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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Rebecca Barrett  
(Tel: 01443 864245 Email: [barrem@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:barrem@caerphilly.gov.uk))

**Date: 19th July 2022**

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 **Monday, 25th July, 2022 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 'Christina Harrhy'.

**Christina Harrhy**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## AGENDA

	Pages
1 To appoint a Chair for the ensuing year.	

A greener place Man gwyrddach



Correspondence may be in any language or format | Gallwch ohebu mewn unrhyw iaith neu fformat

2 To appoint a Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

3 To receive apologies for absence.

4 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: -

- 5 Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal - Crumlin Arm Working Group held on 27th February 2020. 1 - 6
- 6 Update on Matters Relating to the Canal. 7 - 10
- 7 Update from Mr Richard Dommett - MBACT (verbal update).

**Circulation:**

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

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

Relevant Cabinet Member

And Appropriate Officers

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## **MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL - CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON  
THURSDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2020 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Whitcombe - Chair

Mr R. Dommett (Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust) - Vice Chair

Councillors:

M. Davies, A. Hussey, L. Jeremiah, G. Johnston, B. Owen, D.W.R. Preece, J. Simmonds,  
C. Thomas, R. Whiting

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services - Councillor N. George

Together with:

K. Kinsey (Principal Engineer), A. Bolter (Visitor Economy and Destinations Manager), E.  
Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs A. Leonard and Ms P. Leonard,  
together with Mr B. Illman (Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust).

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course  
of the meeting.

### **3. MINUTES – 7TH NOVEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2019 were approved as a correct  
record.

### **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

#### 4. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL – CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP**

The Chair gave a warm welcome to Emma Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer), who presented a report reviewing the current membership of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group and set out various options by consideration by the Canal Group. Members were asked to note that any changes would need to be considered and approved by Council at its Annual Meeting.

The Senior Committee Services Officer outlined the 4 options for consideration as set out in the report recommendations:-

**Option 1** - Membership of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group remain unchanged with full representation from all wards adjoining the canal:

Abercarn (2), Crosskeys (1), Crumlin (2), Newbridge (3), Risca East (3) and Risca West (2) including the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services giving a committee membership of 13.

**Option 2** - The Working Group be comprised of 1 Member + 1 nominated substitute from each of the wards adjoining the canal plus the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services:

Abercarn (1), Crosskeys (1), Crumlin (1), Newbridge (1), Risca East (1) and Risca West (1) – giving a committee membership of 7.

**Option 3** - The Working Group be comprised of full ward representation from those wards that have accessible connectivity to the canal plus 1 representative + 1 nominated substitute from each of the remaining adjoining wards (Crumlin, Abercarn and Newbridge) and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services.

Abercarn (1), Crosskeys (1), Crumlin (1), Newbridge (1), Risca East (3) and Risca West (2) – giving a committee membership of 10.

**Option 4** - The Working Group be comprised of full representation from all wards apart from the Newbridge ward who would be invited to attend as and when such matters of interest to the ward arise, plus the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services.

Abercarn (2), Crosskeys (1), Crumlin (2), Risca East (3) and Risca West (2) – giving a committee membership of 11.

It was highlighted to Members that the position of Cabinet Member has been left separate as Councillor Nigel George is both the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services and a representative of the Canal Group as a Ward Member for Risca East. However, this might not always be the case and in order to ensure continuity of representation it was recommended that the Cabinet Member place be in addition to the representatives for each ward.

The Canal Group considered the options set out in the report and a Newbridge Ward Member moved Option 4, stating that he felt this to be a fair choice, given that the existing stretch of the Canal does not extend as far as Newbridge and the Canal Group covers matters that bear little or no relevance to the Newbridge Ward. A Crumlin Ward Member agreed with the Newbridge Member and also queried the relevance of his representation on the Canal Group. The Chair reminded the Canal Group that Option 4 includes full representation from the Crumlin Ward. Option 4 was then seconded.

The other Crumlin Ward Member stated that he would wish to remain as a representative of the Canal Group.

The Senior Committee Services Officer suggested that a solution for the Canal Group could be to amend Option 4 to comprise full representation from all wards with connectivity to the canal (Abercarn, Crosskeys, Risca East and Risca West), Newbridge being invited to attend as and when required, and Crumlin having 1 representative and 1 nominated substitute on the Canal Group, plus the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services.

