

# Public Document Pack

Mid Devon District Council

## Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee

Tuesday, 2 March 2021 at 7.00 pm  
Remote Meeting

**Important - this meeting will be conducted and recorded by Zoom only. Please do not attend Phoenix House. The attached Protocol for Remote Meetings explains how this will work.**

To join the Zoom Meeting please use the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/92775029650?pwd=bll5RmtEUEVUYzRONHdacXJ4bmxGZz09>

Meeting ID: 927 7502 9650  
Passcode: 616539

One tap mobile  
08003582817,,92775029650#,,, \*616539# United Kingdom Toll-free  
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Meeting ID: 927 7502 9650  
Passcode: 616539

## A G E N D A

*Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place*

- 1      **Apologies**  
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2      **Protocol for remote meetings** (Pages 5 - 10)  
To note the protocol for remote meetings
- 3      **Public Question Time**  
To receive any questions relating to items on the agenda from the public and replies thereto.

- 4     **Minutes** (*Pages 11 - 20*)  
Members to consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 6 October 2020.
- 5     **Matters Arising**  
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.
- 6     **Chairman's Announcements**  
To receive any announcements that the Chairman may wish to make.
- 7     **Progress Report** (*Pages 21 - 32*)  
To receive a report from the Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager (DCC) informing members of the work that has taken place since the last meeting.
- 8     **Review Action Plan targets in the Canal Management Plan** (*Pages 33 - 46*)  
To receive a report providing an Annual Action Plan Review (2020/2021) of the Grand Western Canal Country Park Management Plan.
- 9     **Community Patrol Boat verbal update**  
To receive a verbal update on the Community Patrol Boat.
- 10    **Community Patrol Boat - Terms of Reference** (*Pages 47 - 50*)  
To receive, and note, the Terms of Reference for the Community Patrol Boat.
- 11    **Canal use during Covid restrictions (Adam Pilgrim)**  
Cllr Adam Pilgrim wishes to pose the following question to the Committee:  
  
‘Why are Grand Western Canal users such as canoeists and paddle-boarders allowed to use the canal during the Covid restrictions but motorised boat users are not?’
- 12    **Tourism Group- verbal update**  
To receive a verbal update from Cllr Mrs Sue Griggs.
- 13    **Any other business**  
To consider any other relevant business.
- 14    **Identification of items for the next meeting**  
To identify any issues for discussion at the next meeting.
- 15    **Date of the next meeting**  
To agree the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 7pm.

**Stephen Walford**  
Chief Executive  
22 February 2021

### **Covid-19 and meetings**

Meetings will not be held in person at Phoenix House until the Covid-19 crisis eases. Instead, the meetings will be held remotely via Zoom and you will be able to join these meetings via the internet. Please see the instructions on each agenda and read the Protocol on Remote Meetings before you join.

If you want to ask a question or speak, email your full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) by **no later than 4pm on the day before the meeting**. This will ensure that your name is on the list to speak and will help us ensure that you are not missed – as you can imagine, it is easier to see and manage public speaking when everyone is physically present in the same room. Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

If you require any further information, please contact Sarah Lees on:  
[slees@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:slees@middevon.gov.uk)

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## **Mid Devon District Council - Remote Meetings Protocol**

### **1. Introduction**

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations permit remote attendance in Local Authority meetings.

Remote attendance is permitted as long as certain conditions are satisfied. These include that the Member is able to hear and be heard by the other Members in attendance. Also, being able to hear and be heard by any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting (in line with the public participation scheme). A visual solution is preferred, but audio is sufficient.

This also relates to members of the public attending the meeting also being heard. The regulations are clear that a meeting is not limited to those present in the same place, but includes electronic, digital or virtual locations (internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers).

### **2. Zoom**

Zoom is the system the Council will be using for the time-being to host remote / virtual meetings. It has functionality for audio, video, and screen sharing and you do not need to be a member of the Council or have a Zoom account to join a Zoom meeting.

### **3. Access to documents**

Member Services will publish the agenda and reports for committee meetings on the Council's website in line with usual practice. Paper copies of agendas will only be made available to those who have previously requested this and also the Chair of a virtual meeting.

If any other Member wishes to have a paper copy, they must notify the Member Services before the agenda is published, so they can arrange to post directly – it may take longer to organise printing, so as much notice as possible is appreciated. Printed copies will not be available for inspection at the Council's offices and this requirement was removed by the Regulations.

### **4. Setting up the Meeting**

This will be done by Member Services. They will send a meeting request via Outlook which will appear in Members' Outlook calendar. Members will receive a URL link to click on to join the meeting.

### **5. Public Access**

Members of the public will be able to use a weblink and standard internet browser. This will be displayed on the front of the agenda.

## 6. Joining the Meeting

Councillors must join the meeting early (i.e. at least five minutes before the scheduled start time) in order to avoid disrupting or delaying the meeting. Councillors should remember that they may be visible and heard by others, including the public, during this time.

## 7. Starting the Meeting

At the start of the meeting, the Member Services Officer will check all required attendees are present (viewing the participant list) and that there is a quorum. If there is no quorum, the meeting will be adjourned. This applies if, during the meeting, it becomes inquorate for whatever reason.

The Chair will remind all Members, Officers and the Public that **all microphones will be automatically muted**, unless and until they are speaking. This prevents background noise, coughing etc. which is intrusive and disruptive during the meeting. The Hosting Officer will enforce this and will be able to turn off participant mics when they are not in use. Members would then need to turn their microphones back on when they wish to speak.

## 8. Public Participation

Participation by members of the public will continue in line with the Council's current arrangements as far as is practicable. However, to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly and that no member of the public is missed, all those who wish to speak must register **by 4pm on the day before the meeting**. They should email their full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk). If they wish to circulate their question in advance, that would be helpful.

At public question time, the Chair will invite the public by name to speak at the appropriate time. At that point, all public microphones will be enabled. This means that, to avoid private conversations being overheard, no member of the public should speak until it is their turn and they should then refrain from speaking until the end of public question time, when all microphones will be muted again. In the normal way, the public should state their full name, the agenda item they wish to speak to **before** they proceed with their question.

Unless they have registered, a member of the public will not be called to speak.

If a member of the public wishes to ask a question but cannot attend the meeting for whatever reason, there is nothing to prevent them from emailing members of the Committee with their question, views or concern in advance. However, if they do so, it would be helpful if a copy could be sent to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) as well.

## 9. Declaration of Interests

Councillors should declare their interests in the usual way. A councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest is required to leave the room. For remote meetings, this means that they will be moved to a break-out room for the duration

of this item and will only be invited back into the meeting when discussion on the relevant item has finished.

## **10. The Meeting and Debate**

The Council will not be using the Chat function.

The Chair will call each member of the Committee to speak - the Chair can choose to do this either by calling (i) each member in turn and continuing in this way until no member has anything more to add, or (ii) only those members who indicate a wish to speak using the 'raise hand' function within Zoom. This choice will be left entirely to the Chair's discretion depending on how they wish to manage the meeting and how comfortable they are using the one or the other approach.

Members are discouraged from physically raising their hand in the video to indicate a wish to speak – it can be distracting and easily missed/misinterpreted. No decision or outcome will be invalidated by a failure of the Chair to call a member to speak – the remote management of meetings is intensive and it is reasonable to expect that some requests will be inadvertently missed from time to time.

When referring to reports or making specific comments, Councillors should refer to the report and page number, so that all Members of the Committee have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.

## **11. Voting**

On a recommendation or motion being put to the vote, the Chair will go round the virtual room and ask each member entitled to vote to say whether they are for or against or whether they abstain. The Member Services Officer will announce the numerical result of the vote.

## **12. Meeting Etiquette Reminder**

- Mute your microphone – you will still be able to hear what is being said.
- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Speak clearly and please state your name each time you speak
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

## **13. Part 2 Reports and Debate**

There are times when council meetings are not open to the public, when confidential, or "exempt" issues – as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – are under consideration. It is important to ensure that there are no members of the public at remote locations able to hear or see the proceedings during such meetings.

Any Councillor in remote attendance must ensure that there is no other person present – a failure to do so could be in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Member Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, remove them to a break-out room for the duration of that item. They can then be invited back in when the business returns to Part 1.

Please turn off smart speakers such as Amazon Echo (Alexa), Google Home or smart music devices. These could inadvertently record phone or video conversations, which would not be appropriate during the consideration of confidential items.

#### **14. Interpretation of standing orders**

Where the Chair is required to interpret the Council's Constitution and procedural rules in light of the requirements of remote participation, they may take advice from the Member Services Officer or Monitoring Officer prior to making a ruling. However, the Chair's decision shall be final.

#### **15. Disorderly Conduct by Members**

If a Member behaves in the manner as outlined in the Constitution (persistently ignoring or disobeying the ruling of the Chair or behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs the business of the meeting), any other Member may move 'That the member named be not further heard' which, if seconded, must be put to the vote without discussion.

If the same behaviour persists and a Motion is approved 'that the member named do leave the meeting', then they will be removed as a participant by the Member Services Officer.

#### **16. Disturbance from Members of the Public**

If any member of the public interrupts a meeting the Chair will warn them accordingly. If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chair will ask the Member Services Officer to remove them as a participant from the meeting.

#### **17. After the meeting**

Please ensure you leave the meeting promptly by clicking on the red phone button to hang up.

#### **18. Technical issues – meeting management**

If the Chair, the Hosting Officer or the Member Services Officer identifies a problem with the systems from the Council's side, the Chair should either declare a recess while the fault is addressed or, if the fault is minor (e.g. unable to bring up a presentation), it may be appropriate to move onto the next item of business in order to progress through the agenda. If it is not possible to address the fault and the meeting becomes inquorate through this fault, the meeting will be adjourned until such time as it can be reconvened.

If the meeting was due to determine an urgent matter or one which is time-limited and it has not been possible to continue because of technical difficulties, the Chief Executive, Leader and relevant Cabinet Member, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, shall explore such other means of taking the decision as may be permitted by the Council's constitution.

For members of the public and press who experience problems during the course of a meeting e.g. through internet connectivity or otherwise, the meeting will not be suspended or adjourned.

## **19. Technical issues – Individual Responsibility (Members and Officers)**

Many members and officers live in places where broadband speeds are poor, but technical issues can arise at any time for a number of reasons. The following guidelines, if followed, should help reduce disruption. Separate guidance will be issued on how to manage connectivity – this paragraph focusses on the procedural steps. Joining early will help identify problems – see paragraph 6.

