



MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL – CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP – 2ND MARCH 2023

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 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 2023 will be scheduled for the usual months - September/October. It shall be noted that for this year's weed maintenance, additional supervision will be included to ensure there is no material left obstructing the towpath causing a hazard to users. This additional element will be included due to issues in this respect being observed and raised in last year's weed cutting operations.

5.1.2 **Grass Maintenance**

The first cut of the season will be undertaken this month (March) and then on a 3 to 4 weekly cycle up until the final cut planned for September/October 2023. The amended cutting regime has been maintained throughout the canal corridor. With specific reference to Temperance Hill section, a request has been made to Parks Department that advance notice of their attendance is provided. This is in order residents may remove personal vehicles from the verge areas for the team to have unobstructed access.

5.2. **2023/2024 WORKS PROGRAMME**

5.2.1 **Towpath**

The scheduled patch repairs to the asphalt surface within the towpath section that forms part of the adopted highway on Temperance Hill was completed October 2022. There are no further planned towpath works for 2023/2024.

5.2.2 **Access Enhancement**

A query previously raised by Cllr. George with respect to an alternate locking mechanism accessible to those with disabilities was queried with the relevant department but unfortunately seemed to be beyond the realms of their experience/capacity. Consequently, this was not progressed at the time. If there is an ongoing issue however, officers are open to further investigation on options for this. It shall be noted that the Parks Team have been reminded to ensure the timely locking of gates following the grass cutting cycles.

5.2.3 **Water Control**

Under the recommendation of a former member of MBACT Mr R. Dommett, a suitable trash screen at the inlet pipe of The Darran culvert was fabricated and installed August 2022.

The culverted section linking the Darran with Temperance Hill has now been reinstated and has been operational from mid-February 2023. During the course of the repair works officers made the decision to install a penstock valve in one of the new chambers. The intention of which is to help control/maintain water levels at the downstream section given the entire area is generally affected by mining subsidence.

5.2.4 **Dredging**

Localised dredging works at the three known problem areas currently stifling the potential relaunch of the trip boat at Wysom Wharf commenced on site end of February 2023 and will last for a period of 4 weeks. It is anticipated that in future years the de-silting of these areas will become less onerous as regular visits (either annually or bi-annually subject to ongoing monitoring by officers) will be made together with potential channel/silt trap improvements (subject to securing external funding).

A fourth location (Fernlea) has been identified for de-silting and will be scheduled within the coming months. Unfortunately, officers were unable to include Fernlea within the recent de-silting works due to the footpath number having a different one to that covered by the existing closure currently live on the site.

5.2.5 Tree Maintenance

An extensive tree survey of the full canal corridor was completed by October 2022 and planned tree maintenance with respect to high priorities has been undertaken within the given timeframes of the works orders. Reactive works to tree falls is also ongoing.

5.2.6 External Funding

Funding was secured to attend to the repairs of the Darran Culvert and has been utilised in this respect.

Officers within CCBC Regeneration and Planning Division have identified an opportunity for funding to aid design works for potential improvements to the head of the canal at Pontywaun. No commission received yet but anticipated within the new financial year.

5.2.7 Channel Leak Repair

Phase 5 (covering the area in which the previous breach occurred as a direct result of Storm Dennis) re-lining works (from Greenmeadow Bridge approximately 500m north remains a priority for the council (subject to securing funding).

Another area has since been identified for priority lining is the Gelli Avenue to Thistleway Section (subject to available funding).

It is anticipated that the leaking aqueduct may be attended to as design works progress for potential improvements to the head of the canal at Pontywaun.

5.2.8 Emergency Works

No emergency works to report.

5.3. FUNDING

5.3.1 Capital

The capital budget allocation for 2023/24 has been largely utilised to cover residual costs outstanding on the last contracted major relining works that were completed (Phases 3 and 4 Pontywaun down to the Deeps)

5.3.2 Revenue

The budget allocation for 2022/23 was £100k with an allocation from reserves should the funding for repairs to the Darran not come into fruition. 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 a damaged bench just downstream of Manor Road together with repairs to the knee rail fencing at the slipway. There are also some miscellaneous fence repair works throughout the canal corridor. Reactive works to tree falls and grass/weed cutting regimes are also ongoing.

5.4. BOATS

5.4.1 Other than the de-silting works north of the Darran to facilitate the relaunch of the trip boat, there are no other updates with respect to licensing.

Whilst it has previously been confirmed and documented that the slip way at Halls Road Terrace would be re-instated in the future, MBACT has proposed that the Inland Waterways Recovery Group attend to this as a stand-alone piece of work to be completed sooner rather than that programmed by the council. MBACT have further proposed to arrange and fund the accommodation element for the Volunteers. Officers are grateful for this proposal of support from MBACT and the Group and will review/discuss further with respect to a suitable design for it subject to Capital funding being available. Officers will keep interested parties updated as this progresses.

5.5 Conclusion

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

It shall 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 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 Consultation as below for information only.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 No requirements in this respect, information only.

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