



MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL – CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP – 15 FEBRUARY 2024

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 Council.

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 2024 will be scheduled for the usual months - September/October. It shall be noted that following the smoother process of last year's weed removal – the additional supervision will again be applied to assist in the

successful management of the operation.

5.1.2 **Grass Maintenance**

The first cut of the season is due in March 2024 continuing onto a 3 to 4 weekly cycle with the final cut of the year in October 2024.

5.2. **2024/2025 WORKS PROGRAMME**

5.2.1 **Towpath**

There are no planned towpath works for 2024/2025 but CCBC in-house Contractor is currently on-site undertaking works to reinforce the canal embankment and reinstate edge of asphalt surfacing at Temperance Hill due to the damage caused by resident parking (Cllr. raised issue).

5.2.2 **Access Enhancement**

A service request was recently received alluding to a cycle barrier having been vandalised and/or removed at the Brynhyfryd area. Officers are reviewing and will arrange replacement if required – this review and subsequent replacement will continue for the length of the canal.

5.2.3 **Water Control**

The canal feed was switched off in October 2023 and is not due for reinstatement until March 2024. There have been no reported issues with respect to water levels over the last quarter.

Design and investigation work is ongoing with respect to abstraction licensing.

Drainage upgrade/improvement works at Henry Roberts Bridge has now been completed and appears to be working well.

Officers provided DCWW pollution prevention control officer with an array of dates through the month of January 2024 for a meeting on Manor Road Emergency Feed - unfortunately, no response was received. Further contact was attempted requesting DCWW provide dates for availability but again no acknowledgement to date.

5.2.4 **Dredging**

Dredging works at Fernlea remains a desire and will be scheduled for maintenance later in 2024/25 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 allocation of £40k from the Shared Prosperity Fund has been awarded, available from April 2024. This award has been agreed to undertake investigation works and consultations at the head of the canal Pontywaun. No other external funding for use on the canal has been secured for 2024/25 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).

A works cost estimate within the order of £250k has been prepared to attend to the leaking aqueduct but subject to available funding.

5.2.8 **Emergency Works**

No emergency works to report.

5.3. **FUNDING**

5.3.1 **Capital**

Officers recently received an update on the capital budget allocation for 2023/24 where there seems to have been an error in the original information provided. The actual capital budget allocation for 2023/24 was £173.7k and not the £181.7k originally reported. Considering this update, the remaining capital budget for 2023/24 is circa £40k. This year's allocation was utilised to re-install Halls Road Terrace Slip Way and Henry Robert's Bridge canal drainage upgrades. It is anticipated that this remaining capital budget be carried forward to 2024/25 to supplement the forthcoming capital allocation of £200k, totalling approximately £240k – the desire of which, would be to utilise this for sealing of the aqueduct subject to updated costs and available funding.

5.3.2 **Revenue**

The budget allocation for 2023/24 was £105k with an allocation of £100k from agreed reserves, totalling £205k for the current year, of which to date, circa £95k remains. CCBC in-house contractor continues to work on site on miscellaneous maintenance items as per list communicated to members and colleagues a few months ago. Officers are able to provide an update on this upon request – associated costs for these additional maintenance items would also come from the remaining revenue budget.

5.4. **BOATS**

The Trust are in receipt of the licensing regimes but no further updates with respect to boats since the last working group meeting.

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 aqueduct 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 £173.7k and revenue budget of £205k, of which £40k and £95k remains respectively.

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: Dave Street – Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S Williams – Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Marcus Lloyd – Head of Infrastructure
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