- Join public Zoom meetings by telephone if there is a problem with the internet. Before all meetings, note down or take a photograph of the front page of the agenda which has the necessary telephone numbers. Annex 1 to this protocol contains a brief step-by-step guide to what to expect
- Consider an alternative location from which to join the meeting, but staying safe and keeping confidential information secure. For officers, this may mean considering whether to come into the office, subject to this being safe and practicable (childcare etc.)
- If hosting a meeting via Zoom (briefings etc.), consider creating an additional host when setting up the meeting. The additional host can step in if the main host has problems – remember that without a host, the meeting cannot close and any information on the screens will remain on view
- Have to hand the telephone number of another member or officer expected in the meeting – and contact them if necessary to explain the problem in connecting
- Officers should have an 'understudy' or deputy briefed and on standby to attend and present as needed (and their telephone numbers to hand)
- For informal meetings and as a last resort, members and officers may be able to call another member or officer in the meeting who can put the 'phone on loudspeaker for all to hear – not ideal, but it ensures some degree of participation and continuity
- Member Services will hold a list of contact details for all senior officers

## Phone only access to zoom meetings

(Before you start **make sure you know the Meeting ID and the Meeting Password**) – Both of these are available on the agenda for the meeting

**Call the toll free number** either on the meeting agenda or on the Outlook appointment (this will start with 0800 --- ----)

(Ensure your phone is on 'speaker' if you can)

A message will sound saying *"Welcome to Zoom, enter your meeting ID followed by the hash button"*

- **Enter Meeting ID followed by #**

Wait for next message which will say *"If you are a participant, please press hash to continue"*

- **Press #**

Wait for next message which will say *"Enter Meeting Password followed by hash"*

- **Enter 6 digit Meeting Password followed by #**

Wait for the following two messages:

*"You are currently being held in a waiting room, the Host will release you from 'hold' in a minute"*

**Wait.....**

*"You have now entered the meeting"*

### Important notes for participating in meetings

Press **\*6** to toggle between **'mute' and 'unmute'** (you should always ensure you are muted until you are called upon to speak)

If you wish to speak you can **'raise your hand'** by pressing **\*9**. Wait for the Chairman to call you to speak. The Host will lower your hand after you have spoken. Make sure you mute yourself afterwards.

## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MINUTES of a MEETING of the GRAND WESTERN CANAL JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE held on 6 October 2020 at 7.00 pm

#### Present:

Cllr C R Slade	Devon County Council (Chairman)
Cllr R Croad	Devon County Council
Cllr R F Radford	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr L Cruwys	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr Mrs C Collis	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr Mrs C P Daw	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr Mrs S Griggs	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr Miss Jo Norton	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr K Browse	Halberton Parish Council
Cllr D Cutts	Sandford Peverell Parish Council
Cllr J R Rendle	Tiverton Town Council
Mr P Brind	The Tiverton Canal Company
Mrs Pat Brind	Mid Devon Moorings
Mr R Hodgson	Friends of the Grand Western Canal
Mr D Howells	Community Patrol Boat
Mr A Pilgrim	Holcombe Rogus Parish Council
Mrs J Pilgrim	Inland Waterways Association
Mr P Saupe	Tiverton Unit Sea Cadets
Mr M Trump	Tiverton and District Angling Club
Mr J Hampshire	Cycling UK

#### Officers:

Mr M Baker	Canal Manager, DCC
Mrs R Mills	Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager, DCC
Ms Eileen Paterson	Group Manager for Development Management, MDDC
Ms Helen Govier	Planning Officer
Mr S Densham	Land Management Officer, MDDC
Mrs S Lees	Member Services Officer, MDDC

#### 1 Election of Chairman

**RESOLVED** that Cllr C R Slade be elected Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2020/2021.

(Proposed by Cllr R F Radford and seconded by Cllr Mrs C Daw)

## 2 Election of Vice Chairman

**RESOLVED** that Cllr R F Radford be elected Vice Chairman for the municipal year 2020/2021.

(Proposed by Cllr C R Slade and seconded by Mr A Pilgrim)

## 3 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following members of the Committee:

- Cllr George Birch (who was substituted by Cllr Ken Browse)
- Mr Ray Jones
- Mr Graham Moore
- Mr Trevor White

## 4 Protocol for remote meetings

The protocol for remote meetings was **NOTED**.

## 5 Public Question Time

Victoria Pugh spoke in relation to item 10 on the agenda, 'Tidcombe Hall planning application': I want to ask the Joint Advisory Committee if as custodians of our much loved and admired Grand Western Canal often described as Tiverton's most valuable asset, if you would consider very carefully your advice at this time given that the current proposal to build 179 houses so close to the canal bank is the single most important matter affecting the canal in a generation.

I note that last October the developer gave a presentation to you all. Reading the minutes of that meeting, clearly many concerns were raised by you and in the minutes it was concluded that 'It is generally recognised that the proposed development if it comes to fruition would have a significant impact upon the canal.' A year has passed, detailed plans have now been submitted by LVA and professional consultees and local residents have all expressed their views on Mid Devon's website. Committee members will be aware that there are a great many views expressed, the vast majority opposing this development. Do members agree with me that now is the right time for this advisory committee to take a position, to come to a consensus and proffer your advice regarding the impact of this proposal on the canal for now and for future generations? Will the JAC add its voice to the many consultees who have considered the impact of this including, Tiverton Town Council, which is 'unable to support it', Devon County Council's Floods and Risk assessors who object to it, the Highways authority which recommends refusal, Natural England who unusually has quite a strongly worded report, they raise concerns about the dangers from run off and I know that is a concern that many of you share with us, Blundells School and the National Trust which also has considerable concerns, Devon County Council Historic Environment team who again recommend refusal, the Tiverton Archeological group who oppose it and Tiverton Civic Society who object.

Thus I ask, will the Advisory Committee in the interests of protecting and enhancing the canal for the future advise Mid Devon in the strongest possible terms against allowing this development so close to the canal to go ahead? Thank you.

Speaking in relation to item 15 on the agenda, 'Cyclists on the Canal', Maureen Gooding stated that: We are mid-Devon residents, and frequent long-time users of the canal, for walking, bike riding, angling and, in the past, canoeing. My husband grew up in the area around the canal basin; both of our sons live very near to the canal. Like many people it is an important amenity for us, one which we feel very positive about and one which we treat with respect and consideration. It is our experience that on the whole, most people we share the canal with are similarly positive and are good at sharing the country park. During lockdown, when the local parks were closed, this was the only place our grandchildren could get a change of scene and exercise safely – it was enormously important to them then, as it was to many other residents. Because it was crowded at times at the Tiverton town end, the fact that they could go out on their bikes and get to less busy areas was a benefit. Not to put too fine a point on it, we love the canal. However, it seems that this love isn't reciprocated.

Please find below a selection of comments made on the 'Friends of Grand Western Canal' Facebook page with reference to people who ride bikes on the towpath:

- 'Kick them in the canal easy'  
'Yep'
- 'Stand under bridges and push them in'
- 'A stick between the spokes stops them pretty quick'
- 'A little nudge when cyclists try and cycle under bridges usually gives them an early bath'
- 'I'd push them in'
- 'If a cyclist met me under a bridge, they'd end up in the canal'
- 'How about tying an old barge rope across the canal from bank to bank. That should sort out any speeding'  
And, referring to other walkers:
- 'I just Mow through like its skittles'
- 'I have nudged a very aggressive small dog into the canal before now' (Describing an incident where her own dog had been attacked, in fairness, but worrying that this is someone who frequently posts negative comments about cyclists)

There are also many passing references to 'lycra clad losers'; lycra idiots' that are routinely used in mainstream media to depersonalise and whip up anger in debates such as this.

With 'Friends' like this, who needs enemies?

Is the JAC is aware of the hostile and aggressive tone and frequency of remarks made towards and about people who ride bikes on the towpath on this Facebook page? Is this page an 'official' representation of the Great Western Canal's perspective? If not, who IS responsible for the group? What steps have been/will be taken by the committee to address threats of harm to towpath users by other individuals? Will the committee deal with misuse or misrepresentation of the GWC name, if that is what is happening here?

Mr David Barnes spoke in relation to the Tidcombe Hall planning application:

I have lived and worked in Tiverton as a teacher for over 30 years. I am a big fan of the canal. I walk, run, and cycle the canal on a regular basis and as a primary school teacher I have enjoyed all the canal has to offer, its local history, nature, leisure facilities with hundreds and hundreds of local children over the time that I have taught in Tiverton.

The proposal to build 179 houses on agricultural land along the canal as it leaves its urban setting and emerges into the typical Devon agricultural setting flies in the face of both the recently adopted Mid Devon Local Plan review and the draft Canal Management Plan 2020 – 2025. The Local Plan review is the culmination of years of deliberation, consultation, drafting and re-drafting. The Plan sets out strategic policies for development, identify sites for housing, employment, infrastructure and environmental protection. It identifies how local housing needs will be met up to 2035 and it has the approval of national government. The plan to build a housing estate near the canal totally ignores all of this and in doing so is a direct threat to what the Plan sets to achieve for our local area both now and in the future.

Your Draft Management Plan recognises the need to protect not only the canal and its immediate environment but also the setting in which it sits. The proposed introduction to this Plan states that 'The Plan seeks to influence the wider setting of the canal recognising its importance in the landscape'. Point 15.15 of your action plan identifies a specific threat to the canal and I quote 'Inappropriate development on adjacent land'. Point 19.14 identifies potential threats to the landscape and again I quote 'Existing and potential future development within the setting of the canal could harm its attractive rural setting, sense of tranquillity and quality of long views.'

The Canal Action Plan sets out a clear role for this Committee threats posed by inappropriate development. Point 19.14 goes on to identify as a strength and again I quote 'Well organised Joint Advisory Committee, able to comment on, object to adjacent planning applications and planning policies'. Point 473 describes how effective the Committee has been in carrying out this role in relation to the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension. I quote 'The canal's Joint Advisory Committee has successfully lobbied for the field adjacent to the canal from Follett Road to Manley Lane to be protected from development in order to minimise impacts on the amenity value of the canal.' This has resulted in designated fields of green infrastructure of approximately half a kilometre wide between the housing development and the canal. The proposed housing estate at Tidcombe Hall would come within tens of metres of the canal and as your action plan identifies will be mostly visible from the canal.

With this in mind it would be inconsistent, irrational as well as being counter to the Committee's own policies for this Committee not to do all in its power to oppose this planning application. The developers are at pains to convince us that having 179 new houses alongside the canal will have a positive impact, a dipping pond, a café, a trim trail. None of these have been identified as local needs in the Committee's own action plan nor to my knowledge anywhere else. We already have a dipping pond and the canal's tow path is Tiverton's own unique trail par excellence. These are thinly disguised attempts to hide the very real negative impacts the construction and existence a significant housing estate would inevitably have on our canal both now and in the future.

