

MINUTES of the meeting of the **BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at 10.05 am on 26 February 2015 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 (Chairman)
Councillor John Bennison
Councillor Brian Gurden
Councillor Elaine Still

Hampshire Districts:

Hart District Council

Councillor Simon Ambler
Councillor Jonathan Glen

Rushmoor Borough Council

Councillor David Welch
Councillor J H Marsh

Special Interest Groups

Basingstoke Canal Society

Martin Leech
Mr P Riley

Parish Councils

Alastair Clark

Basingstoke Canal Houseboat Owners

Mr Denis Betro

Surrey County Council

Mr Ben Carasco
Mrs Linda Kemeny
Mr Colin Kemp
Mr Chris Pitt

Surrey Districts:

Guildford Borough Council

Councillor Gordon Jackson

Runnymede Borough Council

Councillor J M Edwards

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Councillor Paul Ilnicki

Woking Borough Council

Councillor K Davis

Natural England

Adam Wallace

Inland Waterways Association

Paul Roper/Gareth Jones

Business Interests

Galleon Marine/Accessible Boating

Basingstoke Canal Boating Club

Steve Dallen

33/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from John Cale, Stephen Gorys and John Wall.

Martin Bowers substituted for John Cale.

Actions/further information to be provided:

1. At the next meeting of the JMC in June 2015 the Chairman asked for a paper to be prepared on 'substitutions'.

34/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 16 OCTOBER 2014 [Item 2]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman requested that, as a result of some inaccuracies, the minutes from 16 October 2014 JMC be reissued at the next meeting on 25 June 2015.

Actions/further information to be provided:

1. For the minutes of 16 October 2014 to be reconsidered at the 25 June 2015 meeting.

Committee next steps: None.

35/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

36/14 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A question was asked by a member of the public with regards to stones being thrown from the Canal towpath. The Chairman explained that this would be looked into.

Actions/further information to be provided: None.

Committee next steps: None

37/14 FINANCE UPDATE REPORT [Item 5]

Declarations of interest: None

Officers:

Jane Lovett, Finance Business Partner, Hampshire County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers proposed that the third bullet point in paragraph 1.1 of the Executive Summary be removed from the report.
2. Officers summarised the Financial Update Report, drawing particular attention to a recent break-in which resulted in £10,000 damages. The Committee was informed that the cost of setting up an unpowered boat hire business were not included in the figures as it was covered in a separate report on the agenda, but should Members agree to the proposal there was sufficient in reserves to cover the proposed expenditure. Members responded by questioning officers over increases in security since the break-in and inquired as to whether the damaged equipment was insured. Officers assured Members that security measures had been improved to prevent further break-ins and informed the Committee that the damaged equipment was considerable old.
3. Members drew attention to paragraph 5 and questioned officers over Natural England's role in supporting grants for nature conservation projects on the Canal. One Member expressed the opinion that more should be done to encourage Natural England to provide financial support and not place unnecessary hurdles in the way of grant payments. Officers responded by highlighting that the problems referred to in the report were inherited administrative errors made on behalf of the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) who were responsible for securing the HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) funding. Officers informed Members that the majority of the Natural England HLS scheme was partial grant funding (30%-50%) and therefore in order to secure the grant the BCA's resources had to be directed to delivering schemes which might not otherwise be the highest priority. Officers also commented that the BCA's staff resources were unable to deliver two comprehensive HLS schemes at the same time.
4. Members discussed Surrey Heath and Runnymede's low financial contribution to the JMC; this was acknowledged by the Chairman. In conjunction with this, some Members asked the Chairman for an update on Fleet Town Councils' membership to the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee (JMC), as it was felt that their level of financial input warranted membership. The Chairman informed the Committee that a meeting between himself and a representative of Fleet Town Council had been arranged to discuss the matter.

Resolved:

1. Members supported the out-turn forecast for 2014/15.
2. Members supported the change in the revenue draw on reserves in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Actions/further information to be provided:

1. For the Committee Officer to remove the third bullet point in paragraph 1.1 of the Executive Summary.

Committee next steps: None.

38/14 MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT UPDATE [Item 6]

Declarations of interest: None

Officers:

James Taylor, Strategic Manager Basingstoke Canal - Surrey & Hampshire County Councils

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers updated Members on the progress around partner authorities ratifying the revision to the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), as per requested at the last Committee. Members were informed that only Runnymede had ratified the MoA; with some members choosing to wait until after the election, or after seeking further legal advice.
2. The Chairman notified Members that there would be an update on the MoA at the next meeting.

