

BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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**Canal Management Report**

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The BCA Canal Manager reports that:

Works

- 3 sets of lock gates replaced at Locks 19 and 11
- Cills repaired at lock 18
- Gate pots re-concreted along with cills at lock 19 lowers
- 20 + trees dealt with as a result of Storm Katie
- Artillery weir & sluice (near ash lock) now fully back in service after many years unused
- Over 100 urgent trees dealt with by contractors and our staff as a result of tree survey.
- Hectic schedule overseeing capital works at Woking and Ash embankment, with drain downs and fish rescues to organise and oversee and trailer loads of rubbish to be fished out and removed.
- CCTV installed at Ash Lock and further works to improve security after another trailer was stolen.
- All the old lock gates were finally removed from the Deepcut depot

Events/Visitor Services

- The canoe and rowing boat hire business has had a slow start to the season with slightly unpredictable weather. However when the sun shines the demand is high.
- Our visitor centre manger is working alongside the Canal Society work party to undertake refurbishment of the bridge barn boaters' facilities in time for the Woking canal festival. This is well on schedule.

Staffing

- Mark Foster will be returning this month. He previously worked with us as casual ranger and lock keeper and has been working with Blackwater valley countryside project for the last two years. He will replace Chris as our new Canal Ranger.
- Sarah broke her wrist but wasn't out of action for long and after a short spell in the office she was soon back out on site.

Volunteers

- Tuesday volunteers finished off winter sapling cutting with sessions up at Crookham, Barley mow, and Woking. They also helped out with rubbish removal from the drained down sections. They have also been getting the locks back into shape for the season with sessions on lock painting and strimming. They and the canal society volunteers both had days at Deepcut depot clearing up the whole work yard and removing rubbish.
- There are several other volunteer opportunities now developed with our trip boat Rosebud now entirely run by Volunteers. The Patrol boat is also now starting to do patrols of the canal, checking on boat licences and generally acting as good public relations with people out on the water. Other jobs they may undertake while out are clearing debris and litter from the water and trimming any low hanging branches and removing fish hooks. We also hope to complete a full boat audit this summer.
- The lengthsman scheme continues to be a highly valuable daily source of information from out on the canal.

- We now also have two office based volunteers helping out in the office and visitor centre reception two days/week. This has enabled for example our extensive map/plan collection to be completed categorized and indexed.
- Volunteer training has been undertaken in the form of RYA Inland water helmsman course for Rosebud and Patrol boat skippers and a training evening held for potential patrol boat skippers and crew as an introduction to this new project.
- We are working with two other volunteers and the Canal Society to develop a new volunteering leaflet to hand out highlighting the many opportunities to get involved and support the canal.
- Society volunteers have again been helping to smarten up a boat that we were jointly donated by Fleet sea cadets. They also spent many sessions on the weedcutter in Woking prior to the drain down this winter to remove as much hydrocotyle as possible.

Annual Volunteer Figures

Year/qrt	Conservation Tuesdays (started in Jan 2012)	Centre/events (Centre started 2014)	Trip boat (started 2015) & Patrol boat (started 2016)	Corporate	Lengthsmen (BCS) Started recording 2013)
2015/16					
Qrt 1	125	23	25	68	520
Qrt 2	89	16	31	38	520
Qrt 3	131	43		20	520
Qrt 4	173	23	5		520
Totals	518	105	61	126	2080
2015/16 net worth £161,100					
2014/15					
Qrt 1	147		8		494
Qrt 2	127	16	17		494
Qrt 3	139	18		100	494
Qrt 4	135	18		42	494
Totals	548	52	25	142	1976
2014/15 net worth £144,850					
2013/14					
Qrt 1	112				390
Qrt 2	85	8			390
Qrt 3	95	18			390
Qrt 4	111				390
Totals	403	26	0	0	1560
2013/14 net worth £102050					

Figures are quoted as volunteer days. 1 Volunteer day = > 1 hr of volunteer time/person/day
 Quarters are financial year quarters: April –June, July- Sept, October - December, January - March

The Volunteer net worth figure is based on the HCC guidance for cost of day work, currently as follows:

Unskilled tasks at the up to £50/day (gardening, stewarding etc.)

Skilled tasks at up to £150/day (construction tasks, leading a workshop etc.)

Professional tasks at up to £350/day (creating plans, providing technical drawings etc.)

