



MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL - CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
THURSDAY 21ST JUNE 2018 AT 5.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillors:

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

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services - Councillor N. George

Together with:

Mr R. Dommett (Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust), K. Kinsey (Acting
Engineering Projects Group Manager), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

In his absence, Councillor Andrew Whitcombe was unanimously appointed Chair of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal - Crumlin Arm Working Group for the ensuing year.

Mr Richard Dommett (Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust) was unanimously appointed Vice-Chair of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal - Crumlin Arm Working Group for the ensuing year.

In the absence of Councillor Whitcombe, Mr Dommett presided as Chair for this meeting.

It was also noted that the Canal Group has now moved to the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services (Councillor Nigel George).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. **MINUTES - 8TH FEBRUARY 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2018 were approved as a correct record.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

5. **MAINTENANCE UPDATE**

Kevin Kinsey (Acting Engineering Projects Group Manager) presented a verbal update on matters relating to the Canal and responded to queries from the Group in turn.

Canal Channel – weed clearance will be undertaken by the specialist contractor during September/October 2018 and will be closely monitored by Officers from Ecology and the Engineering Projects Group in view of the accidental fish kill incident which occurred in October 2015.

Grass Maintenance - cutting is progressing to the agreed regime and includes the amended cutting patterns along the Manor Road section. This appears to be working well and a balance between ecological and access considerations seems to have been achieved. A Member queried if would be feasible to extend the amended cut to other areas of the Canal and Mr Kinsey confirmed that this could be examined if the Group wished to explore this option.

6. **2018/2019 WORKS PROGRAMME**

Towpath – General maintenance will be undertaken. Repair work was carried out in March and April 2018 to some paved areas of the towpath.

Access Enhancement - general maintenance to paved surfaced areas in the form of weed clearance and power washing is being carried out. A Member sought an update in respect of remedial works to the car park at Pontywaun Spiritual Church on Halls Road (adjacent to the Canal) and Mr Kinsey confirmed that he would make some enquiries in this regard.

Water Control - No works are planned for this year. It was confirmed that all water control valves have been turned on and that water levels are due to be inspected shortly. Discussion took place regarding a recent drop in levels and it was confirmed that this was due to a tampered feed which has now been rectified.

Dredging – Silt bar removal has been planned along the length of the Canal which will allow for boat navigation to be resumed.

Tree Maintenance - Tree maintenance has been undertaken to deal with low lying branches obstructing passage along the canal channel, and trim back those trees identified in the February 2017 survey. In response to a Member's query, it was confirmed that this has been carried out at a cost of £35k and that all areas identified in the survey have been addressed.

External Funding – It was noted that an announcement is due in July on EU funding for the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle project and it is hoped that this will bring positive news for the Canal. A Member queried whether there would be any investment at the Manor Road (Risca) section of the Canal if this funding is successful and Officers confirmed that this avenue would be explored, together with the potential restoration of a lock structure uncovered at Pontywaun.

Channel Leak Repair - Phase 3 relining works are being designed at present and will be tendered in due course. The length of Canal to be addressed in this phase will extend from the downstream terminus of Phase 1 down to the Pontywaun overbridge.

Emergency Works - There have been no defects requiring emergency action identified during this period. It was noted that generally across 2017/18 there were very few instances of reactive maintenance required to repair emergency leaks.

7. FUNDING

A capital budget allocation for 2018/19 is anticipated to be confirmed as £212k plus the £149k carry over from 2017/18, giving a total budget of £361k. This funding will be used to complete the Phase 3 channel lining works at Pontywaun.

The budget for 2018/19 was £105k and current spend commitments should see this spent in full.

8. BOATS

There was no news to report in this respect.

Mr Kinsey was thanked for his update and for responding to Members' queries during the course of his presentation.

9. UPDATE FROM MR RICHARD DOMMETT - MBACT

Members were advised that the Ty Coch Waterway Park Feasibility study has been completed and that the consultants have established its potential. The project will now move on to the next stage. Mr Dommett confirmed that he had been provided with a report on the study findings and would arrange for this to be circulated to the Canal Group following the meeting.

It was noted that the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership's Memorandum of Understanding is currently being reviewed. Comments will be fed back to the next meeting of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Joint Steering Group on 19th July 2018 which is being held at the Winding House in New Tredegar.

Members were advised that MBACT will have a presence at this year's Pontypool Party in the Park on Saturday 14th July 2018. The Canal Group were also encouraged to attend MBACT's Annual Duck Race event, which is being held at Llangynidr, Crickhowell, on August Bank Holiday Monday (27th August 2018).

Discussion took place regarding a plot of land for sale in Crosskeys that is in the vicinity of the Canal, and it was suggested that Officers make enquiries to ensure that future maintenance access to one of the Canal locks can be retained.

In closing, it was noted that the next meeting of the Canal Group will be held on Thursday 18th October 2018 and will be preceded by annual refresher training for the Group Members.

The meeting closed at 5.35 p.m.