Point 19.12 of the action plan identifies the role of this Committee in opposing inappropriate development such as the one under consideration. The main method for conserving the landscape are as follows: Opposing inappropriate developments which would impact on the canal corridor. In every sense of the word the proposed development is putting it mildly 'inappropriate'. My question to you today is, will you carry out the role you have so comprehensively set in the Draft Canal Management Plan of protecting the jewel in crown of Mid Devon by formally objecting to the planning application for a housing estate alongside the canal at Tidcome Hall?

The Chairman read out a statement on behalf of Mr Goff Welchman in relation to the Tidcombe Hall item on the agenda:

"The Tidcombe Hall canal side planning application is totally inappropriate for its location. The applicant's attempts to gloss over the environmental threats are unsustainable. Flooding and pollution risks will clearly exist, given the exponential increase in severe weather events, which we are likely to continue experiencing. The valuable wildlife habitat will also be compromised, while Tidcombe Fen SSSI will also be endangered.

Furthermore, the ambiance of this important tourist attraction will be permanently adversely affected, not just by the buildings themselves, but also by the traffic chaos in the immediate area, which will result from any further housing developments. I hope you will see the necessity to strongly object to this plan."

## **6 Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 3 March 2020, having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record.

## **7 Matters Arising**

Mr Adam Pilgrim referred to minute number 24 and the funding situation regarding the canal. He confirmed that he had undertaken a significant amount of research in the past and had spoken with a number of senior officers but that due to Covid19 situation discussions had temporarily halted but would be taken up again as soon as possible.

## **8 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman thanked the Committee for electing him as their Chairman and particularly thanked everybody who had attended the virtual meeting that evening.

## **9 Terms of Reference and membership review**

Members considered the Terms of Understanding \* and membership of the Committee.

**RESOLVED** that the Terms of Understanding and membership of the Committee be agreed.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: \* Terms of Understanding and Membership previously circulated; copy attached to the signed minutes.

## 10 Tidcombe Hall planning application

The Chairman opened the discussion by reminding the Committee that planning matters were a consideration for the Planning Committee only. The JAC should merely concern itself with the proposed housing development as it affected the canal corridor.

Committee members expressed the following concerns regarding the proposed development:

- The developer's plans had seemingly increased since the presentation they gave to the Committee last October.
- The plan showed considerable disrespect for the wildlife in the area.
- Evidence of unrestrained water flow damage caused by new development elsewhere. There had been no financial provision made for the maintenance of attenuation ponds. The current culvert may not have sufficient capacity.
- A possible repeat of the breach that had occurred in the recent past.
- The devastating effect this development would have upon the canal as a tourist attraction.
- The need for the offside strip to be kept as a nature reserve. It was confirmed that this strip of land was owned by Devon County Council. The County Council's own Flood Risk Management team is a consultee to the planning application and has the expertise to assess the proposed mitigation measures. The Canal Manager was given the choice of draining water from the site into the canal via an existing water course, or sending the water through an existing canal culvert. The Canal Manager's preference was for the water to be culverted under the canal.
- The negative visual impact upon the beauty of the canal.
- The effect of more dogs on the canal as a result of 179 new houses.
- The significant opposition to the proposal generally by the wider community who had submitted hundreds of objections. However, due to the size of the application it had to be presented to the Planning Committee for determination.

**RESOLVED** that the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee object to the Tidcombe Hall planning application in the strongest possible terms and for Mr Adam Pilgrim to co-ordinate a response in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice Chairman and to submit this within the appropriate timescales.

(Proposed by Mr P Brind and seconded by Mr P Saupe)

Note: (i) Cllrs L Cruwys, Mrs C Daw and R F Radford declared personal interests in that they were members of the Planning Committee and that they would abstain from any voting this evening and try to maintain an open mind.

(ii) Cllr Mrs C Collis declared a personal interest in that she was a substitute member of the Planning Committee.

(iii) Cllr Miss J Norton declared a personal interest in that she used to work for the National Trust at the Knightshayes estate.

## **11 Progress Report**

The following issues were raised in relation to the progress report:

- The currently limited number of parking spaces near the slipway was causing some concern. The Canal Manager was receptive to the idea of designated parking spaces but this would need further consideration and discussion with the parties involved.
- Potholes under certain bridges where water collected following rain making it difficult for people to pass without nearing the edge of the canal. It was confirmed that a survey and necessary works would be undertaken

## **12 The effect of Covid 19 on the canal**

Issues in relation to the effect of the pandemic on the canal had been discussed in the previous progress report.

## **13 Fenacre water transfer - update**

This had also been covered in the progress report, however, it was repeated that progress had been slow due to the situation regarding Covid19 and the deadline had been pushed back to December.

## **14 The canal as a tourist attraction**

Cllr Mrs S Griggs had requested that this item be added to the agenda as she had read a lot about canals and their importance as tourist attractions. She requested that the Committee consider whether enough was being done to promote the canal as a precious resource both to Tiverton and to Mid Devon as a whole?

Consideration was given to the following:

- The efforts made by Mr P Brind to promote the Grand Western Canal nationally. This was having a positive effect and more people were coming to visit. Mid Devon as a whole had a great deal to gain by further promotion.
- 'Visit Devon' saw the canal as 'unique'.
- The need to look at further solutions for people to use the entire length of the canal, not just the Canal Basin end where parking during peak times was sometimes limited.
- The positive effect upon the villages running alongside the canal due to increased numbers of people visiting the canal.
- Cllr Miss J Norton stated that she had written her undergraduate dissertation on the Grand Western Canal and that as such she had a great deal of knowledge about it. There were many opportunities to be explored in terms of promoting the canal further and she was keen to work with members of the committee to explore the options available.
- The importance of the canal to the cycling community. It was part of the National Cycling Network Route 3.

- The increase usage and footfall during the pandemic and the need to monitor increased numbers of powered scooters and paddle boarders.
- A forthcoming improved Canal website which should be launched next year as a result of an HLF project at Stover Country Park which is developing a new website for that site.
- The need for an updated interactive map showing the entire length of the canal and all the villages that ran alongside it.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Mrs S Griggs talk to the appropriate officer at Mid Devon District Council who had responsibility for a tourism group with a view to setting up an informal working group to include Mr P Brind and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the JAC.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

## 15 **Cyclists on the canal**

Cllr Mrs S Griggs had requested that this item be added to the agenda due to a lot of recent discussion on social media. A lot of different views had been expressed but there was a need to try and find a way of working together in a respectful way.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The majority of cyclists followed the rules and were respectful of other users.
- Increased usage by cyclists during the pandemic as a means of exercise and escape.
- Whether the signs asking cyclists to dismount under bridges were big enough. Many were still not dismounting and this presented significant dangers to other users.
- The fact that the signs only recommended cyclists dismount, they did not 'instruct' them to, perhaps the language used needed to be more forceful?
- The poor behaviours of some users generally, not just cyclists and the dangers they presented.
- A fear that a tragedy would happen with somebody falling into the canal.
- The importance of the Friends Group and how they could act as a helpful forum to look further at this issue and identify a way forward. Contact details were on the Friends website.
- The Tiverton cyclist group could also look at the issues raised further.
- Limited powers to tackle those disrespecting the rules of the canal. Bylaws were open to interpretation.
- The limited resources within the Canal Ranger team who were working hard just to keep on top of the basic maintenance of the canal.
- The potential for the Canal Ranger team and the Community Patrol Boat skipper to be given greater powers by the police under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.
- The need for a long term strategic approach rather than a kneejerk reaction to social media comments.

16 **Any other business**

No issues were raised under this item.

17 **Identification of items for the next meeting**

Items for the agenda (other than those which usually came) were requested to be notified to the Clerk nearer the time.

18 **Date of next meeting**

It was **AGREED** that the date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 at 7pm.

(The meeting ended at 9.00 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**

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## **Progress Report** (October 2020 – February 2021 inclusive)

### **1. Covid 19**

The periods of lockdown and tier restrictions during this reporting period continue to have a significant impact on the use and management of the Country Park. Effects are broadly similar to those reported in detail in the October 2020 Progress Report, with Canal Rangers and at times the Canal Manager continuing to undertake practical work with significantly reduced levels of volunteer support. Throughout most of the period, just one volunteer has worked with the Canal Rangers on 3-4 days per week, in order to reduce the Rangers' contact with other people and to maintain reasonable social distancing on the maintenance barge.

As a result, slower progress than usual is being made on the winter tree work and so other projects which do not have to be completed before bird nesting season are being delayed.

The Country Park continues to be busier than usual for the time of year, as local people make use of it for their daily exercise. The public toilets and play park have remained open as per government guidance, and the visitor centre has remained closed.

### **2. Winter tree work**

Throughout the late autumn and winter, the Canal Rangers and volunteer Lee have spent almost all of their time working on the maintenance barge cutting back overhanging branches and undertaking various coppicing, crown-lifting and formative pruning tasks as they go. Work started in Tiverton and at the time of writing work is taking place near Boehill Bridge.

Progress has been slower than usual both because of a reduction in volunteer support and because a more thorough job of cutting back overhanging branches in the section the horse-drawn barge operates in has been made, in the knowledge that the horse-drawn barge will have a new skipper and a bit more leeway would be appreciated this year.



The target is to complete work up to the northern end of the canal by mid-March ahead of bird nesting season, after which other delayed tasks can be focussed on for a month before the mowing / strimming / weed-cutting season starts in April.

### **3. Tree works undertaken by contractors**

Following a survey of ash trees undertaken by tree consultants earlier in 2020, tree surgeons have felled a number of ash trees that were recommended for felling on health and safety grounds. These have included a number around the Swans Neck opposite the golf course, some in Snakes Wood and some near Battens Bridge. Another batch of Ash felling along the roadside near Battens Bridge is due to be undertaken in late February, subject to securing a temporary road closure.

The annual round of expert tree safety inspections are due to be undertaken during April and May and this will identify the next batches of ash dieback felling (based on the extent of dieback evident in the crown and any basal lesions) as well as any other safety works that are required on other species of tree. Inspections were recently undertaken of the three large oak trees near Follett Road, Tiverton and some minor works have been recommended for completion during the spring.

### **4. Hedge and tree planting**

A memorial oak tree has been planted near Manley Bridge, replacing an Ash tree that was recently felled there. A number of other standard trees are due to be planted before the end of February. These include four trees being planted in memory of Jean Hall. A number of Hazels and Hollies are also due to be planted opposite the steps from Follett Road to better screen the canal from any potential future development. A few small gaps in hedges are also due to be planted up with Hawthorn and Hazel whips.