The first Crumlin Ward Member stated that he would be happy to attend as a substitute for his ward colleague who wished to remain on the Canal Group. Members indicated their agreement for the suggested amendment to Option 4 and Mrs Sullivan confirmed that she would highlight these changes to the membership list for approval at Council AGM.

Having moved and seconded Option 4, this was put to the vote with the inclusion of the suggested amendment, and by a show of hands was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Council that membership of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group be amended to comprise full representation from all wards with connectivity to the canal (Abercarn, Crosskeys, Risca East and Risca West), Newbridge being invited to attend as and when required, and Crumlin having 1 representative and 1 nominated substitute on the Canal Group, plus the Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services.

The Chair thanked the Senior Committee Services Officer for taking the time to attend the meeting and present the report. Mrs Sullivan then left the meeting.

## 5. UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE CANAL

Kevin Kinsey (Principal Engineer) presented a verbal update on matters relating to the Canal and responded to queries from the Group in turn.

### Maintenance Update

**Canal Channel** - Members were advised that channel clearance has taken place to remove debris and weeds from the Canal.

**Grass Maintenance** – Grass cutting will commence in March and will include the amended cutting regime going forward across the length of the Canal to promote wildlife bio-diversity.

### 2019/2020 Works Programme

**Channel Leak Repair** – work is ongoing regarding the water loss at the Pontywaun aqueduct. External consultants are undertaken geophysical survey of the ground surrounding the aqueduct and examining the history of the towpath. So far they believe there to be a multitude of holes in the aqueduct area which are contributing to the water loss but will map these out for the Council's Engineering department, who will then plan for works in aqueduct perimeter to address these issues.

The Canal Group were also advised of an emergency towpath closure on the grounds of public safety which had begun on 25th February and will remain in effect until further

notice. The closure is located between the Halls Road and Greenmeadow Bridge (The Deeps) section of towpath and is due to a reported leak which on investigation had partially undermined the towpath, causing a void of unknown size. Officers attended the site and undertook a repair to the canal channel which has stopped the leak, but are unable to reinstate the void under the towpath at this time due to operational constraints. Further investigation will be progressed at the earliest opportunity to enable a repair to be made and the towpath re-opened.

**Water Control** – Officers have inspected water levels in view of the recent Storm Dennis events but there have been no direct flooding incidents across the Canal. Concerns had been raised about the section of open concrete channel that the Dragons Teeth overflow discharges into, in terms of blockages due to accumulated debris. This channel is not on canal land but was inspected immediately after the storm and cleaned by CCBC operatives to ensure continued public safety.

**Tree Maintenance** – there were very few instances of tree fall along the Canal during Storm Dennis and this is testament to the tree maintenance works that were carried out last year.

### **Funding**

**External Funding** – It was noted that the spend date for Adventure Triangle funding has been extended to May 2020.

**Capital** - A capital budget allocation for 2019/20 is £212k plus the £361k carry over from 2018/19, giving a total budget of £573k. Tendering for Phases 3 and 4 of works has been delayed and is anticipated to begin in March 2020. The length of Canal to be addressed in these phases will extend from the downstream terminus of Phase 1 down to the Pontywaun overbridge and include The Deeps and Greenmeadow Bridge.

### **Boats**

Mr Kinsey explained that following the previous meeting of the Canal Group, where he was asked about Council membership on the board of the Islwyn Canal Association, he had attempted to contact Mr Wysom but had no success to date. The ICA's leisure boat (The Islwyn Lily) remains moored at Whysom's Wharf and has been stationary for some time.

The Canal Group were also advised that the Canal Management Plan is currently being updated and will be brought to a future meeting of the Group once completed.

A Member referred to enquiries around the funding balance for the Cwmcarn Memorial Cottage Hospital Fund, which had been set up to assist survivors of the Flannel Factory disaster in 1875. The Chair explained that he had received confirmation through the Council's Acting Section 151 Officer that there is almost £7000 remaining in the fund, and that Mr Kinsey and his colleagues are currently looking at spending scenarios which will benefit the area.

