrey Senior Countryside Management Officer to share cycle counter information with the Basingstoke Canal Manager and Runnymede Borough Council Member.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

7/13 REVISED NAVIGATION FEE & MOORING CHARGES [Item 7]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers:

James Taylor, Senior Countryside Management Officer, Surrey County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was presented with the proposed changes to both navigation fees and mooring charges for the Basingstoke Canal. The Senior Countryside Management Officer outlined that this report was following the Committee's discussions around the topic at the June 2012 meeting. The Committee was informed that following four years of capital investment by both local authorities, it was felt an appropriate time for the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) to update its charging policy.
2. It was identified by officers that consideration had to be given around how to get best value out of the use of the Canal, while also wishing to maintain a charging scheme that was comparable to other waterways. The Committee was informed that the current Canal Asset Management Plan estimated that a works budget of £250,000 was required to maintain the Canal at an optimal state. Against this recommended figure there was an identified deficit in the current BCA

works budget of £110,000. The proposed charges would be a means of addressing some of this deficit. The view was expressed that a historical tendency to undercharge had been a contributory factor in the decline of the Canal as an asset.

3. The Committee was told that the proposed changes to mooring charges would have a two year introductory period for existing mooring licence holders. Members praised the consideration given to those who already held mooring licences.
4. Officers informed the Committee that the proposed navigation fees were intended to meet the cost of managing the waterway. Navigation would be facilitated through the employment of casual lock-keepers. The Committee heard that a standing charge would be implemented for powered craft based on the area of the Canal the boat usually moored on, to be augmented by either an annual or a pay-as-you go scheme for passage through the four controlled sets of locks. Officers went on to outline the individual proposed charges as outlined in the report.
5. The Committee was told that the projected costs of navigation took into account the reduction in hours that the Canal would be in navigable to 16 days per month.
6. The Committee recognised that the report was informed by a greater need to ensure the BCA was recovering its costs. The view was expressed that the capital investments made by both local authorities had been a significant contributory factor in the improvement of the Canal, and that there was now a need to ensure that users of the Canal were contributing to its maintenance and upkeep.
7. Members asked whether boat owners on the Canal were required to have third party insurance. It was confirmed that this was part of the navigation policy already in place, and that every vessel was required to comply with the national Boat Safety Scheme.
8. A query was raised with regards to enforcement and projected administration costs of the proposed charges. It was confirmed by the Canal Manager that the current administrative processes required a high level of resources, and that any change in this process would also need additional input in this regard. The intention was to move to an online booking system in the future. Enforcement was acknowledged as an important issue, and the Canal Manager stated that these procedures were being refined in anticipation of the Committee approving the proposed changes. The Committee was informed that there would need to be further review of local bylaws to ensure that enforcement was carried out in an effective manner.
9. Members raised concerns around the absence of publicity regarding the days that the Canal would be navigable over the summer. It was confirmed by officers that there was an undertaking to update the publicity available and that other local media would be considered in raising the profile of the Canal.

10. The Committee took a vote on the decision to implement the revised navigation fees and mooring charges for the BCA. It was unanimously agreed.

Resolved:

- a) That the Committee approve an increase in Mooring Fees to match those charged on the River Wey as shown in Appendix 1, and authorise the BCA to collect the fees on behalf of the two County Councils and expend the proceeds in maintaining the Canal.
- b) That the Committee authorise the BCA to conduct a phased implementation of increases for mooring fees to existing customers over a 2 year period.
- c) That the Committee authorise the BCA to invest any additional income generated from mooring fees during the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial year in creating new on-line mooring sites for use as a home bases for pleasure craft (not to be used for residential use except as ancillary to leisure use).
- d) That the Committee authorise the BCA to charge a navigation licence fee based on actual costs of implementing the Navigation Policy (as detailed in Appendix 5).

Actions/further information to be provided:

Officers to prepare a communications plan regarding the proposed changes to the Canal's navigable hours.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will review the bylaws currently in effect, in order to facilitate the introduction of the new navigation fees and their enforcement.

8/13 PRESENTATIONS TO FUNDING COUNCILS [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers: Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager, Basingstoke Canal Authority

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Canal Manager provided a verbal update on the work undertaken to engage partners who contributed financially to the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA). Odiham Parish Council had received a presentation from the Canal Manager and had committed to pay their partner contributions for the current financial year and 2013/14. Similar presentations were due to be given to Runnymede Borough Council and Rushmoor Borough Council.
2. The Chairman requested that consideration be given to sharing the presentation with Local Committees with interests in the development of the Canal.

