



MEETING Thursday 7th March 2019 at 3pm

Wiltshire Council Offices Monkton Park Chippenham SN15 1ER Committee Rooms C&D

Item	<u>Notes</u>
FdRP CG SM KO SP CS JT TW RW	<p style="text-align: center;">Attending</p> <p>Cllr Fleur de Rhé Philipe (Chairman) Colin Goodhind Melksham Community Area Partnership Stuart Malaure Environment Agency Ken Oliver Wiltshire Council Steve Petty Berryfield Residents Melksham Chamber Chris Sims K&A Canal Trust Jonathan Till Wilts & Berks Canal Trust Tim Wheeldon IWA Russell Weymouth Swindon BC</p>
1	<p>Apologies: Gavin Champion Cooper Tires; Cllr Chris Hodgson Cricklade TC; Chris Brown OCC; Cllr Roger Cox VWHDC; Peter Challis Sustrans; Cllr Yvonne Constance OCC; Paul Harris OCC; Richard Broadhead Wiltshire Council ; Cllr Gary Sumner Swindon BC, Cllr Richard Wiltshire Melksham TC; John Allan Cotswold Canals Trust</p>
2	<p>Notes from the last meeting Thursday 6th December 2018 (pre-circulated) were agreed.</p>
3	<p>Chairman's Announcements The 2019 Annual Restoration Conference, jointly run by The Inland Waterways Association and Canal & River Trust, is taking place on Saturday 30th March at South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy. This year's theme is 'Relining your Pockets' which will focus on funding and how to make sure your project is relevant to funders. It will look at how added extras, alongside the physical restoration of your canal, can be crucial to bringing in the necessary funding. This year, in order to encourage more new faces, spaces are not limited for each restoration group. Details and bookings: https://bit.ly/2tjCPFQ</p>
4	<p>Appointment of new President for the Partnership Lord Lansdowne stood down at the previous meeting. At this stage FdRP thought that an excellent candidate would be John Laverick. John was the project manager for the successful K&A restoration programme, and was Chairman of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust for a number of years and is hugely respected in the industry and is someone that everyone could have confidence in. FdRP said that she would be pleased to accept any other suggestions. The unanimous view of the meeting was to endorse approaching John to ask him to accept the position.</p>

5

Project Officer Report-

A Restoration Strategy for the Completion and Future Development of the

Wilts & Berks Canal- March 2019 revised document was pre-circulated . **KO** noted that this version had information that was omitted from the first draft circulated last September. This information is the five year project plan to deliver the two key priority schemes at Melksham and the connection of Royal Wootton Bassett to Swindon.

The meeting approved publishing of this version of the document (subject to any further amendments to be made by Friday March 15th) **KO** noted that an abridged version of the Strategy would be published on the Partnership web site .

M4 Crossing update- with thanks to Canal & River Trust **KO** reported that he had met (with WBCT) Highways England to discuss how the separate canal crossing of the M4 could be delivered.



Highways England had confirmed that the canal restoration would conform to the criteria for applying to their Designated Fund programme. Funding would be subject to approval of a business plan which is currently being written to deliver the Royal Wootton Bassett to Swindon connection programme. **KO** noted that the current plans for the Cotswold Canals crossing of the M5 (part of the Missing Mile project) had just been approved for funding from Designated Funds . Subject to fulfilling the requirements for the funding application, Highways England would design and build the required structure. **RW** said this was very timely as the S106 agreements for Wichelstowe construction have agreed environmental mitigation on the land south of the motorway. Delivery of the canal between the motorway and Hay Lane will provide an opportunity to put together plans for some of this mitigation (habitat creation- tree planting etc). There were a number of issues to be resolved with tenant farmers however **RW** was keen to start work soon on a project in this area. **KO** noted discussions had just started with SBC highways on the required culvert under the re-aligned Wharf Road. **RW** said that there would also need to be

discussion with the Wichelstowe joint venture company (Swindon BC/ Barratt Homes). **RW** said that having firm proposals for this area will be very helpful in giving credence to the whole project. **SM** asked if there were any river connections here. **KO** said there were no connections.

Coate Water Swindon update



KO outlined recent discussions with Natural England regarding how Coate Water could be returned to use as a reservoir to supply the restored canal despite its designation as a SSSI. The NE scoping assessment suggests that this could be done if suitable mitigation is put in place. More data is required particularly on watercourse input and output flows. **KO** agreed to share the NE scoping response with EA. **KO** noted that the proximity of the route of the canal (new route) made the use of Coate Water an inviting proposition (although the highest sections of the canal are above reservoir level and would require pumping) **TW** asked how the reservoir fed the original canal route **KO** said there was a mile long feeder channel going northwards to join near Greenbridge.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

There is a currently a consultation being carried out by Oxfordshire CC.

