

MINUTES of the meeting of the **BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at Mytchett Canal Centre, Mytchett Place Road, Mytchett, Surrey, GU16 6DD on Wednesday 26 July 2017
These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting 22 November 2017.

(* Present)

Hampshire County Council

- * Councillor John Bennison
- * Councillor Andrew Gibson
- * Councillor Anna McNair Scott
- * Councillor Charles Choudhary

Surrey County Council

- * Councillor Mike Goodman
- * Councillor Ben Carasco
- * Councillor Paul Deach
- Councillor Colin Kemp

Hart District Council

- * Councillor Simon Ambler
- * Councillor Jenny Radley

Rushmoor Borough Council

- Councillor Les Taylor
- * Councillor JH Marsh

Fleet Town Council

- * Councillor Jeff Smith

Special Interest Groups

Basingstoke Canal Society

- * Martin Leech
- * Philip Riley

Parish Councils

- * Alastair Clark

Residential Boat Owners Association

Alan Wildman

Guildford Borough Council

Councillor Nigel Kearse

Runnymede Borough Council

Councillor Barry Pitt

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Councillor David Lewis

Woking Borough Council

Councillor Kevin Davis

Councillor Ann-Marie Barker

Natural England

Adam Wallace

Inland Waterways Association

- * Verna Smith

Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club

- * Liz Murnaghan

Galleon Marine

- * Arthur McCaffery

Substitutes:

Hilary Addison, Woking Borough Council

1/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Colin Kemp, Kevin Davis and David Lewis.
Hilary Addison substituted for Kevin Davis.

2/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 2 NOVEMBER 2016 [Item 2]

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest made.

4/17 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions received.

5/17 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN [Item 5]

Declarations of interest:

None

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman proposed Cllr Andrew Gibson to be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. This was agreed unanimously by the Committee.

6/17 UPDATE ON THE FUTURE OF THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL [Item 6]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Lisa Creaye-Griffin, Countryside Group Manager, Surrey County Council
Jo Heath, Head of Countryside, Hampshire County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers outlined the report to the Members of the Committee. It was stressed that Option B presented the most viable option for the future governance arrangements of the Basingstoke Canal. It was noted that this included an investment in the canal to improve viability and to improve the offer of a transfer of assets to the Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT). It was also noted that the CRT would be invited to the next meeting of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee (JMC) to discuss their work and the proposed offer with Members.
2. It was noted by officers that the service was continually, as part of the options appraisals, considering efficiencies to be made to reduce operational costs to the funding authorities.
3. Officers noted that the County Councils were considering Capital investment in the canal to reduce the current arrears of maintenance and improve future viability of the canal. The overall aim of improving the offer would be a smooth transfer of assets to the CRT.
4. Officers stressed that there would be more information available to Members regarding proposals with the CRT after November 2017.
5. Members expressed support for the work being undertaken with the CRT and highlighted that there was hope that there would be positive engagement between the CRT and the funding authorities. Members also noted the role that District and Borough authorities could have in improvements to the canal and in promoting the canal as a public resource. It was suggested that there could be improved partnership

- work with District and Borough authorities to promote the canal, highlighting digital promotion as a potential area to explore more fully.
6. Members stressed that there was a requirement to put in a strong case to District and Borough authorities when there was a requirement to further develop the canal and that District and Borough authorities would need to have a greater input in the development for the canal.
 7. It was questioned whether the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) was looking for additional income streams to fund projects. Officers confirmed that they had applied for the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (M3LEP) funding for the Campsite development project and that there were other opportunities that were being looked into of a similar nature by the BCA.
 8. Members suggested that the JMC should meet more frequently to analyse business cases relating to income generation for the Canal. The Chairman suggested that there could be scope to set up a small business case task and finish group to analyse any potential business cases.
 9. It was questioned by Members whether partner authorities should be required to provide their full contributions. Officers noted that the BCA had maintained its service without the full contributions of all partner authorities, and that the service must be realistic as a result of the financial pressures on the partner authorities. However, it was suggested that the Chairman write to partner authorities to highlight the importance of maintaining current funding levels to ensure the effective maintenance of the canal.
 10. Officers stressed that the core priority for the funding authorities was to maintain the safe operation of the canal.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

The Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee agreed:

1. That it would scope out the possibility of a task and finish group to review future business case proposals.
2. That it would approve the business objectives and long term direction for the management of the Basingstoke Canal.
3. That the Chairman would issue communications to all partner authorities encouraging them to maintain their revenue contribution as close to current levels as they can for the next 3-5 years to assist in securing the long term financial future of the Canal.
4. That it would consider the detailed business cases prior to final approval by the relevant authorities.

7/17 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2016/17 [Item 7]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Jane Lovett, Honourary Treasurer, Hampshire County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers outlined the report, highlighting an additional income of £15,000 from boat revenue and that there was additional revenue from car parking charges and an improved sales revenue.
2. Officers noted that there was a reserve of approximately £486,309. It was noted that this was considered a healthy reserve and that it could help with one-off investments into the canal in future.
3. Members questioned the potential for the development of more riparian car parks as an income stream for the BCA. Officers noted that funding for the development of the Scotland Bridge Road car park was already in place and that this was planned as a future income stream for the BCA. It was also suggested by officers that the Canal Centre could also implement car parking charges after any future site development. Members questioned whether it was possible to implement car parking charges on all rural car parks. Officers noted that work would be done by the BCA and the Surrey and Hampshire County Council to determine the plausibility of this and report back to the JMC.
4. Members noted that the increase in revenue was positive and that the financial outlook for the BCA 16/17 also looked positive.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. That officers provide a report on potential car parking charges being implemented across all rural, riparian car parks and report back to the JMC in its meeting early 2018.

8/17 CAPITAL WORKS PROGRESS REPORT [Item 8]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

James Taylor, Strategic Manager Basingstoke Canal
Peter Close, Volunteer Skipper of the *John Pinkerton II*, Basingstoke Canal Society

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers noted that there had been a significant amount of Capital works undertaken over the last three years. It was stressed that the service had been looking primarily to resolve high priority safety issues.
2. It was noted that there was leftover Capital funding in the Surrey County Council budget from the previous year, and that there was an agreement to input an additional £150,000 per year for the next three years. It was noted that Hampshire County Council had spent its Capital budget as a result of the Dogmersfield Landslip, but confirmed that a high priority bid for a new project cycle had been submitted to the Executive of Hampshire County Council.
3. Officers noted that the highest priority issues for the service were dredging and bank protection. It was explained that there was a significant build-up of silt in some areas. However, it was noted that dredging operations were a costly endeavour for the service.
4. It was stressed by officers that the BCA and the owning authorities were committed to resolving the backlog of maintenance. It was highlighted that this would also resolve some issues highlighted in the Future of the Basingstoke Canal report of July 2017.
5. Members questioned the scope and purpose of the “Sense Check” with the CRT. Officers noted that it was a way of determining whether the service was working in concert with how the CRT sees the future of the canal and ease the potential transition of the Future of the Canal proposals.
6. Members questioned the continued concerns regarding Swan “Cutting”, and suggested that the resolution of this problem be considered a higher priority by the BCA. The Chairman invited a guest speaker of the *John Pinkerton II* trip boat owned by the Basingstoke Canal Society (BCS) to detail issues regarding the “Cutting” that were experienced by canal users. Officers noted that, while this was considered an important issue it was not primarily a safety issue, and that any resolution would be very complex.. Members accepted this, but noted that they would like to see some resolution to the Swan “Cutting” issue and that the service should submit to the JMC proposed timescales of work to be undertaken.
7. Officers stressed that the key challenge for the BCA and owning authorities was officer time and workload to deliver complex engineering projects.. It was stressed that the work on the Dogmersfield landslip had taken a significant amount of officer resource to resolve. Officers explained that with the completion of this work, more priority could be placed on other projects.
8. Members noted the significant amount of work undertaken with the Dogmersfield landslip and thanked the BCA for their work in resolving

this issue.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. That the BCA provide a detailed timescale of Capital projects to be undertaken over the next five years.