### **5. Bank and hedge trimming**

The annual bank and hedge cutting work was completed by contractor during January, making the most of a cold spell to do several day's work when the ground was frozen. However, there are some sections of canal where the tractor tread has squished mud out onto the towpath and so, as in most years, an excavator operator has been lined up for a couple of days in late February to scrape off the worst sections and ensure the towpath is in good condition with the full width available.

### **6. Resurfacing the towpath under bridges**

DCC capital funding has been secured for work to resurface the towpath under bridges where there are currently large puddles, using concrete. A site visit has been undertaken with a contractor and the work is due to be completed before the end of March 2021.

### **7. Fishing platforms**

The four fishing platforms which had been installed at locations along the canal some 20 years ago to benefit anglers in wheelchairs, are all becoming rotten and unsafe to use. Two have been removed and the remaining two are in need of replacement. In all four cases the steel supports which are bolted to a concrete mass in the towpath, enabling the platforms to be cantilevered over the water, are in good condition and can be reused.

In order to provide longer-lasting replacement platforms, a design has been developed using planks of recycled plastic. Funding for the materials has been provided by Councillor

Slade and Councillor Radford from their locality budgets, and the Tiverton and District Angling Club have also contributed to cover the cost of equipment hire and metalwork. The recycled plastic planks have been delivered and the Canal Ranger Service plan to build and install the platforms as soon as they have time following completion of the winter tree work.

## **8. Green Flag Award**

In mid-October it was announced that the Country Park had been successful in winning a Green Flag Award for the twelfth consecutive year. The score was the highest yet received by the Country Park and was due to an improved score for the management plan.

The announcement by Keep Britain tidy (which runs the scheme) came a few months later than usual due to Covid 19.



In the subsequent DCC press release, councillors thanked the Canal Ranger Service staff who have managed and maintained the park under very trying circumstances.

## **9. Swans and powerlines**

Sadly, there have been several incidents where swans have flown into powerlines in the last six months:

- Two cygnets flew into the powerlines above the entrance to the Canal Basin car park. Both were taken to The Vale vets, where one had to be put down due to the extent of its injuries, and the other was taken to RSPCA Westhatch for ongoing care.
- An adult swan was retrieved from below the high voltage powerlines near Ebear Bridge, Westleigh and taken to RSPCA Westhatch.
- A dead cygnet was retrieved from directly below a powerline near Buckland Bridge in Sampford Peverell.

The Canal Manager reported the incidents to Western Power Distribution and has since had a site visit with one of their technicians. The technician is organising works in April to replace two of the telegraph poles near the end of the canal which will enable the four lines, which are currently aligned vertically, to be bundled up into one thick line which will be easier for swans to see and avoid.

The Canal Manager also provided details of the powerlines crossing the canal which do not currently have any markers on them to make them more visible to swans. The technician has promised to follow this up as well.

## 10. Sampford Peverell community orchard

In the autumn, the Canal Ranger Service worked on a project to create a new wildflower meadow in the community orchard in Sampford Peverell picnic site. They planted the orchard in 2005, but since then the grassland below had become dominated by rank species such as nettles, thistles, docks and hogweed. The only reliable way of establishing a wildflower meadow here was to scrape off the topsoil containing these plants and their seeds and start afresh, sowing a wildflower meadow seed mix.



They had the help of a skilled digger driver who scraped off the soil and formed a bank around the perimeter of the orchard. The Rangers then raked over the soil to create a good seed bed and sowed the seed, which has established quite well. A little extra seed will be spread on a few bare patches in the early spring.

The meadow will provide a great wildlife habitat, a nectar source for pollinators and an attractive sight for people to enjoy. Some narrow paths will be mown though the meadow to enable public access to enjoy the meadow and pick the apples.



The Canal Ranger service would like to thank Sampford Peverell Parish Council for supporting the project and the local Devon County Councillor, Ray Radford, who funded the work through his Locality Budget.

## 11. Boehill parking signage

As reported at the October 2020 JAC meeting, the Tiverton and District Angling Club made representations to request that a parking space for one car was made available at Boehill Bridge as it is a favourite spot and they believed this could be achieved without impeding boaters launching their boats. After checking with our informal trail-boating representative,

Adam Pilgrim, this was approved and the Angling Club agreed to fund the cost of some new signage to explain the new parking arrangements. These signs have now been installed.



## 12. Fenacre water transfer system

Following Covid 19 delays to the progress in designing a new system, with key AI staff members on furlough for much of 2020, the Environment Agency unexpectedly requested that AI withdraw the existing licence application for the scheme (rather than grant the anticipated time extension) and to submit a new one once the design of a new scheme had been drafted. This had the unfortunate effect of cutting all lines of communication between our consultant hydrologist, Marcus Francis, and the local EA officer who had been liaising on what solutions were likely to be acceptable to the EA (as EA officers are only allowed to comment on live applications / pre-applications).

In order to plan the way forward, a video conference was held in December with representatives of AI, their hydrology consultants Wood PLC, DCC (PRoW and Country Parks Manager and the Canal Manager) and DCC's hydrology consultant Marcus Francis. The meeting was positive with AI reiterating their desire to work collaboratively with DCC on a solution which work for the Canal, although the AI Environment Adviser did sound a note of caution about the likely protracted timescale based on his previous experience in dealing with the EA.

In early February, the PRoW and Country Parks Manager requested an update on the state of play and in his response the AI Environment Advisor stated that AI are optimistic that a collaborative approach with all involved stakeholders will result in a positive outcome to this phase of scheme to satisfy the obligations under the s.106 Agreement; that they are currently in the process of agreeing costs to re-engage their consultants who will be required to revise the original proposals that were submitted back in November 2019, that

as this involves significant unexpected costs the business needs to ensure it is going to result in a satisfactory solution and allow the Environment Agency (EA) to issue the requisite licences. He pledged to ensure that as the application progresses all appropriate stakeholders are kept abreast as it develops during this new phase of the project, including when he has a clearer picture of the timescale.

DCC officers will continue to seek regular updates on progress and will insist that our consultant is involved in the development of the scheme rather than just kept abreast of progress.

### **13. Handrails and gates**

DCC capital funding was secured to pay for a fencing contractor to replace rotting handrails at Sampford Peverell Bridge (pictured right), Whipcott Bridge (pictured below) and Waytown Tunnel. New gates were also installed at a number of locations.



### **14. Silt trap cleaning**

The silt trap at Manley Bridge has rapidly filled up during the winter so has been emptied by a JCB contractor in early February. This winter seems to have been particularly bad for silty water entering the canal during heavy rainfall events, with large sections of the canal being discoloured for days or weeks following heavy rain. The worst sections appear to be at the Tiverton end, with silty water entering at Manley Bridge (the silt trap only works effectively during low-flow situations) and from the stream that runs parallel to the canal at Atherton Way/ Francis Crescent, which often overtops into the canal when the culvert grille at the end of the open channel blocks with leaves and other debris.

### **15. Seats and benches**

During the autumn and winter three new memorial seats and one new memorial bench have been built and installed at the following locations:

- New oak bench to replace the old softwood bench 150m north of the Aqueduct
- New oak seat in a new location 200m along the bend from the tilting weir towards Ebear Bridge (pictured below)
- New oak seat in a new location near the western end of Snakes Wood
- New oak seat in a new location 200m north of Battens Bridge



Virtually all of the potential locations for seats or benches between Tiverton and Halberton are now filled and very few potential places exist between Halberton and Sampford Peverell. Several available locations still exist between Sampford Peverell and Lowdswells.

## **16. Aqueduct relining**

Following completion of the work to reline the Aqueduct last year, it was noted that there was still some water leakage from the structure. The DCC Bridges and Structures Team, which designed and supervised the works, were made aware at the time, and have recently contacted the Canal Manager to discuss the intention of the contractor to retrain the aqueduct and rectify this fault. Previously the contractor had indicated that they intended to dig some trenches in the towpath and offside banks to seal the leak, but they now believe retraining the section will be more effective.

The Canal Manager is extremely frustrated that this work wasn't undertaken during the winter and is currently awaiting a programme of works and start date. Mid Devon Moorings and the Tiverton Canal Co have been informed.

## **17. Car park and Country Park signs**

Missing car park name signs have been installed at a number of outlying car parks and a strong adhesive has been used to make it much harder for them to be removed by members of the public.

The ongoing programme of repainting Country Park signs continues. Once repainted they are fitted to new posts and are installed in appropriate locations along the Canal. During the winter repainted signs have been installed at Crownhill picnic site, Sampford Peverell Bridge and opposite the layby on Ebear straight.



## 18. Battery-powered machinery

Power tool and battery technology has improved significantly in recent years. The two major brands for the chainsaw / hedgecutter / brushcutter / leafblower machinery the Canal Ranger Service uses – Stihl and Husqvarna – have developed ranges of tools and batteries which are becoming widely adopted in both the domestic and commercial markets. The batteries are transferable between machines (although not between brands).

Over the next few years the Canal Ranger Service aims to switch over to battery power for most of their machinery (although not for leaf blowers which deplete batteries very quickly, and there will always be a need to have at least one large petrol chainsaw for crosscutting big logs) and so as and when current machines fall beyond economic repair, they will be replaced with battery-powered equivalents.

In the autumn, one of the petrol chainsaws suffered a terminal fault, and so after much research, consultation and receipt of three quotes, the Canal Ranger Service purchased its first battery-powered chainsaw: a Stihl MSA 220 plus two batteries and chargers.



As well as reducing the use of fossil fuels, the saw has health and safety advantages in that it weighs slightly less, the noise and vibration are significantly reduced, there are no fumes to inhale, and there is no danger of petrol spillages. The Canal Rangers have used it extensively throughout the winter and really like it, using it in preference to the petrol saws for most tasks.

## 19. Greater Horseshoe Bat Project

In recent years the Country Park has been a partner of the [Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project](#). This lottery-funded project led by Devon Wildlife Trust has worked for the last five years to protect and enhance colonies of the Greater Horseshoe bat in Devon – one of the key strongholds of what has been for many years a dwindling UK population. They have sought to raise awareness through engaging with communities and schools; improve feeding and roosting opportunities by working with landowners; and to improve knowledge

of where the bats are through a very successful citizen science initiative. The project ended on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

In 2018 a series of bat games developed by the project were added to the touchscreen system in the Canal Visitor centre and in 2019 and 2020 the Canal Ranger Service provided a pick-up / drop-off location for the automated bat detectors used in the citizen science project. This project enabled members of the public to borrow a detector and put it out (usually in their garden) for 3 nights during which time the detector would record any bat calls made within 10-15 metres, onto an SD card. The card and a form providing details about the site would then be posted back and the data would then be analysed by a computer programme. A few weeks later the participant would be emailed a report listing the species detected.



