

BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date: 16 October 2014



Hampshire
County Council



Canal Management Report

Lead Officers: James Taylor / Fiona Shipp

Tel: 01483 517538 / 01252 370073

Email: james.taylor@surreycc.gov.uk / Fiona.shipp@hants.gov.uk



BCA Canal Manager

The BCA Canal Manager reports that:

Works

- We now have 4 boats on the new moorings at the canal centre with others being lined up as we complete each section and work our way down the waiting list.
- The 1st summer towpath cut was completed over 64 miles and the end of summer cut is due to start over the next couple of weeks.
- Annual Japanese Knotweed spraying has been underway along the canal. Each stand is either sprayed or injected each year. A full invasive species survey last summer helped us ensure we not missing anything.
- We have managed to acquire a new area of land from the MOD at Ash Lock (on a lease) and we have carried out several weeks of work of groundworks to prepare this site for arrival of new emergency equipment.

Staffing

- Sadly after 3.5 years we will be losing Rachael Thomas from our Administration team next month as she will be leaving us to have a baby and start a new life in Wales. She will be missed. Rachael's position has been filled through re-deployment from Hampshire and Sue Doyle will be starting with us for her handover at the end of September.
- 2 new lock keepers came and then left and have been replaced by two new ones (Matt and James) and hopefully a third about to start and see us through to the end of the season.

Volunteers

- The Tuesday volunteer group have worked their way through all the locks giving them a full spruce up and re-paint which has helped give our visiting boaters a positive welcome.
- The canal society have installed a new visitor mooring at Brookwood Country Park and also reinstated 800m of towpath through this stretch of canal.
- We will be holding the 2nd lengthsman workshop here in November. The workshops are aimed at giving opportunities for the lengthsman to learn more about how we manage the canal. The 1st workshop focused on water management. This 2nd one will focus on tree management and the other volunteer teams have also been invited to attend.

Weedcutter

- The weedcutter run by the Canal Society volunteers has been tackling weed in the Woking and woodham areas all summer keeping the canal open through this stretch. Literally moving tonnes of weed.

Boat Audit

- We have carried out a boat audit working through the unlicensed boats on the canal. This has been a visual look at gardens from the towpath followed by door knocking. Reminding anyone with boats of the licence requirements. We have unearthed several unlicensed powered boats and helped encourage either removal from the canal of the more derelict ones or payment for the others.

Management Team

- The tree survey has been completed over 7 weeks and already the most dangerous trees have been removed from the full length. 600 others have been identified for more minor works which we hope to have carried out this winter. The full report should be with us over the next few weeks. There were no signs of ash dieback or sudden oak death which was good and overall they felt that the tree stock was in good condition.
- Visiting boat numbers have been good this season and have at least equalled last year where we had 100 visiting boats through. We will report more accurately at the end of the season.
- Water levels have been really good this summer with regular rainfall to top us up and hence there has been a lack of Navigation updates. No news is good news however!

SCC / HCC Strategic Manager

The Strategic Manager reports that:

Capital works

Major works are planned in the capital programme for this winter in both Counties. Planning of the various projects are not as far ahead as we might have liked to see at this stage, mainly due to lack of resource provided by engineering services in both Counties, and procurement difficulties particularly in Hampshire. The following items are due to take place during the winter of 2014-15:

Hampshire

- **Dogmersfield landslip** – a deal has now been struck with the adjoining landowner who will carry out works to the slip on his land leaving HCC to install sheet piles at waters edge and reinstate the canal channel and towpath. Planning consent may be required for this work. HCC's works are unlikely to occur until January 2015, and these works are likely to close the channel for at least 8 weeks. The Strategic Manager has reminded Engineers of the importance of the navigation being open in time for Easter 2015.
- HCC Engineering Consultancy have been instructed to carry out repairs to two **culverts** under the Canal which the inspection identified as being in poor condition – these are located either side of the Dogmersfield slip on a design and build basis; but they appear to have made no progress with programming this work to date.
- **Swan Bridge** – HCC engineers have appointed Atkins to arrive at a design for the replacement of the failing piling and slumping towpath and reinstatement of a suitable depth channel. If a permanent solution to the land instability at Swan cannot be installed in time for the 2015 season the Strategic Manager has requested Engineers to consider a temporary fix to ensure that both navigation and towpath are in acceptable condition during the Magna Carta celebrations in May 2015.

Surrey

- The 2009 Embankment Survey identified a number of embankments requiring remedial work on a prioritised basis. The following **embankments** are those next in the priority list:
 - Frimley Lodge Park - Mytchett Canal Centre -800m of soft bank protection

- Canal Centre – Mytchett Place Bridge – 100m of hard bank protection
- Further investigation is also required on the Rive Ditch (Woking) and Horsell Sluice outfall **culverts**, and once re-inspected repairs may need to be programmed urgently.
- A new set of **lock gates** will be purchased from capital for Lock 10.

Both counties

- **Ash Embankment** is due to be drained down in January for SCC Structures whilst they carryout the overdue principle inspection of the A331 Aqueduct. We have decided that during the drain down we will arranged for a contractor to re-puddle the clay lining above two minor leak sites one situated on each side of the county border.
- Following from the Parson Brickerhoff principle **tree hazard inspection**, mentioned above, a contractor will be employed to work through the list of identified tree works.
- A contract is now in place for Aquamtix to supply a **telemetry system** to measure and record water levels at key points, provide rangers with palmtop data 24/7 and provide remote pump control for the Woodham and St John's back pumping systems.
- **Purchase of emergency use equipment** – SCC have purchased two new trailable pumps, HCC will purchase a new light-weight trailable workboat, a supply of stop planks plus containers to store them in.

This page is intentionally left blank