9/17 FARNBOROUGH ROAD MOORINGS DECISION REPORT [Item 9]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

James Taylor, Strategic Manager Basingstoke Canal

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers highlighted the business proposal and noted the potential income generation opportunities the proposal presented. Officers explained that this site was chosen as an initial project due to its positioning and its status as a previous canal wharf.
2. Officers noted that there was some concern raised by Natural England regarding the Site of Significant Scientific Interest (SSSI) status and that the Runways End had also raised some observations regarding the proposals. It was noted that the service had taken these issues into consideration in the proposal and had addressed any issues raised.
3. It was noted by officers, after questions raised by Members, that one live aboard boater might be considered to police use of the mooring. It was noted that this was considered normal procedure on other waterways and did not contravene any previous rules enforced by the BCA.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None

Resolutions:

It was resolved that:

1. The Committee approves and authorises officers to implement the proposed moorings and associated alterations to the adjoining car park at Farnborough Road (Wharf) Bridge.

10/17 CANAL MANAGEMENT REPORT [Item 10]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

James Taylor, Strategic Manager Basingstoke Canal
Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers outlined the work undertaken by the BCA since the last meeting of the JMC. It was highlighted that the service had performed well in an Emergency Plan test exercise and that the BCA had received a team award from Hampshire County Council for an unusually high number of compliments received during 2016. It was also noted that routine maintenance had been undertaken by the service and that the next scheduled tree survey was to take place in late 2017.
2. Officers noted that it had been a good season for unpowered boat use and that the numbers per trip had increased.
3. Water levels were highlighted as an issue. Officers explained that the unusually dry spring was a cause for the low levels of water. It was stressed that there was a requirement for a prolonged period of wet weather to resolve this, but that the BCA had implemented measures to lessen the impact that this had upon the canal.
4. Officers highlighted the Key Results Indicators (KRIs) in the report, noting that a key reason for the red targets in the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) scale, were due to the high targets that were set by the service.
5. It was noted that the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status was an area of required improvement. However, it was stressed by officers that the target did not indicate poor performance by the BCA but that the SSSI status had not improved. The need for improvement on this was recognised by the BCA. It was noted that Natural England were the regulatory authority for SSSI condition, and could in theory prosecute if they considered activities were harming the SSSI. Members noted the need to work in partnership with Natural England, and stressed that their representative on the JMC should be present to help voice any concerns that they have before issues become acute.
6. It was stressed that there were no major safety issues on the Canal and that Capital works were resolving any minor safety concerns.
7. The Committee noted that the BCA should look again at how the KRIs are measured and ensure that they are reported in a meaningful and simple manner for the next report.

8. Members questioned whether there was any bank damage caused by animals and whether this put significant strain on the service. Officers noted that this was a problem, but that the service had taken measures to alleviate it, highlighting the use of dog steps in some areas.
9. Officers noted that telemetry project was still ongoing, and that some progress had been made.
10. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, noted it's thanks to the BCA and highlighted the good progress that was being made over the year.

Actions/further information to be provided:

1. That the Chairman make representations to the Member representing Natural England to stress the importance of partnership work and request that they attend meetings to highlight concerns raised by Natural England regarding the Canal's SSSI status.
2. That the KRIs contain an explanation as to what the targets set by the BCA and for this information to be circulated to the Committee.

Mike Goodman left the meeting at 12.04pm. Andrew Gibson resumed the meeting as Chairman.

