

Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee
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MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Report

To update the Joint Management Committee on issues relating to the current membership, and to agree the process for the appointment of a special interest group representative by the Committee at its meeting in October 2015. The Committee is also asked to agree the arrangements for substitutions at its meetings.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The membership of the Joint Management Committee (JMC) consists of 16 voting members drawn from county, borough and district councils in Hampshire and Surrey, along with a further eight co-opted non-voting representatives from special interest groups related to the Canal. This is set out in the revised Memorandum of Agreement, which was approved by the JMC in February 2014 and is subject to formal ratification by the partner local authorities.
- 2 Of the eight special interest group representatives, two places are allocated to the Basingstoke Canal Society and one place is allocated to Natural England. The other five special interest groups represented are decided by the JMC, and the following groups were agreed in October 2013 following a voting process:
 - Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club
 - Hart District Association of Parish and Town Councils
 - Inland Waterways Association
 - John Cale Canal Cruises
 - Residential Boat Owners' Association
- 3 The co-option period for these groups is due to expire in May 2017, but the groups will be eligible for further periods of co-option. The JMC agreed in October 2013 that it did not wish to increase the number of co-opted representatives, and this is reflected in the revised Memorandum of Agreement.

PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE EXISTING MEMBERSHIP

- 4 As part of the selection process for the special interest groups in October 2013, groups were invited to make written representations outlining their case for appointment to the JMC. One of the special interest groups selected by the JMC, John Cale Canal Cruises, made the case that it was essential to have commercial representation on the Committee so that their concerns and interests could be put forward at that level. John Cale Canal Cruises ceased operations on the Canal in September 2014 and, as the purpose of the appointments is to represent the views of groups or organisations rather than individuals, the basis on which the appointment was made is no longer valid. John Cale (or his nominated substitute) has continued to attend JMC meetings but, as the organisation being represented no longer exists, it should be considered that there is now a vacancy for a special interest group representative. A letter has been sent to John Cale explaining this position.
- 5 Fleet Town Council makes a significant financial contribution to the Basingstoke Canal Authority and has requested representation on the JMC. The current Memorandum of Agreement states that the JMC comprises 16 elected representatives of the constituent local authorities, and any change to this would require a decision by the JMC and formal ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement by the eight constituent authorities.
- 6 In the light of the vacancy amongst the special interest group representatives, there is an opportunity for Fleet Town Council to be appointed to the JMC as a non-voting co-opted member. However, in line with the previous selection process, this opportunity would need to be made available to other groups as well, with the JMC deciding on the appointment. The JMC may feel that it is more appropriate to offer Fleet Town Council a voting position as an elected representative in view of the financial contribution the Council makes. The Committee is therefore requested to agree whether it wishes to invite Fleet Town Council to take up a place as a voting member or as a non-voting special interest group.
- 7 It is proposed that the JMC agrees to invite expressions of interest from special interest groups to fill the vacancy caused by John Cale Canal Cruises having ceased trading, and that an appointment is made by the JMC at its meeting in October 2015. The appointment would be for the period until May 2017 and the chosen co-opted member would be eligible for a further period of co-option, in line with the Memorandum of Agreement.

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

- 8 At the last meeting, the Chairman requested that consideration be given to the issue of substitutions on the JMC. The following extracts from the Constitution of the JMC set out the current arrangements, confirming that substitutes are permitted:

Local Authority Members

‘Each Authority may nominate individuals to serve as deputies to attend meetings of Joint Management Committee on behalf of and in the absence of the person for whom they are nominated to deputise.’

Special Interest Groups

‘Representatives and any named deputies shall normally be co-opted for periods of four years but shall be eligible for further periods of co-option.’

- 9 The advantage of substitutes attending is that it ensures that the views of member organisations are represented at meetings, and the nomination of named deputies means that any lack of continuity caused by the attendees varying considerably from meeting to meeting is minimised.
- 10 The wording in the Constitution does not make it a requirement for members of the JMC to have substitutes but, if they choose to do so, it is recommended that these should be named individuals. The current position is that some authorities and organisations have identified named substitutes, but this is not consistent across the JMC.
- 11 The Memorandum of Agreement states that co-opted members will ‘*register any interests they have which relate to any of the constituent authorities*’ and a system of agreed named substitutes would be helpful in achieving this. The list of substitute members and interests would be maintained by the Democratic Services Team at Surrey County Council, and all members will be notified of the arrangements. It is suggested that only named substitutes should be allowed to act in that capacity at meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (a) That expressions of interest be sought from special interest groups related to the Canal, and that the Joint Management Committee agrees an appointment at its meeting in October 2015.
- (b) That the Committee reviews its current membership and decides whether
 - (i) to offer Fleet Town a place on the JMC as a full voting member and request formal ratification of a revised Memorandum of Agreement by the eight constituent authorities;

Or

 - (ii) to invite Fleet Town Council to submit an expression of interest for appointment as a special interest group, for consideration by the JMC at its meeting in October 2015.
- (c) That a system of named substitutes for Joint Management Committee members be agreed, to take effect from the meeting in October 2015.

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