<https://oxfordshireplan.org>

KO said that he responded noting that canals were not mentioned anywhere in the Plan. Canal & River Trust had been informed and were also going to comment on this issue.

It was suggested that IWA might also want to comment. **KO** to contact IWA.

KO

KO

Wiltshire/ Swindon Local Plan Review – Canal Policy

KO reported that Swindon BC would shortly be hosting a workshop to discuss the Canal Policy for the forthcoming Local Plan review. WBCT and Wiltshire Council Spatial planning team have been invited to attend. **KO** said that in reviewing the policy more emphasis would be put on delivery of the canal. A sound evidence base will be required.

Swindon Croft Road Business Park



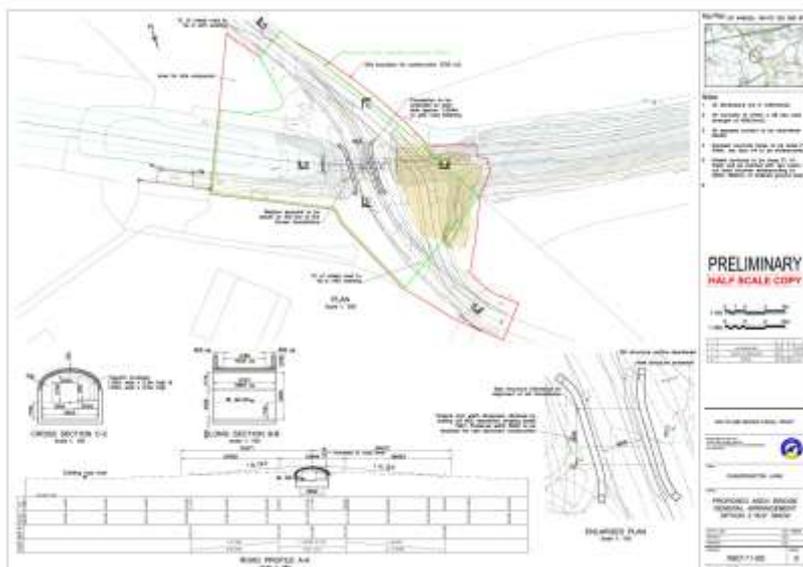
The Partnership has facilitated successful discussions between the developer and Swindon BC to find suitable sites for habitat mitigation for this development.

Bincknoll Lane Bridge

This will allow the two sections of canal at Studley Grange and Morningside Farm to be fully connected. The scheme will replace the original demolished bridge with a new design which is currently being assessed by Wiltshire Council's bridge team. The intention is to use a Macrete flexiarch bridge for this location.

<http://www.macrete.com/flexiarch-flexiarch-projects/>

Following design approval a funding plan will be implemented by WBCT.



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Projects update –

Melksham Link- planning application.

KO reported that the revised information from consultants is now being reviewed by EA as part of the planning process. The case is now being dealt with by Wiltshire Council's Head of Planning. **CG** asked what the expected time scale is and whether there are any anticipated problems. **KO** said that the expected time for a response is about 8 weeks and as ever the consultants had aimed to answer all outstanding issues. **CG** noted that the continuing uncertainty was impacting production of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan.

**Swindon Wichelstowe
Canalside**

Work is progressing on completion of the canal works with the aim to open for navigation before the start of May. The new Hall & Woodhouse pub opened in February and the connecting bridge is due for installation shortly.



