

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee held at Rushmoor Borough Council Offices, Farnborough, at 10.05am on Thursday 21st June 2012.

Members

Hampshire County Council	Surrey County Council
Cllr Keith Chapman (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs Linda Kemeny (Chairman)
a Cllr Brian Gurden	a Mr Ben Carasco
Cllr Roger Kimber	Mr Chris Pitt
Cllr Jenny Radley	Mrs Diana Smith
Hampshire Districts:	Surrey Districts:
Hart District Council	Guildford Borough Council
Cllr Simon Ambler	a Cllr John Randall
Cllr Sara Kinnell	
Rushmoor Borough Council	Runnymede Borough Council
Cllr J H Marsh	Cllr J M Edwards
David Welch	
Surrey Heath Borough Council	Woking Borough Council
Cllr Bob Paton	Cllr K Davis

Special Interest Groups:

Natural England	Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society
a Cressida Wheelwright	Mr Roger Cansdale
	Martin Leech
	Mr Gareth Jones
Parish Councils	Mr P Riley
Alastair Clark	
	Inland Waterways Association
	Gareth Jones
Basingstoke Canal Houseboat Owners' Association	Business Interests
Mr Denis Betro	a Galleon Marine – Jan Peile
a Ms Kathy Williams	
	Residential Boat Owners Association
	Julia Jacs
Basingstoke Canal Boating Club	
a Steve Dallen	

a = absent

[All references to Items and Appendices refer to the Agenda for the meeting bound with the Minutes]

PART 1

IN PUBLIC

14/12 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Ben Carasco, John Randall, Steve Dallen, and Brian Gurden.

The Chairman advised that Councillor Kevin Davis replaced Councillor G Preshaw as the representative of Woking Borough Council.

15/12 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 10th February 2012 [Item 2]**

The Chairman stated that she had received comments regarding the minutes of the previous meeting, and advised the Committee that future minutes would clearly set out any agreed recommendations and actions.

It was commented that at the previous meeting, a policy on Open Access had been agreed. In response, the Chairman advised that this was being looked at by officers, but that it was not currently possible to implement it. In response, it was felt that Open Access could cause difficulties for water levels if canal users did not close locks correctly.

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

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

16/12 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS [Item 3]**

There were no declarations of interests.

17/12 **QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

There were no questions or petitions.

18/12 **PLANNING SOLUTIONS CONSULTING – UPDATE [Item 5]**

Representatives from Planning Solutions Consulting attended the Committee to provide an update on the work they had undertaken in forming a vision for the Canal.

Key points raised during the discussion:

- Planning Solutions felt that the area surrounding the canal had lots of market potential.
- Case studies of other canals had been considered, and a set of primary objectives formed. These objectives were then refined into a vision statement for the Canal which was included within the report.

- It was felt that the Canal's management needed a more streamlined bureaucracy, and would benefit from a project manager with commercial experience.
- Marketing of the Canal was not felt to be strong, and the possibility of changing its name, in order to more accurately reflect its geography, was posited.
- The Canal had potential for a Heritage Lottery Funding bid, and it was suggested that Surrey County Council (SCC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) should invest towards this.
- It was suggested that a working group be set up, focusing on income generation.
- The draft document would be published online and feedback and comments sought until September 2012, at which point officers would review the feedback and amend the document accordingly.
- It was felt that a key element of the vision for the Canal should be navigation, as this would be an essential part of the Canal being a success.
- Mooring availability was felt to be important and it was suggested that this should also be added to the vision.
- Governance was discussed, and the Committee considered the pros and cons of various governance models, including trusts and charities. It was suggested that a legal appraisal should be undertaken to consider the implications of adopting a different governance/ownership model and to ensure that additional cost and complexity was not incurred.
- A perception was expressed that a change in the governance/ownership model of the canal could result in the County Councils reducing their funding for the canal.
- It was felt that a charitable body could potentially be set up. The Committee discussed the merits of such a model, and in summary it was felt that the most important element of any particular governance model was to ensure that appropriately skilled and driven people were involved at board level.
- Officers clarified that once the vision for the canal was established, it would be appropriate to draw up a strategy and then to look for new sources of funding.
- SCC Estates and Property Management Officers provided an update to the Committee on plans for the Mytchett site. Conversations had been held with the Basingstoke Canal Authority with a view to the site generating revenue, and moving the operational side of the site to Ash Lock.
- It was envisaged that the Mytchett site could become a hub, which would function as a destination, with an information centre, better use of the camping facilities, and the ability to use the catering facilities.
- The Committee discussed the site and it was felt that the lack of an amenity block was a missed opportunity. SCC Officers were concerned that if the site was developed into an amenities block in the short term, it could potentially restrict the future development which was possible for the site, and wanted to look at a revenue generating development for the long term.
- The Chairman advised that SCC was looking at whether it could compensate the Canoe Society for their expenditure on plans for the amenity block.
- It was suggested that there was a Scouts building nearby the site which could potentially be used for amenity provision.
- The Committee discussed a potential mooring development, and whilst the Chairman felt that SCC and HCC could pursue this issue, she

commented that navigation was needed before moorings could be developed.