Mr Kinsey also responded to queries around water control during the recent storms, and in response to a query on the overflow at the Deeps explained that this operates when the canal level rises above normal operational levels, as it did during the recent storm. A Member also referred to recent flooding events in Risca and sought assurance that this was not related to the Canal. Mr Kinsey confirmed that there had been no instances of overtopping in this area and that the Canal water feeds at Pontywaun and Manor Road were both turned off and as such caused no issues during the recent storms. Although there has been some flooding issues in the area, these are unrelated to the Canal.

The Chair thanked Mr Kinsey for his presentation and for responding to the queries raised, and asked that the thanks of the Canal Group be conveyed to the Engineering department for all the recent work they had carried out, particularly in view of all the extra work arising from Storm Dennis.

The Canal Group noted the details of the update from Mr Kinsey.

## **6. UPDATE FROM MR RICHARD DOMMETT - MBACT**

Mr Dommatt (MBACT) provided a verbal update on recent MBACT developments and matters relating to the Canal.

The Canal Group were advised that the Monmouthshire and Brecon Joint Steering Group are due to resume their meetings shortly, with a meeting being held between Officers from the Group and Monmouthshire Council on 12th March 2020, together with representatives from the Canal and River Trust, to discuss the way forward. Arising from this, Mr Dommatt will contact local authorities (including Caerphilly Council) to seek confirmation of outside body representatives to the Monmouthshire and Brecon Joint Steering Group.

Members were also advised that the Memorandum of Understanding for the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Regeneration Partnership Scheme will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Joint Steering Group and will then be circulated to the Canal Group for comments.

Mr Dommatt also referred to the Adventure Triangle works being carried out at Sebastopol in Pontypool and should be completed within the agreed timescale. These include a canal-side sanitary station and electrical hookup. In addition, MBACT's new Community Boat being sited at Goytre Wharf is currently undergoing final preparations and is awaiting a licence from the Islwyn Canal Association to carry up to 30 passengers, and should then be fully operational.

In conclusion, Mr Dommatt referred to MBACT's busy workload arising from the events of Storm Dennis but explained that no serious overtopping of the Canal had been experienced in the area.

The Canal Group thanked Mr Dommatt and noted his verbal update.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance and contributions and the meeting closed at 5.33 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2022, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR

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## MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL – CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP – 25TH JULY 2022

**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 given 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 It is acknowledged that ensuring the integrity of the canal channel and connecting culverts thus maintaining water flows and levels is the first priority of the council.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

### 4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 For information only.

### 5. THE REPORT

#### 5.1 MAINTENANCE UPDATE

##### 5.1.1 Canal Channel

Weed cutting/channel maintenance for 2022 is planned for September/October following ecology checks by CCBC Principal Ecologist.

##### 5.1.2 Grass Maintenance

The first cut of the season was undertaken in March and then on a 3 to 4 weekly

cycle up until the final cut planned for September/October 2022. The amended cutting regime has been maintained throughout the canal.

## **5.2. 2022/2023 WORKS PROGRAMME**

### **5.2.1 Towpath**

Patch repairs are required to the asphalt surface within the towpath section that forms part of the adopted highway on Temperance Hill. These have been raised with the highway department.

### **5.2.2 Access Enhancement**

All lockable access barriers (7 in total) have been reviewed for integrity and new locking mechanisms have been installed. This was a consequence of some of the existing ones being damaged and/or missing.

### **5.2.3 Water Control**

The culverted section linking the Deeps with Temperance Hill (Darren Road) was cleansed in May 2022 and later CCTV surveyed in June 2022. The survey footage indicated that there is an approximate length of 30m with an associated chamber mid-way that has settled considerably. The settlement has resulted in the loss of around 70% of the pipes cross sectional area. A funding bid is being submitted to cover the cost of repairs.

A contractor has also been commissioned to install a trash screen at the inlet pipe which is due for completion within the coming weeks.

It is acknowledged that ensuring the integrity of the canal channel together with the maintenance of the culverts and water levels is the priority of the council – There will be a review of the canals priorities based upon recent inspections and discussions and the programme for the next phases of relining may potentially be altered subject to funding. We are also aware of the desire to remove silt accumulation and install sections of reinforced concrete channel and associated silt traps at the two locations of uncontrolled streams either side of Greenmeadow Bridge together with an area at Medart Place. This is required to allow canal usage and to alleviate the influx of silt and congestion of water. The build-up of silt is a natural ongoing occurrence and it is recognised that an ongoing revenue maintenance commitment needs to be in place.

