

MINUTES of the meeting of the **BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at Mytchett Canal Centre, Mytchett Place Road, Mytchett, Surrey, GU16 6DD on 07 June 2023.

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

MEMBERS

Hampshire County Council

Councillor Jonathan Glen
Councillor Rod Cooper
Councillor Stephen Parker
Councillor Timothy Davies

Surrey County Council

Councillor Marisa Heath
Councillor Riasat Khan
Councillor Paul Deach
Councillor Saj Hussain

Hart District Council

Councillor Peter Wildsmith
Councillor Tim Southern

Rushmoor Borough Council

Councillor Akmal Gani
Councillor Paul Taylor

Fleet Town Council

Councillor Ellie May

Guildford Borough Council

To be confirmed

Runnymede Borough Council

Councillor Steve Ringham

Surrey Heath Borough Council

To be confirmed

Woking Borough Council

Councillor Kevin Davis
Councillor Rob Leach

Special Interest Groups

Basingstoke Canal Society

Mr Ian Moore/Mr John Turner

Hart District Association of Parish Councils

Councillor David Jackson

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Councillor Kate Tuck

Natural England

Mr Adam Bates

Inland Waterways Association

Mrs Verna Smith

Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club

Mr Bill Hansell

Galleon Marine

Mr Arthur McCaffrey

1/23 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN [Item 1]

Jonathan Glen was elected as Chairman of the Basingstoke Canal JMC and Paul Deach was elected as Vice-Chairman of the JMC. Both roles would continue for the next 2 years. The previous Chairman, Marisa Heah was thanked for her service to the JMC.

2/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 2]

Apologies were received from Peter Wildsmith, Tim Southern, Kate Tuck and John Turner.

3/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 3 NOVEMBER 2023 [Item 3]

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

The Strategic Manager for the Canal stated that a letter had been sent to the Chief Executive of Rushmoor Borough Council regarding funding. A letter had been received stating that the council would not reconsider their position on funding.

Saj Hussain joined the meeting at 11:15

4/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 4]

There were none.

5/23 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 5]

One question had been received from Arthur McCaffrey. A response to the question was tabled at the meeting and is attached to these minutes.

The Chairman stated that once the findings of the Mace report were in the public domain he would be open to holding a special session with members to review the findings. Cllr Marisa Heath confirmed that the findings were advisory and any future changes to the canal would be agreed with all stakeholders. The findings would be shared with the JMC at its November meeting.

6/23 ACTIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Strategic Manager for the Canal provided an update on the actions tracker. The following update was provided:
 - A3/19- an invite to visit the canal centre was sent to the Leader of Surrey Heath Borough Council but no response was received. It was explained that a new Leader had been elected and a new invite should be sent out to the new Leader.
 - A1/22- officers had not been in a position to prioritise this.
 - A3/22-The canal society had produced an information sheet on the benefits of the canal.

- A8/22- Partner sessions had not been organised due to elections but it was agreed that sessions with partner council's to highlight issues facing the canal were vital and should be prioritised moving forward.

Resolved:

The JMC agreed the action tracker and forward work programme.

7/23 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2022/23, REVISED BUDGET 2023/24, FORECAST OUTTURN 2023/24 [Item 7]

Officers:

Jenny Wadham, Honorary Treasurer

Katie McDonald, Natural Capital Group Manager

James Taylor, Strategic Manager – Basingstoke Canal

Jo Heath, Assistant Director, Recreation, Information and Business Services

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The report was introduced by the Honorary Treasurer who explained that the final outturn position for the year to 31 March 2023 is a draw from reserves of £149,094 being the net expenditure on revenue activities. The £149,094 draw represented a significant increase on the £82,000 budgeted draw, primarily as a result of unplanned maintenance works, energy price inflation, the impact of the summer drought which negatively affected both visitor income and energy usage, and a reduction in partner contributions. Additional donations from the Basingstoke Canal Society and Crookham Village Parish Council totalling £92,000 had funded towpath works, spot dredging and the purchase of a weed cutter that would not otherwise have been possible.
2. After the forward budget had been approved, the Basingstoke Canal Strategic Manager was notified of a further reduction of £22,000 in Partners' contributions for the 2023/24 financial year.
3. The members from Woking Borough Council noted that due to financial issues facing their council, funding for the canal would be reduced which has been agreed by government commissioners.
4. The Chairman agreed it would be positive for the JMC to write to Woking Borough Council thanking them for their funding towards the canal but also encouraging them to continue with their contributions to the canal.
5. The Assistant Director, Recreation, Information and Business Services explained that work was being undertaken for a presentation in November to review the financial management of the canal. It was felt that a long term financial plan for the canal was required, including the contributions from all partners.
6. The Inland Waterways Association representative asked if there was enough funding available if there was a breach on the canal. Officers stated that funding for a breach on the canal would be covered by both Surrey and Hampshire County Councils as land owners and not Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) reserves.
7. It was queried if funding for the canal could be raised via local businesses and developers. The Strategic Manager for the Canal explained that CIL and S106 funding was available but this funding

could not be used to pay for staffing. The Basingstoke Canal Society liaised with businesses on behalf of the BCA and had raised £4-5k in 2022.