The project has been incredibly successful in building up an accurate picture of the distribution and density of bat populations in Devon and has also engaged thousands of participants who were keen to find out what species are found near their homes.

At the Country Park, the detector has been used to survey all of the 1km squares along the Canal at least once, and the more interesting ones twice. In December the Canal Ranger Service received a report from a survey undertaken near Whipcott Bridge which listed several Greater Horseshoe Bat calls – the first such records along the canal. Other species recorded along the Canal include Lesser Horseshoe, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Daubentons, Serotine, Noctule and Brown Long-eared Bats.

The Canal provides a wonderful resource for bats by providing an excellent feeding site with lots of flying insect life sheltered by the trees that line the canal, and by providing a corridor along which they can commute between roosts and other feeding sites. The old stone structures such as limekilns and some of the large mature trees with cavities may also provide roosting opportunities. The Canal Ranger Service congratulates all involved in this successful project and looks forward to recommencing the ever-popular bat walks along the Canal later this year.

## **20. Connecting the Culm**

[Connecting the Culm](#) is a three-year project which aims to make the River Culm and its floodplain more resilient to flood and drought, improve water quality, support biodiversity and habitat, and involve local people and organisations in the process. It is led by the Blackdown Hills AONB in partnership with the Westcountry Rivers Trust and Devon Wildlife Trust.

Roughly two thirds of the Canal lies within the project area and is very much an active and connected component of the



catchment. Water enters the canal from surrounding land and watercourses within the catchment and is discharged from the Canal into the River Lyner– one of the Culm's tributaries.

The Canal Manager has attended a number of webinars hosted by the project in recent months and will be looking for ways in which the Country Park can engage with the project to benefit the Canal and the wider catchment. He will be particularly supportive of any initiatives that the project develops to improve agricultural practice and reduce soil run-off.

The canal has been very brown with silty run-off being washed into the canal this winter (see point 14 above) and the problem is getting worse over time. Pollution of the Canal's water by silt (and the nutrients which bind to the silt particles) is a serious problem. As well as impacting on wildlife, it fuels excessive weed growth and increases the need for expensive dredging works. Hopefully this project can help steer farmers in the catchment towards more sustainable practices which retain soils on the fields.

## **21. Devon Harvest Mouse Project**

Devon Mammal Group is currently running this project to raise awareness of this species and to gain a better understanding of its distribution in Devon. Before Christmas, the Canal Ranger Team and a college work experience student from Stover Country Park took part in a half day training session run by the [Devon Harvest Mouse Project](#) Officer Sarah Butcher.

Sarah brought some 'pet' harvest mice with her for attendees to see while she delivered a short presentation about their conservation status, lifecycle, habitat requirements and management considerations.

They then headed out to a couple of locations at the northern end of Canal, the first of which - near Ebear Pond - was where a harvest mouse nest had been found by a Canal volunteer in 2019. Searching carefully through the large tussocks of grass, they found several nests including a maternity nest.



They then moved on to the field beside Beech car park, near Fenacre Bridge, where after five minutes of searching they found another maternity nest. It's great to confirm that Harvest Mice are present along the canal, and the Canal Ranger Service will bear them in mind when planning works in areas with tall tussocky grass.



## **22. Volunteers**

As discussed in point 1 above, volunteer and work experience support for the Canal Rangers has been significantly reduced during this period due to Covid 19. One volunteer has worked with the Canal Rangers on 91 days and another volunteer has worked with the Canal Manager on four days, giving a total of 95 volunteer days.

## **Future Programme of works**

### **Management tasks**

- Organising spot dredging works on the Swans Neck near the golf course – In late February / early March a long reach excavator on a pontoon will dredge the central channel, placing mud and debris on the offside banks, completing as much of the section under the trees here as is possible in five days.
- Organising the bank repairs at Tiverton Road car park using plastic piling to retain a short section of collapsing bank between the stone wharf wall and the stone bridge hole.
- Complete update of boating regulations and procedures
- Working with DCC engineers on Asset Management Plan
- Review and scenario-based test of Emergency Plan
- Fenacre water transfer system

- Ongoing development of new interpretation panel at Swing Bridge (about the stop gate buried in the mud below the bridge) and an updated replacement of the Ebear dragonfly panel.
- Organise repainting / replacement of corroded / missing bridge nameplates
- Organise and complete Community Safety Scheme Accreditation for Canal Ranger Service staff
- Organise ongoing Ash Dieback felling works

### **Practical works**

- All usual mowing strimming and weed-cutting work
- Ongoing small-scale bank erosion repairs (including the use of geotextile fabric and Deltalok bags on a section of erosion on offside bank at Francis Crescent)
- Landing stage extensions in Sampford Peverell
- Construction and installation of new disabled fishing platforms
- Concreting towpath under bridges with persistent puddle problems
- Tree planting and filling gaps in hedges with whips
- Re-stain seats
- Pressure wash benches, panels and dog bins as necessary

## Grand Western Canal Country Park management plan

### Annual Action Plan Review for 2020/21 (Year 1)

#### Notes:

Target years: 1 = 2020/21, 5=2024/25, Any £ = whenever funding available, Any = whenever relevant

Priority: 1 = highest, 5 = lowest

Highlighting: None = not required / appropriate this year, green = completed, yellow = partially completed, red = not undertaken

<b>Aim 1: To provide a pleasant, accessible and informative welcome to the Country Park for all visitors and members of the local community.</b>			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Prescription</b>	<b>Target year(s)</b>	<b>Priority (1-5)</b>
1a. Provide easily accessible and accurate pre-visit information.	1. Keep website up-to-date	All	1
	2. Update and reprint Canal Visitor Guide annually and distribute	All	1
	3. Keep 'information gatekeepers' up to date on current management	All	2
1b. Ensure the Country Park and its car parks are well signposted	1. Renew car parking signage in the Canal Basin car park	1	2
	2. Review provision of signage at outlying car parks and ensure all have the requisite signs	1	3
	3. Annually check brown signs to Canal	All	2
1c. Ensure Country Park entrances, car parks, public toilets and picnic sites are clean and well-maintained	1. Undertake inspections as per Inspection Regime (Appendix 5)	All	1
	2. Promptly resolve any issues (litter, graffiti, vandalism, breakages etc)	All	1
	3. Remove any damaging vegetation growing on the Canal Basin walls	All	2
	4. Maintain wildflower bed beside entrance to Canal Basin car park	All	2
	5. Consider re- slurry-sealing the tarmacked paths in the Canal Basin	2 / 3	3
1d. Improve the accessibility and visitor experience for visitors with disabilities	1. Commission an Equality of access audit and respond to recommendations	1 / 2	3
	2. Annually inspect towpath condition and organise resurfacing / edge scraping as necessary	All	2
	3. Ensure all new panels and publications follow good practice for visual accessibility	All	1
	4. Consider resurfacing eastern end of Canal Basin car park and creating an extra disabled parking space, if funding can be secured	Any: £	
1e. Orientate visitors through good design /	1. Consider new orientation panel in Canal Basin car park beside public toilets	1 / 2	3

waymarking / signage.	2.	Re-set leaning cast iron fingerposts in Canal Basin car park	1	1
	3.	Improve signage to public toilets from Canal Basin picnic site	1 / 2	3
1f. Rejuvenate / update on-site interpretation panels and noticeboards as required.	1.	Review displays in Visitor Centre and consider opportunities for new displays	All	3
	2.	Consider installation of new noticeboard at Beech car park	2 / 3 / 4	4
	3.	Commission new interpretation / information panels for noticeboards	1 / 2 / 3	2
1g. Seek to support a steady increase in visitor numbers.	1.	Promote greater recreational use of the canal between Halberton and Burlescombe	All	3
	2.	Review parking space provision / lining in Canal Basin. Create new spaces if possible	Any: £	3
1h. Seek opportunities to encourage more visits at quieter times of the year	1.	Use social media to encourage visits in autumn, winter and spring	All	4
	2.	Engage with external media to encourage visits in autumn, winter and spring	All	4
1i. Seek opportunities to encourage visitors to travel to site by foot, cycle or public transport	1.	Promote sustainable transport options in all appropriate Canal publications	All	3
	2.	Work with councils / developers to provide safe and easy access links with the town centre and new developments	Any	3
<b>Aim 2: To continue to provide a healthy, safe and secure park for all users.</b>				
2a. Ensure that all relevant health and safety regulations and policies are adhered to	1.	Annually review risk assessments and safe working procedures	All	1
	2.	Ensure all contractors are suitably qualified, briefed and insured and undertake risk assessments for their work	All	1
	3.	Pass 3-yearly DCC H&S audit	3	1
2b. Ensure site and premises are kept in a safe condition	1.	Undertake / commission all requisite inspections of site and premises as per Inspection Regime (Appendix 5)	All	1
	2.	Respond rapidly to any damage / vandalism or other safety issues	All	1
2c. Ensure staff and volunteers are adequately trained to safely undertake their work	1.	Ensure all legally-required training and requalification is undertaken by staff	All	1
	2.	Identify opportunities for non-legally required training and refreshers as appropriate	Any	2
	3.	Identify training opportunities for volunteers as appropriate	Any	3
2d. Enforce byelaws and promote codes of conduct.	1.	Ensure Canal Rangers wear uniform to establish authority	All	2
	2.	Canal Rangers to challenge inappropriate, inconsiderate or non-permitted behaviour and	All	2

		activities whenever they see it.		
	3.	Promote codes of conduct in noticeboards, Visitor Guide and website	All	2
	4.	Run periodic campaigns promoting considerate dog ownership	2 / 4	3
	5.	Monitor effectiveness of the new cycling under bridges signage and refine if necessary	All	2
2e. Provide visitor safety information as appropriate	1.	Provide on-site health and safety information including emergency procedures, first aid availability and emergency contact details.	All	2
	2.	Maintain and promote Horse-drawn barge zone safety signage	All	2
2f. Promote health and well-being benefits of recreation and volunteering within the Country Park	1.	Continue to support Tiverton Walk and Talk programme	All	3
	2.	Promote all of the main recreational opportunities in Country Park publications	All	2
	3.	Identify opportunities to make volunteering more useful / meaningful for volunteers (e.g. offer training?)	All	3
	4.	Identify and promote voluntary opportunities other than supervised practical work	Any	3
<b>Aim 3: To provide an attractive country park, which achieves a consistently high standard of maintenance and cleanliness.</b>				
3a. Strive to keep the Country Park clean and litter free	1.	Undertake litter-picking as per the Inspection Regime	All	1
	2.	Encourage visitors to take their rubbish home	All	2
	3.	Provide litter bins wherever litter is generated on site (i.e. shops/cafes) and at the play park	All	2
	4.	Facilitate litter-picking by volunteers by providing litter pickers, bags and bag holders	All	3
	5.	Respond promptly to any vandalism or damage	Any	1
3b. Deter dog fouling	1.	Provide bins for dog waste at all main access points	All	2
	2.	Run periodic campaigns promoting considerate dog ownership	2 / 4	3
	3.	Promote enforcement action against anyone caught dog fouling	All	2
3c. Ensure picnic sites, towpath edges and any other amenity areas are kept tidy	1.	Undertake established grass cutting regimes	All	1
	2.	Undertake maintenance and repairs of walls, benches, fences, gates, signs etc as required	Any	2
3d. Ensure towpath is easily accessible	1.	Undertake annual inspection of towpath condition to inform any significant resurfacing or edge scraping required.	All	2
	2.	Undertake resurfacing / edge scraping as	Any: £	2

