

MINUTES of the meeting of the **BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at 10.05 am on 27 February 2014 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

Surrey County Council

Mrs Linda Kemeny
Mr Chris Pitt
Mr Colin Kemp (a)
Mr Ben Carasco (a)

Hampshire Districts:

Hart District Council

Councillor Simon Ambler
Councillor Jonathan Glen (a)

Rushmoor Borough Council

Councillor David Welch (a)
Councillor J H Marsh

Surrey Districts:

Guildford Borough Council

Councillor Gordon Jackson (a)

Runnymede Borough Council

Councillor J M Edwards (a)

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Councillor Paul Ilnicki (a)

Woking Borough Council

Councillor K M Davis (a)

Special Interest Groups

Basingstoke Canal Society

Martin Leech
Mr P Riley

Parish Councils

Alastair Clark (a)

Residential Boat Owners Association

Julia Jacs

Natural England

Adam Wallace

Inland Waterways Association

Gareth Jones

John Cale Canal Cruises

John Cale

Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club

Liz Murnaghan

1/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Kevin Davis, John Edwards, Gordon Jackson, Colin Kemp, Alastair Clark, Jonathan Glen and Ben Carasco.

Members suggested the Honorary Secretary contact all the Local Authorities represented on the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee to ask for named deputies, which the constitution allows for.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Honorary Secretary contact all Local Authorities represented on the Committee to request named deputies for representatives.

2/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 10 OCTOBER 2013 [Item 2]

Declarations of interest:

Gareth Jones would inform the Honorary Secretary, in writing, of his declarations of interest.

Officers: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members requested that in minute item 44/13 there be a mention of the report regarding the Canal Centre redevelopment.
2. The Committee were informed that Surrey County Council had a team of officers looking into business models for the Canal, and that these officers could provide support to Members of the Business Sub-Group.
3. Officers informed the Committee that a branding report would be brought to the June meeting.

RESOLVED: That

1. The minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2013 be agreed as a true record of the meeting.
2. The following Members be invited to join the Business Sub-Group

Philip Riley
Jonathan Glen
Gareth Jones

Actions/further information to be provided: None.

Committee next steps: None.

3/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Gareth Jones would inform the Honorary Secretary of his interests in writing.

4/14 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers:

James Taylor, Senior Countryside Management Officer, Surrey County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee thanked the Canal Authority staff and officers for their hard work during the recent bad weather, and for keeping the canal open.
2. Members questions were received from Mr John Cale, copies of the questions and responses can be found attached to the minutes of this meeting.
3. Mr Cale asked a supplementary question regarding whether the Committee felt that Members had acted in line with the Members Code of Conduct. The Chairman explained that as this was not related to the questions submitted to the Committee he was unable to answer.
4. Mr Cale asked a further supplementary question regarding whether anyone has exclusive use of any part of the canal and, who had the authority to reclassify boats and whether any discussion needed to take place before this happened. Officers explained that under current procedure they had the authority to reclassify boats without discussing the proposals with the owner, and confirmed that no one had exclusive use of any part of the canal.
5. A public question was received from Mr Alan Norris, a copy of which can be found attached to the minutes of the meeting. Mr Norris was not present to ask a supplementary question.

Actions/further information to be provided: None.

Committee next steps: None.

5/14 MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT [Item 5]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers:

James Taylor, Senior Countryside Management Officer, Surrey County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee had asked for the Memorandum of Agreement to be reviewed during the meeting in June 2013, in light of the staffing changes which had taken place since 2008. Officers had looked at the Memorandum of Agreement and had provided the Committee with a

revised version for discussion. The changes were intended to be a light touch update only and amendments had been consulted upon with the Joint Advisory Group (JAG), with comments being received from the Basingstoke Canal Society and Natural England. Surrey County Council Legal team and the Honorary Treasurer had provided input also.