8. The Assistant Director, Recreation, Information and Business Services explained that work was being undertaken for a presentation in November to review the financial management of the canal. It was felt that a long term financial plan for the canal was required, including the contributions from all partners.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

Action A1/23- For the Strategic Manager for the Canal to write to all partner organisations thanking them for their funding towards the canal but also encouraging them to continue with their contributions towards the canal.

Resolved:

1. The committee approved the final accounts for the 2022/23 financial year.
2. The committee approved the revised budget for the 2023/24 financial year.
3. The committee approved the forecast outturn for the 2023/24 financial year.
4. The committee approved the proposal that a minimum unallocated reserve balance of £200,000 be added to the reserves policy.
5. The Committee noted the forward look position.

8/23 CANAL MANAGEMENT REPORT [Item 8]

Declarations of interest:

None

Officers:

James Taylor, Strategic Manager – Basingstoke Canal

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Strategic Manager explained that there had been a major pollution incident in Woking town centre where a delivery truck hit a bollard and ruptured its fuel tank, with the spillage of approximately 650 litres of diesel transferring through the storm drain system into the Basingstoke Canal. The Environment Agency initially led on the clean-up operation, with support from Basingstoke Canal Authority, Woking Borough Council and Thames Water, working to contain the spill by placing oil booms in strategic locations. This was then taken over by a specialist company working on behalf of the polluter. The clean-up took 7 weeks. The incident has damaged the ecology, as well as BCA income and reputation. It was explained that the Basingstoke Canal Society had put in an insurance claim as the spillage had affected their work on the canal. Liability had been admitted and parties were progressing with insurers.
2. Crookham Parish Council had provided grant funding of £21,000 to improve the towpath surface from Malthouse bridge through to Zebon Copse Swing bridge and a small section under Poulter's bridge.

3. The Basingstoke Canal Manager, Fiona Shipp would be leaving her role at the end of June and had spent 11 years at the BCA. Members thanked her for all her hard work with the BCA and wished her all the best for the future.

Saj Hussain left the meeting at 12:30

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None

Recommendations:

The canal management report was noted.

9/23 BASINGSTOKE CANAL SOCIETY UPDATE [Item 9]

Officers:

Ian Moore, Basingstoke Canal Society

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was explained that the Basingstoke Canal Society (BCS) had contributed over 280,000 (28k hours £10 in kind in the last 12 months towards the operation of the Basingstoke Canal. In hard cash terms the BCS contributed £12,000 to the Basingstoke Canal Authority to help out their training budget, over 20,000 for the spot dredging programme around Odiham, and over £50,000 for the purchase of a brand new Conver weedcutter launched on 17th May from Spantons Wharf in Woking.
2. The BCS was planning £175,000 spend on a new electric trip boat (with disabled access) for 2024 along with environmentally friendly electric points along the canal.
3. The BCS launched a Campaign to help 'Keep our Canal Alive' and was steadily targeting businesses and councillors.
4. The BCS was thanked for their donations towards the canal and for promoting the canal via social media.
5. The BCS was encouraged to undertake member briefings in partner authorities around the canal and the work of the BCS.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None

Resolved:

The JMC noted the report.

10/23 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting.

Meeting ended at: 12:47

Chairman

**BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
7 JUNE 2023**

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Member Question

Question (1) – from Arthur McCaffrey

Will there be a report from MACE, the consultants who carried out a review on the canal? If not, can a question be tabled to ask about any outcome from this consultancy. Thank you.

Response:

In late 2022, Hampshire County Council and Surrey County Council commissioned Mace to undertake a review of Basingstoke Canal's current operating model. All members of the Joint Management Committee were interviewed or surveyed as part of the exercise and we thank you for your contributions.

We have now received the final report from Mace, and both authorities are now reviewing the findings and the implications, including financial, that could follow any future changes. In addition, we are taking further legal advice on our duties towards the Canal.

Both authorities are committed to securing the long-term management and maintenance of Basingstoke Canal. There is a balanced budget in place for the current financial year (2023-2024), which includes contributions from the Canal's reserves. We will aim to bring a report to the next Joint Management Committee in November. For now, it is business as usual and there is plenty to do as always.

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