



**MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL –
CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP –
22ND JUNE 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 provided 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 Members of the working group are asked to note that ensuring the integrity of the canal channel and connecting culverts thus maintaining water flows and levels is the priority of the Authority.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the working group note the contents of the report and the updates provided.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To provide members with an update of details of the current and planned maintenance and any capital works planned for the forthcoming year.

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 should 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.

A contractor has been commissioned (due on site end of May 2023) to cleanse the Aqueduct and temporary bund section at the secondary feed at Pontywaun of all vegetation and detritus that has accumulated over the past several months. Isolated repairs to the cladding panel partially fixed to the reinforced concrete retaining wall has also been included.

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 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

There are no planned towpath works for 2023/2024.

5.2.2 Access Enhancement

There are no planned access maintenance works for 2023/24.

5.2.3 Water Control

Since the repair of the Darran Culvert water levels have improved within the southern reaches of the canal and remained satisfactory.

Initial enquiries have been made to cleanse and inspect all culverted sections along the canal. This can be progressed subject to available resources and budget; however, it should be noted that there are no known issues with the flow of water through the culverted sections and as such this is not deemed as urgent.

Officers in Infrastructure have been advised that a new DCWW pollution prevention control officer will shortly be in contact to work with the authority to resolve the misconnections to the culvert at Manor Road.

5.2.4 Dredging

Dredging works at the three known problem areas north of the Darran were completed early April 2023. The Contractor also attended to localised high spots of silt north of Greenmeadow Bridge by general reprofiling using the arm and bucket of the machine.

The fourth location (Fernlea) will be scheduled for maintenance later in 2023/24 subject to available funding.

5.2.5 Tree Maintenance

Planned tree maintenance is progressing and being managed by the authority's Arboriculturalists. Reactive works to deal with tree falls is also ongoing.

5.2.6 External Funding

An opportunity for external funding titled the Biffa Award Partnership Grants Scheme was presented to officers in Infrastructure however, following scrutiny of the conditions for project eligibility it became apparent that it would not have been a viable option for the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal Crumlin Arm.

No other external funding for use on the canal has been secured for 2023/24 however, officers within CCBC Planning and Regeneration Division continually seek opportunities where appropriate.

5.2.7 Channel Leak Repair

Phase 5 re-lining works (from Greenmeadow Bridge approximately 500m north) remains a priority for the council (subject to securing external funding).

Investigations around the Strathaven overflow (within the Thistle Way to Manor Road Section) found some defects associated with the concrete overflow structure. These were repaired and officers will continue to monitor during adverse weather conditions.

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 (subject to the anticipated design works commission from the Planning and Regeneration Team)

5.2.8 Emergency Works

No emergency works to report.

5.3. FUNDING

5.3.1 Capital

The capital budget allocation for 2023/24 is now confirmed as £181.7k.

5.3.2 Revenue

The budget allocation for 2023/24 is £105k with an allocation of £100k from agreed reserves, totalling £205k for the current year.

5.4. BOATS

A meeting was held between CCBC Engineering Projects Group (EPG), the Canal Trust, and the volunteers of the Inland Waterways Recovery Group to discuss the reinstatement of the slipway at Halls Road Terrace. However, the slipway reinstatement sits more appropriately (in this case) with an external contractor. Officers in EPG can look for other opportunities for the volunteers and thank all that attended for the time and advice. The details for the slipway reinstatement are currently with a Contractor for pricing.

Licensing Department were updated early March 2023 on the dredging and planned reinstatement to the slipway at Halls Road Terrace, there are no other updates with respect to licensing.

Prior to the boats relaunch, it has been agreed that an officer from Engineering and Parks Departments undertake a joint walkover from the Darran to Pontywaun. This is to ensure there are no broken branches obstructing the water in the canal channel.

5.5 Conclusion

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

It should 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 to record any works undertaken and any priority changes. Copies will be forwarded for consultation as required.

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 The budget details are included in section 5.3 above and include a capital budget of £181.7k and revenue budget of £205k.

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.

Author: Sarah Stook, Principal Engineer, stooksj@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Christina Harray – Chief Executive
Mark S Williams – Director
Marcus Lloyd – Head of Infrastructure and Waste Management
Rob Tranter – Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Stephen Harris – Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Rob Hartshorn – Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Rhian Kyte – Head of Regeneration and Planning