- The Committee welcomed the report and commented that it was a good and thorough piece of work.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The vision statement document will be published online and feedback and comments sought until 7th September 2012, at which point officers will review the feedback and amend the document accordingly. Deadline now 7th September 2012

Recommendations:

None.

19/12 **CANAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT** [Item 6]

The Committee considered a report from the Canal Director which provided an update regarding the work of the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA).

Key points raised during the discussion:

- The Chairman informed the Committee that the Canal Director was leaving the BCA and the Committee thanked him for his efforts during his time as Canal Director.
- The Committee was informed that progress with repairs had been good, but that this was only in phase one. Outstanding works would require extra funding.
- Culverts were challenging and it was highlighted that they might require additional funding for works.
- Project specific funding was starting to be received from the High Level Stewardship Funding scheme, but currently this was only for the Surrey section of the canal. The Hampshire section was behind Surrey owing to difficulties in mapping the canal.
- Income from leisure moorings was felt to be poor, and the Canal Director felt that fees needed to increase.
- The Director recommended that the BCA should work further with the working group on open access in order to progress the issue. The Committee discussed open access and the Chairman advised that whilst all parties were in favour of moving towards open access, there was still a lot of work to be done before this could be implemented.
- It was commented that a policy on open access had been recommended for approval and agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee, but that this was not reflected in the minutes. The Chairman advised that a clear decision to implement the policy had not been taken at the previous meeting, but despite this, officers were working to overcome the challenges which were preventing such a policy from being implemented at present.
- Members were advised that there were numerous safety issues which required attention before open access could be implemented, and the two County Councils were required to consider safety and satisfy themselves with regards to risks posed by open access to the Canal.

- It was suggested that guard rails should be fitted to the locks on the Canal.
- The Canal Director advised that there were lots of difficulties in closing lock gates on the canal which novice boaters would unlikely be aware of. Concern was expressed over the potential for novice boaters to leave locks incorrectly closed which could have serious implications in terms of water levels for the canal and houseboats.
- As the canal was not fully navigable, it was felt to be unfair to compare the mooring charges with the River Wey, as the two did not offer the same benefits.
- A member of the Committee suggested that mooring fees should be reviewed later in the year when it would be clearer as to whether the canal would be navigable in 2013. Furthermore, it was felt that additional clarity should be provided with regards to income figures for mooring at present and their projected increases.
- In response, the Chairman agreed that the issue of mooring fees should be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.
- A report from Natural England was requested with regard to High Level Stewardship Funding.

Actions/further information to be provided:

- A report regarding mooring fee increases be provided to the next meeting of the Committee, to include clearer financial figures.
- A report from Natural England be provided to the next meeting of the Committee regarding High Level Stewardship Funding.

Agreed:

To support the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) on the following matters;

1) On the Deepcut Flight of Locks there are still outstanding structural repairs that will require attention (Jacobs Condition Survey Report 2009) and early consideration to a further capital funded programme for these should be made. In particular the subsidence issues around lock structure and a further survey of these structures needs to be carried out.

2) An 'Open Navigation Access Strategy' to include plans for implementation should be further developed and implemented as soon as practicable to invite and encourage more visiting boats onto the canal in an unrestricted manner. BCA to work closely with the open access group to try and achieve this.

(11:57 Chris Pitt left the meeting at this point.)

20/12 FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2011/2012 & FINANCIAL POSITION 2012/2013
[Item 7]

The Committee considered the report of the Honorary Treasurer, the purpose of which was to brief Members on the financial outturn of the Basingstoke Canal Authority for 2011/12.

Key points raised during the discussion:

- Members were advised that expenditure had reduced, including employee costs, where this was mainly due to a reduction in training fees.
- Premises costs had fallen by £29,000, and there had been fewer vehicles hired, and supplies and services costs such as phones, office and IT had reduced.
- All expected partner contributions had been received.
- Confusion was expressed with regards to Parish Council contributions, and Officers clarified that the lack of contributions was most probably due to a time lag.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None

Agreed:

1) The figures for the 2011/12 final outturn as set out in Appendix A be endorsed.

2) All partner authorities be urged to make their full contributions and to honour the agreed scale contributions for 2012/13.

21/12 **Annual Governance Statement [Item 8]**

The Committee considered a report regarding the Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Governance Statement is intended to ensure the Audit Commission that the financial affairs of the Canal are conducted properly. The purpose of the report was for the Committee to consider and agree the Annual Governance Statement, which the Chairman and Committee Clerk would then be required to sign.

