



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

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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

Consultees: None