3. It was highlighted that the Basingstoke Canal Society would be willing to assist with these presentations, or to publicise the canal at boating events. It was recognised by the Committee that this would be a useful demonstration of how the voluntary sector interacted with the BCA.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

9/13 COLLIERS' STUDY OF THE MYTCHETT CANAL CENTRE SITE [Item 9]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers: James Taylor, Senior Countryside Management Officer, Surrey County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was presented with a report that listed the outcomes of the consultation by Colliers International on proposed uses of the Mytchett Canal Centre site. There were six possible recommendations outlined within the report. The Senior Countryside Management Officer highlighted that options five and six offered a return on investment within what was considered to be a reasonable timescale.
2. The Committee was informed that officers had some concerns with regards to the suggestion of a WaveGarden. It was felt that the Colliers International study had not explored the options pertaining to water attractions and what type of major attraction would be appropriate for the Canal Centre site.
3. The Committee welcomed the report but proposed that any decision should be postponed until after May 2013. It was recognised that the two preferred options would require a significant capital investment and that a strong business case would need to be presented regarding this.
4. The view was expressed by some Members that the report indicated an innovative approach to developing the site, and that it presented a positive long term view. The Committee went on to discuss possible options for attractions that would be more characteristic of the Canal and its environment. It was recognised that there was a need to maintain the camping facilities.

5. The Committee discussed the potential to develop other assets along the Canal. These included Ash Lock and the Lock-Keeper's Cottage.
6. A question was raised about the amenities block that had been proposed for the Canoe Club. It was confirmed by officers that implementation was likely to be phased and the amenity block could be in an early phase of any works due to take place.
7. The Committee was informed that there would be efforts made to develop a long-term business plan for the Canal Centre. Officers confirmed that serious consideration would be given to securing a commercial investment partner to assist with this work.

Recommendations:

That the Committee receive a further update in June 2013 regarding the progress of the work being undertaken to develop the Mytchett Canal Centre site.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

10/13 SITUATIONS REPORT [Item 10]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers: Phil Allen, Countryside Service, Hampshire County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was proposed to the Committee that a regular Situations Report was developed and then subsequently presented at each Committee meeting. It was suggested by officers that this could be a dashboard report that would outline the status of several Key Performance Indicators (KPI). These KPIs would be aligned with those of the Canals & Rivers Trust. It was also indicated that the report would take into consideration the identified actions from the strategic plans developed by the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA).
2. Members raised a question around the Conservation Management Plan and when it was due for renewal. It was confirmed by officers that feedback from the Conservation Steering Group meeting in May 2013 would be brought to the Committee in June 2013, along with an update as to the status of the Conservation Management Plan.
3. One Member expressed the view that the KPIs contained within the Situations Report must be reflective of the key priorities of the BCA, and that there was a danger in aligning performance indicators too closely to those of the Canals & Rivers Trust. It was acknowledged by

officers that the alignment with the Canals & Rivers Trust KPIs had been to encourage public perception of a seamless waterway, but that the BCA's priorities would also be reflected within the report.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

11/13 BRIDGES IN HAMPSHIRE [Item 11]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers: Phil Allen, Countryside Service, Hampshire County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was proposed to the Committee that a report is brought to the June 2013 meeting about the canal bridges in Hampshire. Officers stated that there were 32 bridges in Hampshire that crossed the canal, 15 of which were grade II listed monuments, and 6 of which were of registered historic interest.
2. The Committee was informed that any bridge that did not carry highways over the Canal was the responsibility of the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA). It was noted that the report would take into consideration the conservation work required for some of these bridges.
3. Officer confirmed that the report would also provide detail on the canal bridges located in Surrey.