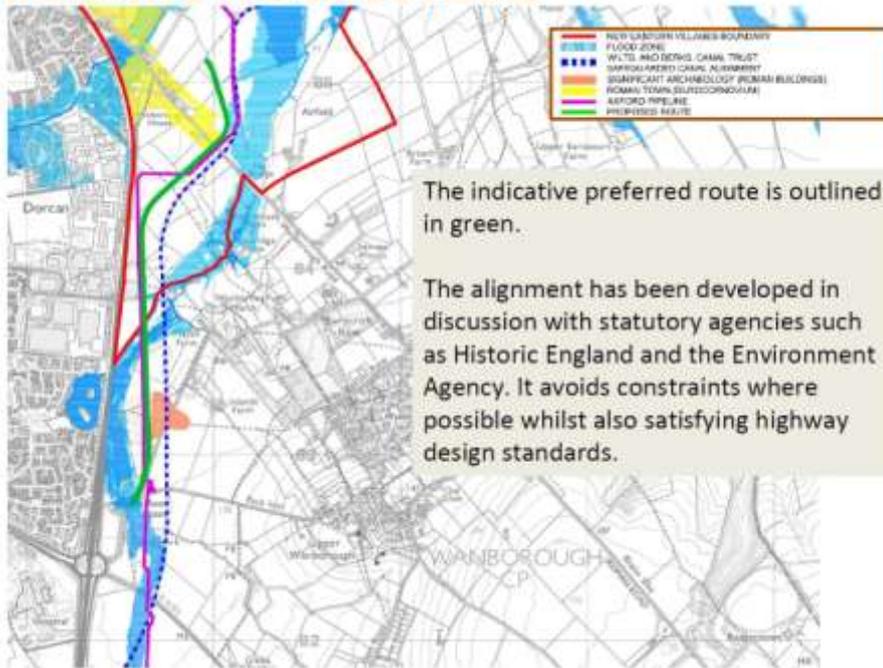
East Wichel- canal leak

Consultants expect to let a contract shortly to carry out the first phase of leak investigation work.

Swindon New Eastern Villages- southern connector road

Swindon BC expect to apply for planning consent shortly for this road scheme:

Indicative Preferred Route



WBCT engineers are currently in discussion with the NEV team to confirm the proposed canal alignment which needs to be amended to avoid significant archaeological finds.

Dautsey Lock Visitor Centre (Peterborough Arms)

JT reported that behind the Peterborough Arms WBCT has just completed installation and fit out of the temporary buildings that are going to be used as the Dautsey Lock Community an Canal Centre.



7	<p>Wessex Waterways Restoration Trust</p> <p>FdRP reported that Luke Walker had resigned as Chairman and that an entirely new board of Trustees had been appointed. KO had asked to attend the recent WWRT AGM but had been refused permission. In discussion with KO it had been agreed to suspend the invitation to WWRT to attend the Partnership meeting until there had been an opportunity to meet with the newly appointed Chairman.</p>	
8	<p>Partners Reports and Issues</p> <p>JT reported that he would be standing down as Chief Executive of WBCT at the end of March. JT outlined his work over the previous 3 years arriving not long after the major reorganisation of the Trust separating its Governance into a Board of Trustees and Executive. Dealing with project overspends had taken much more time than expected. With Rod Bluh (Chairman who recently stood down) they had stabilised the financial situation and had dealt with getting the Peterborough Arms open (with the addition of the visitor and community centre). While still being short of funds much effort is being currently being made to set budgets for the coming year. As much work as possible is being done by volunteers (over 30,000 hrs last year). JT expressed his thanks to partners for the support they had given. FdRP & KO expressed their thanks to Jonathan for his work.</p> <p>CG noted that the Melksham Food & River festival would once again be promoting the waterway this year https://www.melkshamfoodandriverfestival.co.uk/</p> <p>CS noted progress on the Crofton pumping station project and progress with CRT on using modular steel lock gates for the replacement programme on the Kennet & Avon Canal.</p> <p>KO reported latest situation regarding Thames Water Resources Management Plan (which currently plans to construct the Abingdon reservoir by 2037) with a publishing of their response to the consultation in the next few months.</p> <p>KO also said he was also trying to discuss whether Thames Water would be prepared to consider transfer of their reservoir at Wroughton (which it is believed is now being considered for disposal) for use for water supply for the canal.</p> <p>KO reported ongoing discussions with Wiltshire Council planners about the canal restoration at the depot site in Royal Wootton Bassett.</p> <p>RW said it is important now to consider maintenance of the canal once restoration was completed and he was preparing with KO initial proposals to take to the Swindon BC property team. RW said that while it had been agreed in principle to transfer the land to WBCT details needed to be agreed which most importantly would need to include how the asset would be managed. JT said that in a recent meeting with SBC Chief Executive this issue had been discussed and from the perspective of WBCT, the canal would need to be handed over 'in full working order'. KO also noted that usually assets of this nature would come with an endowment to cover maintenance costs. In response to a question from CS, RW said that there would also need to be discussions with the newly formed Parish Councils. KO said that all these issues should be included in a future revision of the Strategy document.</p> <p>SP said he hoped there would be some good news to report about the Melksham Link soon!.</p>	

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Date and time and location of next meeting :

Provisional dates for 2019 at Wiltshire Council Offices Monkton Park Chippenham
6th June (KO to investigate possibility of meeting at Hall & Woodhouse at
Canalside Swindon) : 5th September : 5th December

DRAFT