



MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL – CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN
ON TUESDAY, 25TH OCTOBER 2005 AT 10.30 A.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor E.K. Griffiths - Chairman

Councillors:

D.M. Gray, S. Jenkins, M.G. Parker, Mrs R. Passmore, Mrs B.M. Toomer, D.T. Wiltshire

Together with:

D. Whetter (Senior Engineer), N. Liversuch (Principal Planner, Countryside & Landscape Services), R. Morgan (Principal Planner), J. Ridgewell (Parks Business Development Manager), R. Davies (European Officer), S.M. Kauczok (Committee Services Officer).

Mr R.J. Dommett – Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust.

BEREAVEMENT

Those in attendance stood in silence as a mark of respect for Councillor D.J. Potter and for the mother of Gary George, Committee Services Manager, who had recently passed away.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss L. Ackerman, K. Etheridge and M.H. Newman.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S. Jenkins declared an interest as a member of the Islwyn Canal Association.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2005 were approved as a correct record.

3. Matters arising

- Councillor Jenkins gave details of a forthcoming programme on HTV Wales on Wednesday, 2nd November 2005 when the public would have the opportunity to participate in a special vote which could help to secure "Big Lottery" money for the canal project. Islwyn Canal Association had submitted a bid for a major pot of money as part of a National Lottery Fund called "The Peoples Millions".
- Mr. Whetter updated members of the working group on progress with the implementation of a formal Memorandum of Understanding for the Partnership.

4. CANAL WORKS – CURRENT STATUS

It was reported that works to re-route the main water supply to the canal provided by the Nant Carn had now been completed and water had started to flow into the canal.

During the course of the works there had been an opportunity to collect and clear debris from the dewatered length of the canal.

Although the ongoing works would re-establish the main water supply, approximately 100m of the canal in the immediate vicinity of the Nant Carn Aqueduct, would remain dewatered until permanent works to restore the historic structure and its associated leaks had been implemented.

The Council's Engineering Consultancy had concluded a preliminary assessment of the condition of the aqueduct which made initial recommendations on the scope of remedial works required to it as part of the overall restoration of this Class II listed structure.

The Capital Strategy Group had considered the continuation of the canal's capital works budget beyond 2005/06. Cabinet, via its MIG Forum and the Capital Strategy Group, had indicated its recognition of the need to continue the annual programme of capital improvement works, circa £250,000 for 2006/07 and beyond, to address the remaining works associated with the safety and integrity of the canal.

It was noted that any recommendation by the Capital Strategy Group on the continuation of the canal capital improvements works budget would be subject to Council approval.

5. EXTERNAL GRANTS – LOTTERY LIVING LANDMARKS

The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership (MBCRP) had continued to develop a major bid for up to £25 million of lottery funding via the Living Landmarks programme for submission by 6th January 2006.

Mr Whetter reported that Cabinet had expressed potential support for the inclusion of works and associated fees in the order of £2 million that would fund the Stage 1 recommendations of the Corridor Study i.e. the execution of works to address the remaining works associated with the safety and integrity of the canal.

Cabinet had requested further details on the conditions, in particular in respect of the implementation timescale associated with the Lottery funding, in order to further consider the potential to support a more extensive bid totalling £12.6 million that would allow implementation of the Stage 1 and 2 recommendations of the Corridor Study i.e. the securing of the integrity of the canal and the removal of obstructions to navigation along the Caerphilly CBC section of the canal.

Mr Whetter advised that he had attended a workshop held by "Living Landmarks" for prospective applicants on 17th October 2005 when there had been an opportunity for applicants to seek clarification on issues relating to their bids.

The Chair made reference to the ERDF grant awarded to the Crosskeys and Pontywaun Environmental Strategy being progressed by Groundwork Caerphilly and the inclusion of a number of canal related projects within the Environmental Strategy.

Mr Whetter advised that Groundwork were currently undertaking a review of the prioritisation of all the proposed projects included in the Environmental Strategy.

It was agreed that Groundwork would be invited to make a presentation to the next meeting of the working group.

6. LICENSING CONTROLS

Mr. Whetter indicated that a letter had been sent to the Pontywaun Boat Club advising them that their members should remove their craft from the canal. In addition, in conjunction with Legal Services, a letter had been sent to the owner of the boat operating on the canal advising that the Council wished to terminate the lease.

Mr. Whetter advised that he was in discussion with Dayton Griffiths, the Council's Risk and Insurance Manager, regarding insurance cover and it was agreed that arrangements would be made for the Chairman of the working group and appropriate officers to meet Mr. Griffiths to further discuss. A report on the outcome of the discussions would be presented to the next meeting.

7. NETWORKING – WELSH ASSEMBLY ALL PARTY GROUP ON WATERWAYS

A presentation on the Crumlin Arm Corridor Study had been given to the quarterly meeting of the WAG Members' All Party Group on Waterways on 11th October 2005 by David Whetter.

Mr. Whetter highlighted the key issues raised in his presentation, copies of which had been sent to members of the working party.

Reference was made to the following:-

- Crumlin Arm – Local Context.
- Current use of the Crumlin Arm.
- The Council's Canal Policy Pre Corridor Study.
- The Canal Corridor Study.
- Aims of the Corridor Study.
- The Canal Corridor Study Restoration Strategy.
- Continuation of Works Completed to Date.
- Stage 2 – Navigation from Cwmcarn to Fourteen Locks.
- Stage 2 – Proposed Winding Hose at Cwmcarn - £390,000.
- Stage 2 - Restoration Example (Darran Road) Re-establishing Navigation - £5.75 m.
- Stage 2 – Restoration Example (Manor Road) Re-establishing Navigation - £1.90 m.
- Stage 3 – Adams Quarry Potential Marina & Leisure Development.
- Canal Corridor Catchment Populations.
- Regional Tourist Attractions – Visitor Numbers.
- Canal Development – Economic benefits.
- Public Consultation Exercise December 2004.

- Crumlin Arm – Local Context.
- Canal Development – Local Context.
- Cwmcarn Forest Drive 5-Year Action Plan.
- Risca and Pontymister Development Framework.
- Ebbw Valley Railway Passenger Services.
- Pontywaun Development Site.
- Local Context Conclusions.
- What's changed? What's ahead?
- External Funding Opportunities.

Members of the working group placed on record their thanks to Mr Whetter for the excellent presentation and discussion centred upon the following issues:-

- The aim to restore the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal network by 2020.
- External funding and development opportunities.
- Restoration works.
- Water supplies - including the accessibility of underground water supplies.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 29th November 2005 at 10.00 a.m.