Resolved: The report was noted

Actions/further information to be provided: None

Committee next steps: None.

39/14 HOUSEBOAT INCOME UPDATE PAPER [Item 7]

Declarations of interest: None

Officers:

Lisa Creaye-Griffin, Countryside Group Manager (Surrey County Council)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members welcomed the proposed transfer of net income from the Houseboats to the BCA, but questions were raised around the high management and maintenance costs. The Vice Chairman assured

Members that the finances had been carefully reviewed and the transfer was a positive step.

2. A question was raised regarding what assurance there was that Surrey County Council (SCC) would not reduce its grant to the BCA in the future. Both the Chairman and Vice Chairman responded by stating that this is an unforeseen eventuality that cannot be guaranteed.

Resolved: The report was noted

Actions/further information to be provided: None

Committee next steps: None.

40/14 UNPOWERED BOAT OPERATION - DECISION PAPER [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None

Officers:

James Taylor, Strategic Manager Basingstoke Canal - Surrey & Hampshire County Councils

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Officer thanked Fiona Shipp and Dean Wall for their help preparing the business case for an unpowered boat operation at the Canal Centre.
2. Martin Bowers, representative for John Cale, stated that paragraph 1.1 was inaccurate, as John Cale Canal Cruises (JCCC) had not declined to discuss any revision in licence terms. Increased costs through new arrangements had made it difficult for the company to operate on the canal. The Chairman stated that discussion represented a commercial concern and did not belong within the core business of the JMC.
3. Members questioned whether staff running costs (represented in figure 4) covered public liability. Officers informed Members that public liability was covered.

Resolved:

1. Members supported the resolution that that revenue is likely to be closer to income generated at 37.5% capacity, which amounts to £109.305 over a five year period.
2. The Committee supported the resolution that the BCA running the boat business would ensure that all profit go towards the upkeep of the Canal.

Actions/further information to be provided: As per report

Committee next steps: None.

41/14 CANAL MANAGEMENT REPORT [Item 9]

Declarations of interest: None

Officers:

Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager – Basingstoke Canal Authority

James Taylor, Strategic Manager Basingstoke Canal – Surrey & Hampshire County Councils

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee discussed the filming which had taken place on the Canal and questioned officers on their managerial and pricing strategy regarding this. Officers responded by stating that the BCA charged for use on a case-by-case basis.
2. Members raised questions regarding the condition of the Canal, especially through Woking. Members highlighted that Woking Borough Council had paid the full sum to the Canal partnership and has raised the issue with BCA. Officers informed the Committee that the part of the Canal that runs through Woking has been identified as a priority area for vegetation management and maintenance.
3. Members asked when the JBA Consulting report which was quoted in the report as providing “stakeholder consultation exercise” would be published. Members asked for more information on the role JBA was playing as it was unclear from the report, and asked as to the company’s background, along with information around how this will impact the JMC. Officers informed the Committee that JBA had a background of working with inland waterways and had evaluated the physical assets, economic, health and wellbeing and environmental value and potential of the Canal; their report is still being finalised.
4. One Member queried when the section of the towpath near Dogmersfield Landslip will be reopened. Officers informed Members that a risk assessment has been done and that the BCA are looking to reopen the towpath by Easter.
5. Officers were asked about the Mytchett site redevelopment, as this was not mentioned in the report. Officers informed Members that this was still in consultation with the architects and that an update should be expected by the next JMC on June 25 2015.
6. The Committee discussed the risk register contained within Annexe 1 of the report; Members felt it was too long and overcomplicated. Officers responded that these were the corporate risk assessments required by each owning authority covering their ownership of the Canal. One Member suggested that a simplified risk register be prepared for the Canal partnership / BCA. The Chairman of the Committee agreed and recommended that Officers simplify the risk register for the BCA before presenting it to the JMC.

Resolved: The report was noted

Actions/further information to be provided:

1. For Officers to develop a risk register for the BCA before presenting it to the JMC.

Committee next steps: None.

42/14 THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL SOCIETY REPORT [Item 10]

Declarations of interest: None

Witnesses:

Philip Riley, Chairman – Basingstoke Canal Society

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman of the Basingstoke Canal Society (BCS), reiterated the need to cleanup the Canal around the Woking area, as it impacted the future plans of the BCS. This included a replica barge based at Woking and boating events, all of which are hindered by the overgrown Duckweed in the canal.

Resolved: The report was noted

Actions/further information to be provided: None

Committee next steps: None.

43/14 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

The next meeting will be held on 25 June 2015 at 10am.

Meeting ended at: Time Not Specified

Chairman