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Date: 8th February 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal - Crumlin Arm Working Group** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 15th February, 2024 at 5.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

Members of the public or Press may attend in person at Penallta House or may view the meeting live via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

This meeting will be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the [Council's website](#).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy'.

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution, and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

- 3 Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal - Crumlin Arm Working Group held on 30th November 2023. 1 - 4
- 4 Update on Matters Relating to the Canal. 5 - 8
- 5 Update from Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust - (Verbal Update)

Circulation:

Councillors N. George, A. Leonard, P. Leonard, B. Owen, D.W.R. Preece, J. Simmonds, A. Whitcombe (Chair), K. Woodland and C. Wright

Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust – Rev. J. Collier and L. Gauntlett

Relevant Cabinet Member: C. Morgan

And Appropriate Officers

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MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL - CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2023 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Whitcombe – Chair

Ms L. Gauntlett (Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust) - Vice Chair

Councillors:

P. Leonard, A. Leonard, B. Owen, J. Simmonds, K. Woodland and C. Wright

Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces: Councillor C. Morgan

Representing Monmouthshire, Brecon, and Abergavenny Canals Trust –Reverend J. Collier (Chair of MFACT)

Officers: B. Smith (Regeneration Projects Officer) S. Stook (Principal Engineer), and J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING, FILMING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

All present were reminded that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded and would be made available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here to View](#). Members were advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N. George, D.W.R Preece together with G. Lewis (Principal Regeneration Projects Officer)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations received.

3. MINUTES – 22ND JUNE 2023.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal - Crumlin Arm Working Group held on 2nd March 2023 be approved as a correct record. By a

show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal - Crumlin Arm Working Group held on 22nd June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE CANAL

Sarah Stook (Principal Engineer) presented and summarised the report, which detailed the current and planned maintenance and any capital works planned for the remainder of this year. Details were provided on current funding availability and a general statement was provided outlining any current operational issues regarding the usage and the condition of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm.

Members of the working group noted that the budget details are included within the report include a capital budget of £181.7k and revenue budget of £205k, of which £107k and £145k remains respectively.

The Members thanked the Officer for the comprehensive report and the Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions.

In response to queries raised by a Member the Officer advised the working group that with regard to the revenue budget, there was an agreed reserve of £100k applied for the year, which would be lost if it is not used by the end of financial year. However, there is an ongoing list of works in relation to maintenance and keeping the canal in the best condition. Therefore, the Officer assured Members that every effort would be made to keep as much of the funding as possible to ensure the integrity of the canal. The Officer did confirm however, that there was a reserve allocation in the previous year that was used to make repairs to the Darren Culvert.

The Working Group noted that Caerphilly is the only Authority that receives an allocation for the Canal from the Capital Reserves Fund.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be noted.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report the working group noted the contents of the report and the updates provided.

5. UPDATE FROM MONMOUTHSHIRE, BRECON AND ABERGAVENNY CANAL TRUST – VERBAL

The Vice Chair Lindsey Gauntlet and Reverend Collier provided the Members with a brief verbal update on recent Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust developments.

Rev Collier advised the Working Group that the Water Way Recovery Group were due to carry out works at the section of canal at Pentre Lane, which is South of Cwmbran. However, the

work has been delayed due to an issue with Himalayan Balsam, which can only be removed in May.

The Rev Collier suggested setting up a Subgroup with Council employees and regeneration partners to share good practises and experiences to arrange a festival to promote the Crumlin Arm section of the canal.

The Working Group noted that there are aspirations to re start a canal group or waterway group cross party at the Senedd as soon as possible.

The Working Group were pleased to note that, there is an agreement to be signed with Torfaen Council, which will allow MBACT to work on the canal without restrictions.

The Vice Chair updated the Working Group on the progress at the Newport Section of the canal. The Working Group noted that Newport CC were in the process of recruiting a person to overlook the volunteering groups.

The Chair thanked the Vice Chair and Reverend Collier for the update.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance and contributions and the meeting closed at 5.30p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 15th February, 2024, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR

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MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL – CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP – 15 FEBRUARY 2024

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE CANAL

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Canal Working Group Members on all matters relating to the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 This report details the current and planned maintenance and any capital works planned for the forthcoming year. Details are provided on current funding availability and a general statement is provided outlining any current operational issues regarding the usage and the condition of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm.

2.2 Members of the working group are asked to note that ensuring the integrity of the canal channel and connecting culverts thus maintaining water flows and levels is the priority of the Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the working group note the contents of the report and the updates provided.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To provide members with an update of details of the current and planned maintenance and any capital works planned for the forthcoming year.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 MAINTENANCE UPDATE

5.1.1 Canal Channel

Weed cutting/channel maintenance for 2024 will be scheduled for the usual months - September/October. It shall be noted that following the smoother process of last year's weed removal – the additional supervision will again be applied to assist in the

successful management of the operation.

