



MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL - CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON
THURSDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2018 AT 5.30 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, Mrs A. Leonard, Ms P. Leonard, B. Owen, D.W.R. Preece,
J. Simmonds, C. Thomas, R. Whiting

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services - Councillor N. George

Together with:

W. Birrell (Acting Team Leader), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G. Johnston, Mr B. Illman (Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust) and K. Kinsey (Acting Engineering Projects Group Manager).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 21ST JUNE 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2018 were approved as a correct record.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Will Birrell (Acting Team Leader) presented a verbal update on matters relating to the Canal and responded to queries from the Group in turn.

Canal Channel - weed clearance/channel maintenance commenced in October 2018 along the entire length of the Canal and will be closely monitored by Officers.

Grass Maintenance - the last cut of the season was recently completed. The cutting pattern during this visit was extended down to the water's edge and any self-seeded samplings were removed at the same time from the Canal bank.

5. 2018/2019 WORKS PROGRAMME

Towpath - all paved areas along the canal towpath were jet washed, weeds were removed and a weed killer applied. This work was undertaken in March 2018.

Access Enhancement - All existing street furniture and fencing was painted in March 2018. Existing hoop barriers where damaged or missing were replaced. The replacement barriers now have an integral lock which is less prone to vandalism, and all missing locks on the various gate access points have been replaced.

Water Control - No works are planned for the remainder of this financial year.

Dredging - No works are planned for the remainder of this financial year.

Tree Maintenance - Extensive tree maintenance works are currently ongoing, which has been made necessary by the discovery of Ash Dieback over the full length of the canal. This is likely to have a significant impact on the wooded fringes of the canal. A Member asked if there are any plans to plant replacement trees and Mr Birrell confirmed that he would make some enquiries in this regard.

External Funding - Officers within CCBC's Regeneration and Planning Division as part of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle bid have successfully secured funding to the value of £678,571.00. All works associated with this funding are to be completed by December 2020 and Officers are currently looking at priorities in this respect.

Mr Richard Dommert (Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canal Trust) outlined the history of the Adventure Triangle project and the schemes that have been proposed over the years. The basis of the project is to develop outdoor recreation, leisure and tourism activity at key Canal points, including Pontymoile, South Sebastopol and 5 Locks Canal Basins, towpath improvements at Ty Coch and improved adventure tourism routes across Mynydd Maen linking to Cwmcarn Forest Drive, Blaen Bran and Greenmeadow Community Farm. It was noted that there has been no further progression since the funding was secured but that Torfaen Council has recently advertised for a Senior Project Implementation Officer to play a key role in the delivery of the project.

Channel Leak Repair - The third phase of works is being designed at present and will be tendered in early in the New Year. The length of Canal to be addressed in this phase will extend from the downstream terminus of Phase 1 down to the Pontywaun overbridge. There is currently an issue with water loss at the Pontywaun aqueduct, and Mr Birrell explained that the water at the canal feed has now been turned off to monitor the drop in levels and identify where the leak is coming from.

In response to a Member's query, it was confirmed that the third phase of works will proceed in conjunction with identification of the leak. A Member asked if the recent adverse weather

had contributed to the leak, and it was explained that the leak could possibly be due to water getting into the canal structure at the aquaduct or a failing in the new infrastructure. Officers will investigate in stages in order to identify the cause. The Canal Group discussed whether there could be an opportunity to seek recourse with the aqueduct contractor if the leak has been caused by the regeneration works, and noted that the investigation work will need to be completed in the first instance.

Emergency Works - There have been no defects requiring emergency action identified during this period.

6. FUNDING

Capital - 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.

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

7. BOATS

There was no update to report in this respect.

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

8. UPDATE FROM MR RICHARD DOMMETT - MBACK

Mr Domett provided an update on developments in respect of the Canal, and explained that budget savings considerations for Torfaen Council have led to reductions in the events department and programme for 2019, which may have an impact on the promotion of the Canal moving forward.

The Canal Group were advised that Mr Domett had recently submitted two "Call for Candidate Sites" applications to Torfaen Council for inclusion in their Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033. The applications referred to the Ty Coch Employment Site and Waterway Corridor through Torfaen CBC, and outlined their significance for inclusion in planning policy. Copies of the forms were tabled at the meeting for Members' information.

Mr Domett also explained that the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Joint Steering Group had been due to meet earlier that day but that there had been a need to postpone the meeting. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership's Memorandum of Understanding is undergoing review and will be considered by the Steering Group in due course.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance and contributions and the meeting closed at 5.49 p.m.

The next meeting of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm Working Group will be held on Thursday 28th February 2019.