2. Documents mentioned within the Memorandum of Agreement were updated as some, such as the Strategic Plan had never been formed and had been superseded by the Strategy. While an additional paragraph had been included within the Agreement to include more of an emphasis of engaging with partners.
3. It was agreed that the financial formula remain the same by the JAG as it was aimed to be a sharing formula.
4. The Memorandum of Agreement was to last five years, and would require all authorities to ratify in line with their Standing Orders.
5. The Committee congratulated the Senior Countryside Officer for his work on updating the Memorandum of Agreement, though Members expressed disappointment that there had been little input into the process other than by the Canal Society and Natural England.
6. The Canal Society were pleased that many of their comments had been incorporated within the version submitted to the Committee, however felt that paragraph 1 could be amended to include the Basingstoke Canal Society as a partner. The Senior Countryside Officer explained that a previous sentence within paragraph 1 mentions other organisations as being partners, though the Chairman requested that these two sentences be merged.
7. Members suggested that paragraph 28 was ambiguous, however the Honorary Treasurer noted that the Memorandum of Agreement mentioned that the financial contributions were agreed annually. Members further suggested that the Canal should look at additional funding streams as it was felt that more could be done to increase the volume of contributions.
8. Members were concerned that not all authorities would ratify the Memorandum of Agreement, in particular the financial formula. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman agreed that they would like a response from all authorities, and would write and invite the Leaders and Chief Executives to a meeting to discuss the Canal and ratifying the Memorandum of Agreement.
9. The Committee discussed the option of persuading authorities to pay contributions towards the canal due to the risks associated with shortfalls in funding.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Memorandum of Agreement be agreed.

2. Paragraph 1 of the Memorandum of Agreement be amended to have one sentence stating the organisations involved within the partnership.
3. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman write to all authorities asking them to ratify the updated Memorandum of Agreement and invite them to a meeting to discuss the Basingstoke Canal.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman to write to all authorities asking them to ratify the updated Memorandum of Agreement.

Committee next steps:

The Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee to review the Memorandum of Agreement in five years, February 2019.

6/14 FINANCIAL UPDATE REPORT [Item 6]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers:

Jane Lovett, Honorary Treasurer, Basingstoke Canal Authority

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The current financial year would see a predicted shortfall of £8,000, which was larger than was originally predicted.
2. The Honorary Treasurer informed the Committee that paragraph 2.5 required a correction as there was not a management fee reduction of £5,000, rather the £5,000 shortfall was due to less income than anticipated.
3. The Canal Authority now had around £6,000 of maternity costs to cover in future years.
4. The Honorary Treasurer provided the Committee with an update on the external audit which had taken place, as a letter had been received from the auditors to say they had accept comments and suggestions regarding the internal audit. The Honorary Treasurer stated that it was important that minutes recorded the Committees discussions of 'risk' by specifically mentioning 'risk', as though the Committee did discuss risk during Finance and Canal Managers' reports the word was not always used. It was agreed that the biggest risks laid with the County Councils as the owners of the Canal.
5. Members discussed the matter of Surrey County Council not placing all income back into the Canal budget, and felt that it was important that all income from the Canal was invested back into the Canal. Furthermore it was felt that the houseboat income should be put into the Canal budget rather than into Surrey County Council's budget. The Vice-Chairman explained that Surrey County Council Estates had their own policies, though she had an upcoming meeting arranged with the

relevant Cabinet Member and Chief Property Manager to discuss this issue.

6. The Committee felt that the quote in paragraph 3.2 for a camp site database was too high. The Chairman stated that he had already explained to officers that he felt £20,000 was unacceptable for a software package, and had requested they look elsewhere to procure an appropriate package.
7. Members queried the higher level of stewardship and were informed by officers that it appeared that something had gone wrong and that they were in discussion with Natural England to find solution, however this would mean only a limited amount of work could be completed. Officers felt that they were not liable due to the SSSI criterion not being met. Officers were mitigating the risk by working as a partnership to work towards meeting SSSI in areas of the canal.

RESOLVED: That

1. The forecast outturn be noted.
2. The Members note the revenue draw on reserves in 2013/14 along with the draw for match funding for the HLS projects.
3. The Committee support the Officer responses to the Issues Arising report from the external auditor for 2012/13.

Actions/further information to be provided: None.

Committee next steps: None.

7/14 CANAL CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE [Item 7]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers:

James Taylor, Senior Countryside Officer, Surrey County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee were informed that Surrey had allocated a further budget for the development of a plan for the site and consultants were currently leading the work. Officers had had two meetings with the consultants who were developing plans which considered the economic and built environment of the site.

RESOLVED: That

1. The verbal update be noted.

Actions/further information to be provided:

Officers to provide an update report for the meeting in June 2014.

Committee next steps:

The Committee to consider the update report at its next meeting in June 2014.