5.1.2 **Grass Maintenance**

The first cut of the season is due in March 2024 continuing onto a 3 to 4 weekly cycle with the final cut of the year in October 2024.

5.2. **2024/2025 WORKS PROGRAMME**

5.2.1 **Towpath**

There are no planned towpath works for 2024/2025 but CCBC in-house Contractor is currently on-site undertaking works to reinforce the canal embankment and reinstate edge of asphalt surfacing at Temperance Hill due to the damage caused by resident parking (Cllr. raised issue).

5.2.2 **Access Enhancement**

A service request was recently received alluding to a cycle barrier having been vandalised and/or removed at the Brynhyfryd area. Officers are reviewing and will arrange replacement if required – this review and subsequent replacement will continue for the length of the canal.

5.2.3 **Water Control**

The canal feed was switched off in October 2023 and is not due for reinstatement until March 2024. There have been no reported issues with respect to water levels over the last quarter.

Design and investigation work is ongoing with respect to abstraction licensing.

Drainage upgrade/improvement works at Henry Roberts Bridge has now been completed and appears to be working well.

Officers provided DCWW pollution prevention control officer with an array of dates through the month of January 2024 for a meeting on Manor Road Emergency Feed - unfortunately, no response was received. Further contact was attempted requesting DCWW provide dates for availability but again no acknowledgement to date.

5.2.4 **Dredging**

Dredging works at Fernlea remains a desire and will be scheduled for maintenance later in 2024/25 subject to available funding.

5.2.5 **Tree Maintenance**

Planned tree maintenance is progressing and being managed by the authority's Arboriculturalists. Reactive works to deal with tree falls is also ongoing.

5.2.6 **External Funding**

An allocation of £40k from the Shared Prosperity Fund has been awarded, available from April 2024. This award has been agreed to undertake investigation works and consultations at the head of the canal Pontywaun. No other external funding for use on the canal has been secured for 2024/25 however, officers within CCBC Planning and Regeneration Division continually seek opportunities where appropriate.

5.2.7 Channel Leak Repair

Phase 5 re-lining works (from Greenmeadow Bridge approximately 500m north) remains a priority for the council (subject to securing external funding).

A works cost estimate within the order of £250k has been prepared to attend to the leaking aqueduct but subject to available funding.

5.2.8 Emergency Works

No emergency works to report.

5.3. FUNDING

5.3.1 Capital

Officers recently received an update on the capital budget allocation for 2023/24 where there seems to have been an error in the original information provided. The actual capital budget allocation for 2023/24 was £173.7k and not the £181.7k originally reported. Considering this update, the remaining capital budget for 2023/24 is circa £40k. This year's allocation was utilised to re-install Halls Road Terrace Slip Way and Henry Robert's Bridge canal drainage upgrades. It is anticipated that this remaining capital budget be carried forward to 2024/25 to supplement the forthcoming capital allocation of £200k, totalling approximately £240k – the desire of which, would be to utilise this for sealing of the aqueduct subject to updated costs and available funding.

5.3.2 Revenue

The budget allocation for 2023/24 was £105k with an allocation of £100k from agreed reserves, totalling £205k for the current year, of which to date, circa £95k remains. CCBC in-house contractor continues to work on site on miscellaneous maintenance items as per list communicated to members and colleagues a few months ago. Officers are able to provide an update on this upon request – associated costs for these additional maintenance items would also come from the remaining revenue budget.

5.4. BOATS

The Trust are in receipt of the licensing regimes but no further updates with respect to boats since the last working group meeting.

Prior to the boats relaunch, it has been agreed that an officer from Engineering and Parks Departments undertake a joint walkover from the Darran to Pontywaun. This is to ensure there are no broken branches obstructing the water in the canal channel.

5.5 Conclusion

A full programme of works for the coming year is being developed subject to considerations relating to the aqueduct and subject to available funding from the Capital and Revenue budgets together with potential external funding to achieve objectives.

It should be noted however, that reactive/emergency works will be undertaken and take precedence over planned works with respect to time and budget.

Note: CCBC's 5-year Canal Management Plan will soon be reviewed/updated to record any works undertaken and any priority changes. Copies will be forwarded for consultation as required.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made regarding the information contained in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Report is for information only.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The budget details are included in section 5.3 above and include a capital budget of £173.7k and revenue budget of £205k, of which £40k and £95k remains respectively.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 Consultation as below for information only.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 No requirements in this respect, information only.

Author: Sarah Stook, Principal Engineer, stooksj@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street – Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S Williams – Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Marcus Lloyd – Head of Infrastructure
Rob Tranter – Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Stephen Harris – Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Rob Hartshorn – Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Rhian Kyte – Head of Regeneration and Planning