		required/ affordable		
	3.	Undertake established annual bank and hedge cutting regimes	All	1
	4.	Undertake works to remove puddles under bridges	1	3
	5.	Repair bankside erosion gullies (dog holes) that encroach on the edge of the towpath	Any	2
	6.	Seek to minimise towpath obstructions / closures due to maintenance works and schedule works to minimise impacts	Any	2
3e. Promote tree safety	1.	Undertake tree safety inspection regime as per DCC policy	All	1
	2.	Organise / undertake tree safety works recommended by tree consultants or that clearly need to be undertaken	All	1
	3.	Avoid placing benches under mature trees	Any	2
	4.	Undertake minor tree works to reduce future safety issues (e.g. formative pruning, thinning, crown-lifting)	Any	2
3f. Replace felled trees where appropriate (especially in hedgerows)	1.	If no obvious successor tree is present, then plant a replacement of an appropriate species	Any	3
	2.	Whenever hedgelaying, seek to leave suitable new standard trees at an appropriate spacing	Any	2
3g. Manage vegetation to enable established recreational activities to take place	1.	Undertake weed-cutting during spring, summer and early autumn	All	1
	2.	Trim back overhanging offside branches and crownlift towpath side trees, as necessary	All	2
	3.	Liaise with angling club on the cutting of fishing swims	All	3
	4.	Undertake removal of small sections of encroaching reeds each winter	All	2
	5.	Undertake established annual bank and hedge cutting regimes	All	1
3h. Undertake small scale dredging work if and when required	1.	Collate feedback from boaters / anglers and consider any spot dredging that may be required taking into account urgency and cost.	Any: £	2
3i. Maintain premises	1.	Undertake Inspection Regime and all premises compliance checks	All	1
	2.	Report any significant premises issues to the DCC estates team	Any	1
	3.	Investigate potential / funding for secondary glazing at The Moorings	1	3
	4.	Repaint / replace bridge nameplates as necessary	1 / 2	3
3j. Maintain equipment and replace / add to as	1.	Undertake annual servicing of machinery	All	1
	2.	Consider purchase of battery powered rather	Any	2

necessary / affordable	than petrol machinery (e.g. chainsaws)		
3k. Undertake works to reduce future maintenance burden	1. Develop and deliver the Fenacre reed bed and silt trap project.	Any: £	3
	2. Investigate potential / funding for silt traps at other locations, including Holbrook siphon culvert.	Any: £	3
3L. Manage water levels to support recreational use	1. Check water levels and weather forecast daily and seek keep levels within the target range without rapid increases / decreases	All	1
	2. Continue to pursue improved water transfer system at Fenacre Bridge, and other potential water inputs that may be used to supply the canal with water if levels are low	1	1
	3. Seek to seal any leaks that are identified and monitor any unsealed leaks regularly	Any	1
<b>Aim 4: To advocate and demonstrate sustainable environmental management.</b>			
4a. Minimise use of pesticides and use / store chemicals safely	1. Seek alternative methods of managing weeds (e.g. mulching, pulling, burning)	All	3
	2. Use ecoplugs for stump treatment rather than painting herbicide on stump	All	2
	3. Store fuels, oils and pesticides in secure, bunded container. Store paints in dedicated container.	All	1
4b. Explain / demonstrate environmentally sustainable management to visitors and local communities where opportunities arise	1. Use social media, press releases, JAC progress reports and newsletters to highlight such work	Any	3
	2. Organise events that focus on environmentally sustainable management / practices within the Country Park (e.g. bird/bat box workshops, hedge planting volunteer days)	Any	3
4c. Purchase environmentally friendly consumables.	1. Use biodegradable hydraulic oil and chainsaw bar oil	All	1
	2. Purchase environmentally-friendly products	All	3
4e. Undertake measures to reduce likelihood / impacts of low water levels	1. Continue to pursue improved water transfer system at Fenacre Bridge, and other potential water inputs that may be used to supply the canal with water if levels are low	1	1
	2. Seek to seal any leaks that are identified and monitor any unsealed leaks regularly	Any	1
4f. Prepare for and respond to any pollution incidents	1. Maintain a spill kit for use on small scale pollution incidents	All	1
	2. Canal Ranger Service to attend spill response training	Any: £	2

	3. EA and Angling Club to be informed immediately of any potentially serious pollution incidents	Any	1
4g. Seek to minimise carbon footprint of the Country Park	1. Encourage sustainable travel options for visitors	All	2
	2. Minimise vehicle use by Canal Ranger Service through efficient planning of tasks and through use of electronic communication	All	2
	3. Reduce use of petrol / diesel powered equipment through switching to battery powered or manual equipment, as appropriate	Any: £	3
	4. Investigate potential / funding for secondary glazing at The Moorings	1	3
	5. Ensure all equipment and machinery is well-maintained / regularly serviced	All	2
<b>Aim 5: To protect, enhance and promote enjoyment and understanding of the special biodiversity, landscape and heritage value of the Country Park.</b>			
<b>Biodiversity</b>			
5a. Undertake wildlife monitoring and surveys to inform management	1. Identify groups / species that it would be useful to monitor/survey	1	2
	2. Seek to recruit volunteers / organisations to undertake monitoring / survey work	1	3
	3. Continue existing monitoring (WeBS)	All	2
	4. Commission macrophyte survey	1	3
5b. Undertake measures to maintain / improve water quality	1. Develop and deliver the Fenacre reed bed and silt trap project.	Any: £	3
	2. Investigate potential / funding for silt traps at other locations, including Holbrook siphon culvert.	Any: £	3
	3. Clean out silt traps once full (including Waytown silt trap in year 1)	Any	2
	4. Undertake weed-cutting during spring, summer and early autumn	All	1
	5. Retain and extend where possible the fenced offside buffer strips	Any	2
	6. Report any serious point source silt pollution to the EA	Any	1
5c. Control spread of alien invasive species	1. Maintain vigilance for newly arrived invasive alien species and react quickly to eradicate any potentially damaging new arrivals	All	1
	2. Raise awareness of alien invasive species amongst visitors and neighbours and encourage them to take measures to prevent their spread	All	2

	3.	Commission contractor to undertake periodic chemical control of Fringed Lily, under EA licence	1 / 3 / 5	2
5d. Act to reduce domination by rank / invasive species	1.	Undertake weed-cutting during spring, summer and early autumn	All	1
	2.	Undertake annual bank cutting regime	All	1
	3.	Cut and rake off grassland wildlife areas	All	3
	4.	Reduce nutrient enrichment of banks by discouraging dog fouling	All	2
5e. Manage hedgerows for wildlife, within constraints of space, public access and land ownership	1.	Undertake annual winter hedge trimming regime: tractor-mounted flail siding and topping hedge, but leaving some sections (c.100-200m) un-topped each year to grow on, ready to be laid in subsequent years	All	1
	2.	Lay sections of hedge each year, as appropriate	All	3
	3.	Plant hedging whips to fill gaps	Any	3
	4.	Plant new sections of hedgerow, as appropriate	Any	4
5f. Manage trees for wildlife, within the constraints of public safety, established recreational use and land ownership	1.	Promote new standard trees in hedgerows either through planting or selection of existing trees when hedge-laying	All	3
	2.	Seek advice from tree consultant on any significant proposed work on mature trees, to ensure it is necessary and appropriate	Any	2
	3.	Wherever possible retain dead standing wood and manage senescence of trees by gradual reduction rather than immediate felling, when safe and affordable to do so.	Any	2
	4.	When felling, consider retention of the trunk as a monolith (or 'ecostump')	Any	3
	5.	Plant replacement trees where appropriate and select a range of native species typical of the region.	Any	3
	6.	Continue coppice regimes or begin where appropriate (such as in cuttings or along willow-dominated offside banks)	All	3
5g. Manage banks and grassland areas for wildlife and manage natural succession in these areas	1.	Undertake annual towpath-side bank cutting regime	All	1
	2.	Undertake annual cutting of offside banks and embankments not currently dominated by brambles or heavily shaded by tree growth	All	3
	3.	Annually cut and rake recently created wildflower meadow areas beside Bamfylde Close and Ebear Pond in late summer.	All	2
5h. Manage ponds for wildlife	1.	Seek to dredge Boehill Pond (if machinery access possible)	1	3
	2.	Re-coppice trees around Boehill Pond to reduce	4	3

	shading		
	3. Trim back overhanging willows at Ebear Pond by 50%	2	3
	4. Trim back overhanging trees at Long Pond by c.10% each year	All	3
5i. Undertake habitat improvement and habitat creation works as appropriate	1. Build and install three bird boxes and three bat boxes each year	All	4
	2. Seek opportunities to create new ponds	Any	4
	3. Make plans / funding bids for use of land beside Fenacre Bridge as new silt trap / reed bed / pond system with orchard picnic area.	Any: £	3
	4. Create log piles, grass snake nest piles, reptile hibernacula, wildflower meadow areas etc, as opportunities arise	Any	3
5j. Raise awareness of the Country Park's biodiversity and provide interpretation	1. Refresh / update Ebear dragonfly panel	3	3
	2. Consider new wildfowl panel near the William Authers footbridge?	1 / 2 / 3	4
	3. Include wildlife elements in new interpretation / information panels in noticeboards	1 / 2 / 3	2
	4. Seek opportunities to improve / expand wildlife elements of Visitor Centre touchscreen system	Any	3
	5. Seek to engage in appropriate nature-focussed projects run by DCC or external organisations (e.g. Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project)	Any	3
	6. Include nature-themed activities in annual events programme (e.g. bat walks)	All	2
	7. Provide nature-themed activities/learning in Ranger-led school visits	All	2
5k. Seek to positively influence land management in the wider canal corridor to the benefit of wildlife	1. Engage with MDDC, developers and Tiverton Neighbourhood Plan regarding use, development and management of Tiverton Eastern Urban extension green infrastructure land beside the Country Park	Any	2
	2. Take opportunities to promote beneficial management when talking to adjacent land and home owners	Any	2
	3. Engage with JAC and relevant DCC teams to respond to adjacent planning applications that may impact Canal wildlife.	Any	2
<b>Landscape</b>			
5l. Retain and restore hedgerows and standard trees	1. Undertake annual winter hedge trimming regime: tractor-mounted flail siding and topping hedge, but leaving some sections (c.100-200m) un-topped each year to grow on,	All	1

