



MEETING Thursday 5th March at 3pm
 Wichelstowe Project Offices Mill Lane Swindon SN1 7BX

Item	<u>Draft Notes</u>	
	Attending	
JL	John Laverick (President)	
FdRP	Cllr Fleur de Rhe Philippe (Chairman) Wiltshire Council	
KO	Ken Oliver Wiltshire Council Partnership Officer	
RB	Richard Broadhead Wiltshire Council	
JA	John Allan Cotswold Canals Trust	
DL	Dominic Lamb VWHDC	
PH	Paul Harris Oxfordshire CC	
AM	Andrew Matters WBCT	
WS	Cllr William (Bill) Scott Semington PC	
BS	Brian Stovold WBCT	
TW	Tim Wheeldon Inland Waterways Association	
JW	Jonathan Wilshaw Swindon BC	
1	Apologies Cllr Yvonne Constance Oxfordshire CC; Cllr Gary Sumner Swindon BC, Steve Petty Berryfield residents & Melksham Chamber, Mark Evans CRT, Russell Weymouth Swindon BC, Cllr Sue Brown Melksham TC, Mark Evans CRT, Vaughan Welch WWT, Richard Wiltshire Melksham Trust	
2	Notes from the last meeting Thursday 5 th December 2019 (pre-circulated) were Agreed	
3	Chairman's Announcements FdRP welcomed everyone. Colin Goodhind had let us know that he could no longer represent Melksham Community Area Partnership – FdRP thanked him for all his work and hoped that there would be a replacement. Partners were invited to view the completed work at Canalside following the meeting. FdRP thanked the Wichelstowe Joint Venture Company for hosting this meeting.	
4	Partnership Officer Report- M4 Crossing Highways England Designated Fund Application. WBCT Trustees were about to sign off the application which would be submitted the following week. For clarity this application is for a full feasibility/design study and if successful would be followed by a further bid for capital for construction works. KO noted that groundworks had started on the M4 road crossing underbridge project. Melksham Link- planning application. KO was pleased that WS had attended this meeting and apologised that Semington PC had not been invited previously. The planning situation is that Wiltshire Council ecologists have suggested that WBCT use the newly released DeFRA metric to assess the net biodiversity net gain/loss as a quantitative	

	<p>indicator for the scheme. If the scheme showed net gain in all habitats, then it could probably be progressed through planning. WBCT team were working with their ecological consultants to use the metric on the Melksham Link scheme, however one of the emerging issues is that the category areas in the metric are not interchangeable so gains in one habitat cannot offset losses in another habitat. FdRP emphasised that Wiltshire Council planners were trying very hard to find an acceptable solution. KO said that current discussions with planners included whether the planning ‘red line’ could be varied to accommodate mitigation works. KO also reported further discussions with newly appointed Canal & River Trust Regional Director Mark Evans. Restoration matters have now been devolved to the regions and it is proposed that as soon as possible a meeting is set up with CRT/WBCT and Melksham Link Ltd to revisit issues around connection fees.</p>	
5	<p>Projects update – Swindon Wichelstowe</p> <p>Canalside – KO invited those at the meeting to visit Canalside afterwards. The next phase at Wichelstowe would involve extending the canal westwards from the lock at East Wichel towards Mill lane. When the JV Company’s 5 year business plan is approved the phasing of the next stages of the canal will be confirmed.</p> <p>East Wichel- canal leak- KO said that the excess winter rainfall had stopped work . When things dried out the whole leak detection plan would be reviewed. It is possible that the 3rd phase of works could be advanced.</p> <p>Swindon New Eastern Villages-</p> <p>The Public Enquiry for CPO of land had been completed with the Inspectors report due at the end of March . JW noted current planning consultation for Foxbridge. PH asked about the continuation of the canal from the NEV into Oxfordshire. KO said that in the main the canal route through the NEV has now been fully designed with the exception of the eastern section where it crosses the River Cole flood plain to go to the new railway crossing at Acorn Bridge. Much work with the Environment Agency will be required to design a suitable alignment . BS also described the current WBCT project to add wildlife habitat at Shrivenham Pocket Park which was currently being funded with a grant from IWA.</p> <p>Pewsham Locks BS reported continuing work on the ‘waiting wall’... Regarding the fatality in 2016 WBCT have just released the following statement;</p> <p><i>“Following the death of our friend Peter Koniitzer in August 2016 there was a lengthy investigation by Wiltshire Police in conjunction with HSE. As you were aware, in September 2019 it was confirmed the matter would now be dealt with solely by HSE, after it was confirmed the CPS found insufficient evidence for an offence of corporate manslaughter. This decision was welcomed by the Trust and we have continued to engage with HSE in relation to their ongoing review of the matter. This month, the Trust has been informed that Mr Konitzer’s family has requested the CPS to review its decision under the Victim’s Right of Review Scheme. This review may take a number of months and we await to hear further. The Trust continues to cooperate with the investigation. If you are contacted about the matter, please direct all queries to Brian Stovold.”</i></p>	

6	<p>Wessex Waterways Restoration Trust. Their Chairman was unwell and will be invited to the next meeting.</p>	
7	<p>Partners Reports and Issues</p> <p>PH asked whether there are any plans to revive the towpath challenge project. KO said that the overall aim is still to reinstate the towpath for the full length of the canal before full restoration. Without a WBCT project manager it was difficult to progress things. BS also described another issue around the status of the right of way leading to the proposed rebuilding of Cornhill bridge near Childrey. A further project that required funding was the land at Stockham near Grove where land was available for restoration. BS offered to contact DL/PH to discuss these projects in more detail. PH said it would be very useful to be able to integrate any plans in the cycling initiatives currently being considered by Oxfordshire CC. AM said the Trust is also working on how to repair the damaged wall at Childrey Wharf. There was a brief discussion about water supply issues noting that CRT are now having to apply for abstraction licences from EA where they had previously been exempt.</p> <p>WS said the Semington PC were very supportive of canals but requested a little more caution if further Melksham Link presentations were made.</p> <p>TW reported that IWA now have new Chairman and CEO – details to follow</p> <p>BS is very keen to strengthen links with Local Authorities on planning issues.</p> <p>JW noted that the Great Western Community Forest project is keen to work with the canal scheme to find suitable planting areas south of the M4.</p> <p>AM noted the continuing popularity of the boat trips from Canalside in Swindon.</p> <p>JA reported good progress on the Highways England funded A38 crossing project. He also noted that CCT are having all electric powered trip boat built.</p> <p>RB reported that work is under way to produce a Green Infrastructure plan for Wiltshire. Initial work by the consultants has acknowledged the importance of canals in this plan. He also said that he was in the process of writing a policy for where trees could be planted on Wiltshire Council land.</p> <p>DL outlined his role within the planning team at VWHDC and that the Local Plan Part 2 protected the route of the canal.</p> <p>FdRP said that in May 2021 there were Council elections and that she would not be standing again so the Partnership should consider what should happen for a replacement Chairman</p> <p>JL said he was pleased to see the Partnership working as it should with collaboration and was particularly pleased that Oxfordshire and VWDC had been able to attend.</p>	
8	<p>Date and time and location of next meeting : 4th June 2020 at Wichelstowe Project Offices Mill Lane Swindon. It is hope to organise a boat trip on the canal afterwards. Further dates 3rd September, 3rd December</p>	

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