11/17 CANAL SOCIETY REPORT [Item 11]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Philip Riley, Chairman of the Basingstoke Canal Society
Martin Leech, Vice-Chairman of the Basingstoke Canal Society

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Canal Society outlined work undertaken over the period since the last meeting of the Committee. The Woking Town Wharf development was highlighted particularly as a positive development, noting that this was the first time that M3 LEP funding had been awarded to the Society.
2. It was noted that the Society's trip boats were operational in Woking and that this was a positive development. It was also stressed that the Society was looking to operate a larger trip boat in the future. Members noted the positive work undertaken by the Society in Woking and thanked the Society for their contribution.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None

12/17 APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS [Item 12]

Declarations of interest:

None

Officers:

Richard Plummer, Committee Assistant, Surrey County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers outlined the procedure for the election of Special Interest Groups to the JMC. It was explained to the Committee that it had received a number of Expressions of Interest from interested groups to join the JMC for a period of four years according to the terms set out in the Memorandum of Agreement of the JMC (2014), which were considered by the Committee.
2. Officers noted that Inland Waterways Association (IWA) was submitting a late bid to provide an Expression of Interest. The Chairman put to the Committee whether to allow for a late representation to be heard. The Committee agreed unanimously to hear the representation from the IWA. This is attached to the minutes as Annex A.
3. The Committee voted on applications for new representation of Special Interest Groups on the JMC.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None

Resolutions:

It was resolved that:

1. The following four groups be appointed as Special Interest Groups for a period of four years according to the terms set out in the Memorandum of Agreement of the JMC (2014):
 - a. Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club
 - b. National Trust, River Wey and Godalming Navigations
 - c. The Hart District Association of Parish and Town Councils
 - d. Inland Waterways Association

13/17 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER [Item 13]

Declarations of interest:

None

Officers:

Richard Plummer, Committee Assistant, Surrey County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee noted the forward works programme and action tracker. Members questioned the absence of the Risk Register in the agenda. Officers noted that, as the Risk Register had not changed since the last meeting of the Committee, they were not included in the report, and referred Members to the previous agenda of the Committee. It was noted that an updated version would be included at the next meeting of the JMC.

14/17 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 14]

The Committee noted that its next meeting would be on 22 November 2017 at the Mytchett Canal Centre.

Meeting ended at: 12.24 pm

Chairman

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IWA Submission

I am authorised by the National Chairman, Les Etheridge, and the Head of the National Navigation Committee, Gren Messham, to express the Association's interest in being re-appointed to a place on the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee.

The IWA was established to restore Britain's canals from dereliction in 1947, holding one of its first boat rallies at Woking when intrepid boaters travelled with tarpaulins to allow the locks to fill and getting very muddy was the norm. Since then the IWA has continued to support the Basingstoke Canal with technical assistance from their civil engineer, practical help in form of the Waterways Recovery Group who have assisted with major and minor projects along the canal, and finance to support the back pumping projects.

At a national level the IWA provides the secretariat for the All Party Waterways Parliamentary group and has close contacts with the Canal and River Trust and Environment Agency. The local branch of the IWA serves an area from the south coast to Reading and Newbury, which provides useful links to a variety of waterway authorities and a unique insight into the management of individual waterways. A number of these are also in transition to become part of the CRT network.

I serve on the local branch of the IWA and have been the south eastern representative on the navigation committee for four years and have been proposed as the regional chairman, with effect from September 30th 2017. These roles give me links to good nationwide networks with access to varied expertise which could be useful to the Basingstoke Canal.

I grew up a quarter of a mile from the Basingstoke Canal in Knaphill and have canoed/kayaked along its length many times. I moved to Ash Vale to be close to the canal and have continued to enjoy the towpath and navigation. Until recently I was a director of the Basingstoke Canal Society and still help the sales stand at village fairs.

I think that my contacts with the national waterways and organisations could be useful to the JMC as it seeks to safeguard the future of the Basingstoke Canal.

Verna Smith

July 25th 2017

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