We have classified the Volunteer groups in the following way:

Conservation Tuesday – Unskilled

(Some Volunteers are skilled and trained to use pieces of equipment, we consider all to be unskilled for the purpose of this calculation)

Centre/events – Skilled
 Boats – Skilled
 Corporate – Unskilled
 Lengthsmen – Unskilled

Description Of Volunteer Roles

Conservation Volunteers Every Tuesday between 10 and 20 people work under a Ranger to keep the canal looking good. They paint the locks, mow the grass, keep the vegetation under control and carry out general simple maintenance jobs along the length of the waterway . They are provided with basic training and equipment. More senior volunteers may be sent on a course to qualify them to occasionally lead a small team on a specific task or to be able to use equipment such as hedgetrimmers and strimmers.

Centre and Events Helping out in the visitor centre and shop and welcoming visitors to the centre. These volunteers are also on hand to help with the more office based roles, such as archiving of records and maps and helping with the daily tasks of taking bookings. Many volunteers also help out with our santa crusie event each December.

Rosebud & Patrol Boat We run a number of boats along the length of the canal. Rosebud is a small trip boat that helps raise funds for the canal by providing public trips from the canal centre and is also branching out into chartered trips and events.

The Patrol Boat is a new venture helping to check on boat licences and generally acting as good public relations with people out on the water. Other jobs they may undertake while out are clearing debris and litter from the water and trimming any low hanging branches and removing fish hooks. We also hope to complete a full boat audit this summer.

Skipperers are fully trained volunteers with MCA recognised qualifications.

Corporate groups book in with the ranger team to undertake larger projects on the canal, usually as one off events. The tasks undertaken are usually conservation related similar to the Tuesday group.

Lengthsmen The canal is divided into lengths of approximately one kilometer. Lengthsman choose a section of canal to suit them, to walk once a week and are the “eyes and ears” for their length. They look out for problems and report to a central coordinator who will alert the Canal Centre if any action needs taking. In addition some lengthsman choose to take a more active role for their length and collect litter and cut back overhanging vegetation. Some have also been very active in our “share the space drop the pace” towpath campaign or more recently in our ‘dog poo fairy’ blitz! However, the level of involvement is always up to the individual. (Lengthsman scheme is joint project with the Canal Society, but day to day works with the BCA and figures recorded by BCA)

Management Team

- Writing of draft Operational Plan and updating of work programmes
- Update and re-issue of emergency plan
- Regular meetings held with the Canal Society, head lengthsman, boaters groups, Galleon Marine and the Basingstoke Canal Angling Association.
- Presentations to Basingsbourne Park friends of group, Accessible boating’s AGM, C&RT & Loddon Fisheries & Conservation Consultative.
- Conservation Steering Group meeting held and bade a farewell and thank you to Dr. John Eaton for his many tears of service to the canal on environmental matters. Discussed next full canal vegetation survey due this summer, and canal SSSI unitisation clarification, needed so we can progress potential upgrade of canal SSSI status. Discussion over a new dredging profile (min navigable standard to aim for) for the canal in advance of the depth survey which has been procured.

SCC / HCC Strategic Manager

The Strategic Manager reports that:

Surrey

- Works to re-line the eastern portion of Ash Embankment to reduce seepage were completed at the end of March, and have resolved the long standing seepage issue; time ran out to complete similar work on the western half of Ash Embankment this year
- Works to replace the Rive Ditch (Woking) culvert were also completed in April – the culvert was found to be in worse condition than the survey had shown and replacement was not a moment too soon.
- Seepage prevention work was undertaken at the head end of Locks 20 and 21
- Planned works for 2016/17 are to complete the Ash Embankment works on behalf of both Counties, bank protection works at key targets throughout the summer and targeting Locks 15-25 for brickwork repairs, and the “routine” tree surgery identified by the arboricultural inspector will be carried out in the autumn/winter. The Surrey winter programme is considered very ambitious for the staff resource available and it is very likely that some works particularly at the lock will be rolled forward to 2017.

Hampshire

- Works were undertaken to repair a culvert at Broadoak
- Further works to culverts at Wilks Water and the Principle Inspection of the Whitewater Aqueduct are planned for summer 2016, and the “routine” tree surgery identified by the arboricultural inspector will be carried out in the autumn/winter
- Much of the remainder of the Hampshire capital budget is now tied up with the Dogmersfield Landslip / Barley Mow culvert replacement project which is being led by HCC Engineers. It is expected that these works will now take place from October 2016 and may last up to 6 months.

Both Counties

- We are awaiting a start date from Randall Surveys for a full channel depth/siltation survey