Key points raised during the discussion:

None

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Agreed:

1) That the Annual Governance Statement for 2011/12 be approved and signed off by the Chairman.

2) That the Annual Return for 2011/12 be approved and signed off by the Chairman.

22/12 **SURREY AND HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY REPORT [Item 9]**

The Committee considered a report from the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society which provided an update on their activities.

Key points raised during the discussion:

- The importance of Open Access was raised. The Chairman reiterated that, as per the discussions under previous agenda items regarding this issue, it would be progressed but that there were numerous issues which would first need to be overcome.
- It was suggested that Network Rail be asked to ensure that works affecting the canal be completed in the shortest possible time and during winter months, in order to limit the impact on the canal. In response, the Chairman advised that letters had been sent to Network Rail regarding this issue on several occasions, but agreed to do so again.
- A planning guidance document regarding the River Wey was circulated to the Committee. It was felt that a similar document should be created for the Canal. The Chairman welcomed this and requested that this be considered further at the next meeting, but advised the Committee that in order for a planning guidance document to be sound and of use, it would need to be fully evidenced and compiled between the riparian planning authorities. Furthermore, the Committee was advised that this would need to be considered at the political leadership level, rather than by officers, if it were to be a success.
- It was requested that the riparian planning authorities be contacted with a view to initiating such a document.
- The Chairman advised that she would pursue this with the political leadership of SCC, and requested the Vice-Chairman to do so at HCC, and also the representatives of the riparian planning authorities to do the same.

The Chairman invited John Howe of the Water Strategy Group to give a presentation on the group's work to date, and a summary of the key points raised is provided below.

- The group had estimated where the biggest leakages were occurring on the canal. The biggest problems concerned leaking locks, mostly at the Deepcut flight, but also at Weybridge.
- If it were a sealed canal, there would not be enough water in order for it to be navigable.
- 1.7 megalitres of water were backpumped each day from the River Wey.
- Even if the locks were not leaking water, the canal would not have enough water.
- An application to the Environment Agency had been submitted in order to double the amount of water which could be extracted from Woodham. It was felt that this should enable better navigation through the lower parts of the canal.
- The Canal was not built with a reservoir which posed many challenges.
- The Group were concentrating on modelling the water flow of the Canal, and a current best estimate had been provided for dry conditions.
- Planning guidance for the Canal was considered to be a high priority.
- The Hampshire Pound has potential for surplus water storage for use along the canal, if it is regularly dredged and not 'silted up'.

- It was hoped that some undergraduate university students could be drafted in to support the Group's work as part of a final year project.

Actions/further information to be provided:

- SCC Officers to write to Network Rail regarding maintenance works affecting the Canal. Network Rail's response to be circulated to the Committee.

Agreed:

- **Chairman and Vice Chairman to raise the suggestion of a Planning Guidance document for the Canal with the political leadership of SCC and HCC respectively. Other Members of riparian planning authorities are requested to do the same with their authorities.**
- **The Committee endorsed the work of the Water Strategy Group and supported the implementation of the work on a Water Strategy.**

Resolved: That the recommendations in the report and the content of the presentation be noted.

23/12 **INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION REPORT** [Item 10]

The Committee considered a report from the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), which provided an update on the work of the IWA.

Key points raised during the discussion:

- Scottish Waterways were cited as a relevant example, where £100m of investment resulted in increased tourism which had repaid the capital investment 5 times over.
- The IWA intended to continue work identifying potential funding sources for the canal, and requested that HCC Officers assist them with this, which the Chairman supported.
- The restoration of navigation was felt to be crucial and a high priority for the canal.
- The IWA expressed interest in the capital works programme for the Canal, with a view to ensuring that works were conducted effectively. The Chairman requested HCC and SCC Officers to prepare a report on this subject for the next meeting of the Committee.
- Marketing for the Canal required strengthening and it was suggested that a marketing group be established as part of the work underway regarding a vision for the Canal. A bike hire scheme was suggested.

Actions/further information to be provided:

- The IWA to work with HCC Officers to explore potential funding sources for the canal.
- HCC and SCC Officers to draft a report regarding the canal's capital works programme for the next meeting of the Committee.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be noted.

24/12 **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT** [Item 11]

The Committee considered the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Basingstoke Canal Partnership.

Key points raised during the discussion:

- The Chairman advised that the MOA had never been officially signed. It was felt that the MOA needed to be considered as part of all the other work ongoing regarding the Canal.
- It was hoped that a more permanent document could be drafted and adopted.
- It was requested that the four annexes to the MOA be circulated to the Committee.
- It was suggested that the Joint Management Committee's role and function be considered as part of any review of the MOA and the governance of the Canal.

Actions/further information to be provided:

- The annexes to the MOA to be circulated to the Committee.

Agreed: To note the comments made.

25/12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** [Item 12]

The next meeting of the Committee to be arranged for October 2012.

Chairman

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