Resolved:

That the Committee receive a report detailing information on the bridges along the Basingstoke Canal at the June 2013 meeting

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

12/13 SUMMARY OF BGS 'WATER PROGNOSIS REPORTS" [Item 12]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers: John How, Water Strategy Group

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was provided with an update regarding the progress of the Water Strategy Group since the last report in October 2012. It was anticipated that the Group would be in the position to present the final findings of its work in Autumn 2013, with the work identified as a result of the report being undertaken in 2014.
2. The Committee was informed that the Environmental Agency had agreed to an increase in the amount of water being extracted at Woodham. This had reduced the water deficit from 4.5 million litres of water a day to 2.8 million litres of water a day. The approval for this increased extraction was for two years and would expire in 2015.
3. The Committee heard that the bid to Garfield & Weston for additional monies to pay for telemetry equipment had been rejected. It was noted that the Basingstoke Canal Society had agreed to contribute 10% to any equipment purchased, up to a value of £4,000. It was also highlighted that Natural England had agreed to fund two sets of boat counters, costing £11,000 in total. Officers informed the Committee that Surrey County Council had identified money in its capital funding for telemetry equipment.
4. The Committee held a discussion around the data provided by the boat counters at Woodham and Dogmersfield. It was queried whether there was a risk that the number of boats might exceed the Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) limit. It was confirmed by officers that this was not currently the case.
5. The Committee was presented with a summary of the findings of the British Geological Survey (BGS) report. 7 sites had been identified as having potential for further development, as detailed in the summary report included in the agenda papers.
6. Officers went on to outline the work undertaken by Southampton University students. This included an audit of the Water Strategy Group, the development of a water balance model and the identification of possible solutions to the issues of water deficit. The draft audit report was being prepared for April 2013, with a final publication in May 2013. The work with Southampton University was seen as a long-term and ongoing working partnership, with a potential to link in with other projects.
7. The Committee was given a summary of the proposed next steps of the Water Strategy Group. This included: discussions with the Environmental Agency about the renewal of the abstraction licences due to expire in 2015; the procurement of further telemetry equipment; and discussions with Environmental Agency about creating boreholes at Colt Hill.

8. It was stated that there would also be a review of communications with South East Water about the Greywell site. There would also be further work to explore options around the Mitie Group site at Frimley in March 2013.
9. The Committee was informed that there would be further work undertaken to identify potential surface water and reservoir options. These included dredging the Hampshire Pound, discussions with the Ministry of Defence around use of reservoirs, and consideration of possible use of general drainage.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will receive a further update on the work of the Water Strategy Group at its meeting in June 2013.

13/13 CANAL SOCIETY UPDATE [Item 13]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers: Philip Riley, Basingstoke Canal Society

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was given an update with regards to the work undertaken by the Basingstoke Canal Society. During 2012 Canal Society volunteers undertook an estimated 660 man days of voluntary work.
2. The Committee was informed that a new boat, the John Pinkerton II, had been built and was expected to be delivered in the coming month. Once testing and crew training has been completed the boat would be in service May 2013, with an official launch in June 2013 by Sally Taylor. It was noted that the boat would be available for meetings.
3. The Committee discussed the Aldershot urban expansion, a proposed housing development along the Canal. A number of Members expressed the view that the developers could be required to contribute money towards the Canal through Section 106. This funding could enable upgrades to the Mytchett site and along the entire Canal.
4. It was confirmed that an overall outline for the whole development and one section (Section A) had been submitted to Rushmoor Borough Council, with development to the Canal section (Section

J) not expected to begin until 2017. A Canal loop through the development had been considered during the beginning stages of the planning, however this would require several organisations to work together as the Canal is within a Conservation Area.

5. The Committee discussed possible avenues of enquiry with regards to securing additional funding through the urban expansion. Several proposals were made, with suggestions that both the developer and the planning authority were approached to consider the options around investment along the Canal.
6. It was raised with the Committee that there was a need to look into signage along the Canal, as the current signs were in need of modernisation. The Committee agreed it would consider draft designs for signage so there could be a consistent approach along the Canal.

Resolved:

- a) That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman conduct a site visit of the Aldershot Urban Expansion with the Chairman of Rushmoor's Planning Committee, before the consultation period ends on 26 March 2013.
- b) Phil Allen (Hampshire County Council) and Philip Riley (Basingstoke Canal Society) to meet to form a strategic view of what the Committee would like from the developers, which will be of interest to them but ensuring the Committee receives appropriate funds.
- c) The Committee to receive a report on draft designs for signage along the Canal.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

14/13 CANAL MANAGER'S UPDATE [Item 14]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers: Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager, Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Canal Manager gave a brief update to the Committee. This included details of the preparation for the Easter boating events. It was noted that the number of campers visiting the Canal was higher than projected, and that there had also been an increase in unpowered boating.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

15/13 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 15]

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be scheduled for June 2013.

It was further noted that this would be the last meeting before the local elections in May 2013. Members thanked the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their work over the previous four years.

Meeting ended at: Time Not Specified

Chairman