	ready to be laid in subsequent years		
	2. Lay sections of hedge each year, as appropriate	All	3
	3. Plant hedging whips to fill gaps	Any	3
	4. Plant new sections of hedgerow, as appropriate	Any	4
	5. Promote new standard trees in hedgerows to either through planting or selection of existing trees when hedge-laying	All	3
5m. Keep listed structures clear of scrubby vegetation	1. Undertake an annual survey of ivy/scrubby growth on historic structures to inform annual removal works. Undertake this removal work	All	2
5n. Preserve / open up views along the canal and viewpoints from the canal	1. Undertake annual survey of views on the approach to bridges from the towpath and views from the towpath towards attractive landscapes. Use to inform vegetation management works.	All	3
	2. Cut periodic gaps in the bankside vegetation to achieve the multiple uses of providing fishing swims, providing views of the canal (once bankside vegetation has grown up) and providing points where boats can pull up to the bank.	All	2
5o. Seek to minimise visual intrusions	1. Use consistent and appropriate design themes for Country Park infrastructure	All	2
	2. Screen unattractive visual intrusions through planting trees / allowing hedges to grow taller	Any	3
	3. Ensure visual results of management works (e.g. brash, woodchip, weed, ruts in verges) are left as tidy and inobtrusive as possible	All	2
	4. Minimise the use of signs along the towpath focussing on placing them at access points and in noticeboards wherever possible	Any	2
	5. Respond swiftly to rectify vandalism, graffiti or damage	Any	1
	6. Maintain good relationships wherever possible with adjacent land owners and residents to build influence and deter / respond effectively to visually intrusive activities or developments within the Canal corridor	Any	2
	7. Oppose inappropriate developments which would impact on the Canal corridor through consultation responses from appropriate DCC officers and through the JAC	Any	1
<b>Heritage</b>			
5p. Undertake / commission inspections	1. Liaise with the DCC Buildings and Structures Team to organise / undertake inspections	Any	1

of historic structures as specified in Asset Management Plan	2.	Undertake casual assessments of historic structures whenever passing to identify and report any obvious faults	All	2
5q. Commission maintenance and repairs as necessary	1.	Liaise with the DCC Buildings and Structures Team to organise / undertake maintenance or repairs, as required	Any	1
5r. Manage vegetation on and around historic structures	1.	Remove scrubby vegetation growing on historic structures	All	2
	2.	Manage vegetation around structures to reduce potential for damage and to keep structures visible / accessible	All	3
5s. Interpret the history and historic structures of the Country Park	1.	Develop and install a new interpretation panel about the Brindley stop gate at Swing Bridge	1 / 2	3
	2.	Refresh the Aqueduct interpretation panel once repair works are completed, and install.	1	3
	3.	Refresh Waytown Limekiln panel (rewrite text)	3	4
	4.	Consider other possible locations for heritage interpretation panels (Ayshford Chapel? Whipcott Wharf?)	Any: £	4
	5.	Seek opportunities to improve/expand heritage elements of Visitor Centre touchscreen system	Any	3
	6.	Provide heritage-themed activities/learning in Ranger-led school visits	All	2
	7.	Include heritage elements in new interpretation / information panels in noticeboards	1 / 2 / 3	2
	8.	Seek to engage in appropriate heritage - focussed projects run by DCC or external organisations (e.g. Heritage Open Days)	Any	3
	9.	Organise events and publicity to celebrate the 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Country Park in 2021	1 / 2	1
	10.	Join in celebrations of 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the horse-drawn barge operating on the Canal in 2024	4 / 5	2
<b>Aim 6: To engage local communities in the management of the Country Park and to ensure it provides a high standard of facilities and services enabling a range of recreational activities to be enjoyed</b>				
6a. Support the continued function of the JAC as a forum for local community and stakeholder	1.	Canal Manager to attend all JAC meetings, to draft Progress Reports and to organise annual site visits	All	1
	2.	DCC to provide JAC members with updates on significant projects / issues and to respond to	Any	1

representatives to discuss the management of the Country Park and provide advice to DCC	queries from JAC members, as required		
	3. Canal Manager to assist in finding representatives for stakeholders if and when required	Any	2
6b. Provide opportunities for people to engage through volunteering	1. Provide a range of opportunities for practical volunteering	All	1
	2. Explore opportunities for other forms of volunteering (e.g. leading walks / events; archiving, managing photo library)	Any	3
6c. Support the Friends of the Grand Western Canal	1. Continue to provide monthly column for newsletter	All	2
	2. Help to relaunch Volunteer Warden Scheme	1	2
	3. Meet to discuss other ways the Canal Ranger Service can help to support the friends group	1	2
6d. Provide a programme of events for local communities	1. Organise and deliver an annual events programme themed around the Canal's wildlife, heritage and recreational opportunities	All	2
	2. Seek opportunities to provide new events	All	3
	3. Schedule events to maximise participation and to fit with target audience's likely availability	All	3
	4. Set charges for events at a level that will cover costs or (with high demand events) make a small profit.	All	2
6e. Maintain and improve the key facilities provided within the Country Park	1. Towpath: Annually inspect towpath condition and organise resurfacing / edge scraping as necessary	All	2
	2. Towpath: Undertake annual bank and hedge cutting regime and crownlift trees above the towpath as necessary	All	1
	3. Canal channel: Undertake trimming back of overhanging branches as required	All	2
	4. Canal channel: Organise spot dredging as required	Any: £	2
	5. Canal channel: Undertake weed-cutting during spring, summer and autumn	All	1
	6. Canal channel: Clear sections of marginal reed as they begin to encroach on the central channel	All	2
	7. Car parks: Renew car parking signage in the Canal Basin car park	1	2
	8. Car parks: Review provision of signage at outlying car parks and ensure all have the requisite signs	1	3

9. Car parks: Review parking space provision / lining in Canal Basin. Create new spaces if possible, including a disabled parking space	Any: £	3
10. Car parks: Monitor condition of car park surfaces and lining and maintain as necessary	All	2
11. Public toilets: Undertake cleaning and maintenance to ensure toilets are functional and presentable	All	2
12. Public toilets: Investigate options and seek funding for refurbishing the public toilets	Any: £	3
13. Visitor Centre: Ensure the centre is well maintained and that information is kept up to date	All	1
14. Visitor Centre: Consider options for improvements / additional features / pages to the touchscreen system	Any	3
15. Visitor Centre: Consider replacements to existing hands-on activities	3 / 4 / 5	3
16. Noticeboards and panels: Ensure information provided is up to date and factually correct and that posts / structures are sound	All	1
17. Noticeboards and panels: Commission new interpretation / information panels to go in noticeboards replacing existing A3 ones	1 / 2 / 3	2
18. Noticeboards and panels: Develop and install a new interpretation panel about the Brindley stop gate at Swing Bridge	1 / 2	3
19. Noticeboards and panels: Refresh the Aqueduct interpretation panel once repair works are completed, and install.	1	3
20. Noticeboards and panels: Refresh Waytown Limekiln panel (rewrite text)	3	4
21. Noticeboards and panels: Consider other possible locations for heritage interpretation panels (Ayshford Chapel? Whipcott Wharf?)	Any: £	4
22. Play Park / trim trail: Undertake Inspection Regime and organise annual safety inspection by qualified inspector	All	1
23. Play Park / trim trail: Organise prompt repairs as required	Any	1
24. Benches and seats: Monitor condition of benches and seats and repair / replace as necessary	All	2
25. Benches and seats: Stain all new Streetmaster seats and benches annually	All	2
26. Benches and seats: Write and adhere to a	1	2

	memorial bench policy, explaining processes, siting considerations and responsibilities		
	27. Slipway and landing stages: Complete and promote parking provision near Boehill Slipway	1	2
	28. Slipway and landing stages: Complete low-level extensions to two existing landing stages	1	2
<b>Aim 7: To use appropriate marketing and communication techniques to encourage use of the Country Park, and to develop understanding and enhance the visitor experience</b>			
7a. Undertake market research to guide future management	1. Investigate options / funding for engaging consultants or a university student to carry out market research / develop marketing plan	Any	3
	2. If this is not possible then seek to undertake an in-house visitor survey before the end of year 3	1 / 2 / 3	2
	3. Monitor and respond to other forms of visitor and stakeholder feedback	All	1
7b. Use appropriate communication techniques to connect to current visitors, potential visitors and local communities	1. Continue to use a wide range of print, web and social media platforms to provide information and engage with visitors and local communities	All	1
	2. Seek to increase positive media coverage by identifying stories which will capture attention and by generating more press releases	All	2
	3. Raise the Canal Ranger Service's profile on social media by posting more frequently and looking for engaging photos of our work	All	2
7c. Promote the canal as a tourism attraction as well as a facility for local communities	1. Engage with Visit Mid Devon and Mid Devon Attractions Group to raise profile of the canal and encourage visits	All	2
	2. Use 'BrochureLink' distribution network to make Canal Visitor Guide available to TICs around the UK. [SERVICE DISCONTINUED]	All	3
	3. Deliver batches of Canal Visitor Guides to local TICs, accommodation providers and pubs and shops to ensure it is available locally	All	2
	4. Explore options for developing a more engaging and modern stand-alone, website for promoting the Canal as a visitor attraction.	Any: £	3
7d. Provide educational opportunities for schools and youth groups	1. Provide affordable and flexible opportunities for schools and youth groups to enjoy ranger-led visits learning about their environment and heritage	All	2
	2. Promote these opportunities to ensure teachers and leaders are aware	All	2
7e. Use a range of interpretation techniques to enrich	1. Develop and install new interpretation panels at Swing Bridge and Swing Embankment	1 / 2	3
	2. Replace / refresh existing interpretation panels	All	3