8/14 CANAL MANAGER'S UPDATE [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers:

Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager, Basingstoke Canal Authority
Phil Allan, Countryside Service, Hampshire County Council
Andrew Smith, Countryside Service, Hampshire County Council

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Canal Manager explained to the Committee that the weather had been a challenge, with three storms bringing down around 200 trees. The whole team had been involved in the clear up operation, with around 10 – 15 trees still down. There was a risk that the banks would be breached during the winter weather and this was being monitored closely.
2. Officers informed the Committee that an additional landslip had taken place at Dogmersfield which had further narrowed the canal at this point. This may lead to long narrow canal boats being unable to navigate the corner. Officers were looking to remove trees and test whether a boat can navigate the narrow channel. Officers stated it was important to mitigate the risks.
3. Members felt that the biggest risk facing the canal was that due to this further landslip the canal was now closed. The impact on the commercial businesses was large as they were unable to run, however the difficulty was that part of the land involved in the landslip was privately run.
4. The Committee felt that it was important that a solution was found to ensure the economic viability of the canal of businesses. Officers assured Members that fixing the issue was a priority of Hampshire County Council, and that engineers were looking for a temporary solution for the summer with a permanent fix in the autumn/winter. It was stated that engineers felt that the permanent fix would take six to eight weeks to complete, dependent on weather. Officers were however continuing to assess and mitigate the risks.
5. The Canal Manager informed the Committee that due to the storm damage the team were behind on winter maintenance work, however they were looking to start replacing locks within a week. The Canal Authority had recently signed a contract to have 365 day backup cover with a contractor. This would mitigate the risks associated if a major incident took place in the future. Furthermore officers had updated the emergency plans.

6. The Canal Authority had the abandoned boats along the canal removed and had begun auditing the boats along the canal to ensure they all have licences and the right licences.
7. The Canal Manager thanked the Canal Society for their help throughout this period as the support had enabled work to take place while the Authority were concentrating on storm damage clear up.
8. Officers had attended a dredging conference and hoped to work with the Environment Agency to produce better guidelines on dredging which could be used nationally.
9. The Committee were informed that work was still taking place with Greenhouse Graphics to establish a branding for the canal and the aim was to have an update report at the next meeting.
10. Members queried whether a telemetry system was still being procured and were informed that officers were discussing this with the Hampshire County Council procurement team.
11. Officers informed the Committee that they were still looking into making a Heritage Lottery Fund bid, but that this would require dedicated officer time which was not possible at the time. It was suggested that the Business Sub-Group could consider this during their meetings.

RESOLVED: That

1. The report be noted.
2. The Business Sub-Group consider a Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Committee to receive a report on the branding of the canal at a meeting in June 2014.

Committee next steps:

None.

9/14 CANAL SOCIETY UPDATE [Item 9]

Declarations of interest: None.

Officers:

Philip Riley, Basingstoke Canal Society
Martin Leech, Basingstoke Canal Society

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee were informed that the Canal Society had been removing and selling logs and to-date had sold around a quarter for around £1,000. The money which is made is reinvested into the canal.

2. The Canal Society had arranged for three visits from the Waterway Recovery Group for 2014, two weekend visits and one week long visit.
3. The John Pinkerton II had had a successful season and had netted around £50,000 for the Society, however there were now concerns on how to get it down the canal into Surrey as they Society planned to arrange trips for the all authorities. It was hoped the trips would encourage the councils to fund the canal. The Canal Society was currently looking into whether they could crane the boat out of the lake and transport it by road.
4. The Canal Society felt that it was important that the canal was dredged and to have Swan Cutting cleared up as the community were no longer able to use the towpath.
5. The Canal Society stated that they felt that Members should assist in developing planning guidance so there are mooring sites along the canal. The officers informed the Committee that a number of partner authorities did consult the Canal Authority when a planning application was made for land within metres of the canal, however to benefit from S106 or CIL monies they often had to make a case before the planning application was made. Members felt that it was important that planning officers in the Boroughs and Districts had a common view with regards to the canal. It was suggested that officers could raise the issue of flooding and drainage with the planning departments.
6. The Society stated if the Canal Centre is redeveloped then a maintenance base would need to be developed and suggested that they continue conversations with the Ministry of Defence regarding land at Ash Lock. The Chairman explained that resources had been stretched in Hampshire County Council. Officers stated that a business plan would need to be produced and discussions with Rushmoor Borough Council, as the planning authority, would need to take place before a procurement application could be taken to the Leader of Hampshire County Council for consideration.

RESOLVED: That

1. The report be noted.

Actions/further information to be provided: None.

Committee next steps: None.

10/14 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The Committee noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 26 June 2014 at the Mytchett Canal Centre.

Meeting ended at: 11.30 am

Chairman

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