### **5.2.4 Dredging**

Any potential dredging programmed for 2022 would be localised due to the works associated with the installation of concrete channel sections and associated silt traps at the 2no. uncontrolled streams upstream and downstream of Greenmeadow Bridge and at Medart Place (Dragon's Teeth) (subject to securing external funding). It is also proposed to clear some of the high spots of silt within the canal invert north of Greenmeadow Bridge for approximately 500m (Phase 5) – subject to available revenue budget.

### **5.2.5 Tree Maintenance**

Due to the ash dieback within Wales an extensive tree survey and the subsequent development of maintenance regime has been commissioned and is due for commencement end of July/August 2022. This is likely to take a considerable amount of budget but is required for the continued safety of the canal and users. Reactive works to tree falls will also be ongoing.

## 5.2.6 External Funding

Officers within CCBC's Infrastructure Division have bid for funding in the amount of £100k to attend to the settlement failure in Darren Road culvert. No update available at present in this respect.

Officers within CCBC's Regeneration and Planning Division have been working on the bid for funding related to the Levelling Up Cwmcarn Tourist Legacy Project Proposal. On this occasion however, there was very little opportunity to bid for funding for the canal due to there being no direct link with the Cwmcarn Forest site. Officer's within CCBC Regeneration and Planning Division will explore potential available funding streams to attend to the installation of reinforced concrete channel sections and associated silt traps however, it should be noted that this is desirable and the integrity of the canal, associated elements and water level are priority.

## 5.2.7 Channel Leak Repair

Following Storm Dennis, the canal bank suffered a breach. This breach was isolated and repaired under reactive emergency works. The breach occurred in the section that was later named Phase 5 (from Greenmeadow Bridge approximately 500m north). Phase 5 relining will also now be a priority for CCBC to prevent future breaches of the canal.

An option has now been selected to attend to the leaking aqueduct. The option consists of slow grouting through the face of the structure at suitable centres. Listed Building Consent is required for these works and has unfortunately not progressed due to the pandemic together with operational and budget demands.

## 5.2.8 Emergency Works

The breach within the section north of Greenmeadow Bridge was repaired under reactive emergency works and has presented no further issues to date.

## 5.3. FUNDING

### 5.3.1 Capital

The capital budget allocation for 2022/23 is £200k. Officers are reviewing costs with respect to how much of this allocation remains as it is partly required to cover residual costs outstanding on the recently completed contract works Phases 3 and 4 Pontywaun down to the Deeps.

### 5.3.2 Revenue

The budget allocation for 2022/23 was £100k. Officers are reviewing remaining available budget, but the revenue fund is used to make isolated repairs/refurbishment to miscellaneous elements of the canal. The most recent works that have been issued is the replacement of fencing (approximately 30m in length) at Constant Row and the upgrade of the stepped access linking the towpath with Medart Street. There are also some patch repairs required to the asphalt surface within the towpath section that forms part of the adopted highway on Temperance Hill. Reactive works to tree falls and grass cutting regimes are also ongoing.

## 5.4. BOATS

5.4.1 Due to recent communications from Cabinet Members and potential business proposals, CCBC's Licensing Department has been commissioned to prepare a new

fee setting regime that covers minor craft such as canoes/kayaks/paddleboards and small rowing boats. This work is ongoing and when available will be presented to Scrutiny Committee and the Canal Working Group for comment/approval.

As discussed in Section 5.2.3 and subject to the Working Group's approval CCBC's Engineering Projects Group would be amenable to commencing design works associated with the installation of silt traps to facilitate the relaunch of the trip boat moored at Whysom's Wharf. This may be undertaken in conjunction with the Waterways Recovery Group. As previously noted, this work depends on available funding as repairs to the Darren Culvert and the integrity of the canal are the priority.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

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

Note: CCBC's 5-year Canal Management Plan will soon be reviewed/updated as the priorities change.

## **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 There are no financial implications.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 There is no requirement to undertake consultation given the nature of this report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 No requirements in this respect, information only.

Author: Sarah Stook, Principal Engineer, [stooksj@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:stooksj@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees: None