visitors' understanding of the Canal's heritage and wildlife	as they become worn / out of date		
	3. Commission new information / interpretation panels to go in noticeboards	1 / 2	3
	4. Organise and deliver an annual programme of events	All	2
	5. Develop and use a proforma for identifying aims of events and how they will be achieved	1	2
<b>Aim 8: To ensure a high standard of service through effective resource management and delivery of the management plan</b>			
8a. Manage work programme efficiently and flexibly to achieve aims whilst adapting to changing circumstances	1. Check Action Plan section regularly (at least quarterly) to inform forthcoming works programme	All	1
	2. Drive efficiency through careful organisation and grouping of tasks to fit human resources and circumstances	All	1
8b. Recruit and manage staff and volunteers and develop their competence and capacity	1. Ensure staff/volunteers hold the necessary competency tickets for equipment / activities they use/undertake	All	1
	2. Identify opportunities for personal development through appropriate learning methods	All	2
	3. Encourage staff and volunteers to join the Countryside Management Association and take advantage of membership benefits	All	3
8c. Secure and manage financial resources to optimum benefit of the Country Park	1. Manage available budgets responsibly, seeking to derive the maximum benefit for the Country Park	All	1
	2. Promote the benefits of the Country Park and respond to funding reviews effectively with an aim of averting / minimising funding cuts	Any	1
	3. Discuss funding arrangements with MDDC	1 / 2	1
	4. Seek opportunities to increase income	Any	2
8d. Engage with stakeholders to adapt / refine / add new management actions and to update the plan as required	1. Report on progress at JAC meetings, including annual review at March meetings	All	1
	2. Gather and share feedback from other stakeholders and visitors	All	2
	3. Consult on any proposed changes in management approaches	All	2
	4. Fundamentally review sections 11 and 12 at the end of year 1	1	2
	5. Fundamentally review the whole plan during year 5	5	1

## **Community Patrol Boat**

### **Draft Terms of Reference**

The Community Patrol Boat operates on the Grand Western Canal to promote public safety, encourage considerate use, assist with applying permit requirements / conditions for certain activities and to provide public assistance and canal information if required.

The Community Patrol Boat (Ripple) is owned by Tiverton Canal Co and is made available to Devon County Council through an agreement with Tiverton Town Council. The Agreement includes mooring at Canal Basin, annual maintenance to the outboard motor, lifting and winter storage at Tiverton Canal Co Boat Yard.



These terms of reference outline the scope and remit of the Community Patrol Boat, as well as safety and reporting procedures.

### **Authority to operate**

1. The Community Patrol Boat operates on behalf of the Canal owner - Devon County Council - and crew operating the boat are considered to be volunteers for the Grand Western Canal Country Park Ranger Service and are therefore covered by Devon County Council's public liability and employer's liability insurance.
2. Devon County Council's representative for operational matters at the Grand Western Canal is the Canal Manager. The Community Patrol Boat will operate under these terms of reference as interpreted by the Canal Manager, and through discussion with him on any issues that arise.
3. Devon County Council may choose to alter or amend these terms of reference at any time but will take into account the views of the Canal's Joint Advisory Committee and any major funders of the Community Patrol Boat.
4. It is agreed by all parties that the Community Patrol Boat will also operate within the terms of agreement set out between Tiverton Canal Co and Tiverton Town Council. It is also agreed that should the Tiverton Town Council or Tiverton Canal Co decide for any reason not to continue this agreement The Community Patrol Boat would cease to operate and the boat (Ripple) returned to Tiverton Canal Co with immediate effect.

### **Extent of operation**

5. The Community Patrol Boat is permitted to operate along the entire 11.25 miles of Canal between Tiverton and Lowdells, during day or night.
6. The home mooring for the Community Patrol Boat is in the Canal Basin and so it is inevitable that more time will be spent patrolling the section of Canal between Tiverton and Halberton. Given the voluntary commitment being provided by the crew, it is unreasonable to insist on specific amounts of time to be spent patrolling further along the Canal towards Sampford Peverell and Burlescombe. However, it is understood that reasonable efforts will be made to patrol these sections several times a year, providing a safe and secure mooring and be found on the offside of the canal for the patrol boat, if it needs to be moored away from the Canal Basin overnight.

## **Funding**

7. Devon County Council accepts no obligation for funding the Community Patrol Boat and if a lack of funding at any time means that the boat cannot be operated safely then its operation will have to cease.
8. At the time of writing, the largest single funder of the Community Patrol Boat is Tiverton Town Council. The Community Patrol Boat accounts are and will continue to be managed by Tiverton Town Council. If this arrangement ceases, then these terms of reference will be reviewed.
9. The Community Patrol Boat 'team' – comprising the crew and any supporters – are responsible for securing the necessary funding and for negotiating and adhering to the terms of the funding provided, ensuring that any funding conditions comply with these terms of reference.

### **Remit** - Core activities for the Community Patrol Boat are as follows:

10. Promoting public safety: With reference to the Canal and Towpath Codes of Conduct, and the Canal Byelaws, to encourage safe and considerate use of the Country Park by all visitors. This will entail stopping and talking to visitors as appropriate, always explaining the reasons for the safe and considerate behaviour that is requested. Key issues to address include cycling under bridges where this is prohibited, littering, dog fouling and dogs out of control (e.g. attacking other dogs / people / wildlife / farm animals).
11. Where possible, assisting the emergency services or Canal Ranger Service during incidents (e.g. missing persons).
12. Encouraging compliance with boat permit requirements: Community Patrol Boat crew are authorised to request evidence that boaters have a valid boat licence. If boaters do not have a valid licence, they shall be advised of the requirement to have one and be provided with details of the current boat permit outlets. If feasible, boaters should be encouraged to buy one on that day retrospectively, or if not then to ensure they have one before visiting the canal again.

Any boater who is clearly speeding (exceeding 4mph – brisk walking pace) may be hailed and requested to slow down. Failure to comply should be immediately reported to the Canal Ranger Service who may seek to intercept and evict the boat in question.

13. Encouraging compliance with angling permit requirements: The Tiverton and District Angling Club (which leases the fishing rights on the Canal) have authorised the Community Patrol Boat crew to request evidence that anglers have a valid angling permit. If they do not have a valid permit, they shall be advised of the requirement to have one and be provided with details of the current angling permit outlets. If feasible, the angler should be encouraged to buy one on that day retrospectively, or if not then to ensure they have one before visiting the canal again.

The angling club are particularly concerned about fish thefts and are keen for the Community Patrol Boat crew to watch out for potential fish thieves and for unattended lines left out overnight to catch fish. The Community Patrol Boat crew may also choose to join forces with angling club bailiffs and / or the local Environment Agency fisheries officer to undertake night patrols.

14. Providing accurate information about the canal, usually with reference to the Canal Visitor Guide, of which a stock of copies will be kept on board the boat for distribution as required.
15. It is understood that the Canal Manager and the Tiverton and District Angling Club are responsible for informing the Community Patrol Boat crew of any changes which may affect the advice the crew give to members of the public.

## **Health and safety**

16. A skipper's Boat Safety checklist, which includes checks to the outboard motor and the boat must be completed before the boat is used on each occasion.
17. Three risk assessments will be carried out: one for both daytime and night-time operation of the Community Patrol Boat and a fire risk assessment which must be agreed with the Canal Manager and adhered to at all times and be reviewed annually.
18. The skipper of the Community Patrol Boat must be adequately trained in the safe use of the boat and outboard-engine and deemed to be competent by the Canal Manager and the Managing Director of the Tiverton Canal Co. The skipper must hold the RYA Powerboat Level 2 certificate.
19. The Patrol Boat and its operation must at all times abide by the Boaters code of conduct and Navigational Rules and Regulations specific to the Grand Western Canal.
20. For the reasons of safety, The Community Patrol Boat may only operate with a Skipper on board at all times.
21. The Patrol Boat must not exceed 4 persons. (including the Skipper)
22. All crew must be good swimmers (e.g. be able to swim unaided 2 widths of the canal basin minimum) and complete an induction which covers the safe operation of the boat and how to deal with foreseeable emergencies such as man overboard.
23. All crew must wear in date lifejackets and carry a mobile phone at all times when onboard the boat and appropriate lifesaving equipment such as a throwline or life buoy / ring must be carried onboard.
24. The Community Patrol Boat must never carry members of the public or passengers. (other than the designated Skipper, Crew and those authorised by these terms of reference or members of the Canal Ranger Service and emergency services). The community patrol boat is not be used for leisure purposes. **[Note for JAC – there is an outstanding issue regarding the carriage of injured persons. The Canal Manager needs to check if DCC insurance will cover this and the nature of what injuries 'qualify' needs to be defined]**
25. At least one member of the crew must hold a valid first aid certificate and the boat must carry a first aid kit. If a defibrillator is added to the boat's range of equipment at any stage, then it must be professionally serviced annually, and batteries and pads must be in date.
26. If the Community Patrol Boat crew wish to make use of personal CCTV ('bodycams') for their own and / or public safety, then the detail of this must be agreed with the Canal Manager and all regulations and best practice relating to their use must be adhered to.

## **Interaction with the public**

27. The Community Patrol Boat crew are expected to contribute to the warm welcome which Devon County Council wishes to extend to Country Park visitors. Initial interactions should always be friendly and the reasoning behind the rules and codes of conduct should be explained.
28. Conflict with unreasonable or aggressive visitors should be avoided and reported to the Canal Manager or the police depending on the circumstances. Ideally, Community Patrol Boat crew

members should be trained in dealing with conflict and a calm and professional manner should be maintained at all times.

29. Community Patrol Boat crew shall wear a uniform which identifies them and their role and this should be distinct from the Canal Ranger Service (in terms of design of uniform and explanation of their role to the public).
30. Community Patrol Boat crew are encouraged to undertake Community Safety Accreditation Scheme training provided by Devon and Cornwall Police, in order to support them in their role.
31. Community Patrol Boat crew are encouraged to promote their work through social media but should endeavour to balance the 'negative' reports of inconsiderate behaviour with reports of 'positive' incidents and sightings.

As volunteers acting on behalf of Devon County Council, Community Patrol Boat crew members are expected to refrain from instigating media coverage in which they adopt points of view at odds with that of current or proposed management of the Canal. Through their seat on the Canal Joint advisory Committee (see below), they are welcome to use that forum to argue for changes in management policy.

### **Reporting**

32. The skipper of the Community Patrol Boat is responsible for ensuring a log is kept of every patrol undertaken, and details of who is on duty (for that Patrol) and all canal incidents recorded. The log must be made available to the Canal Manager on request. Any serious incidents should be reported to the Canal Manager immediately.
33. Any 'repeat offenders' in terms of failing to have a valid boat licence or fishing permit; cycling under bridges where prohibited; or failing to pick up dog waste or keep dogs under control, should be reported to the Canal Manager or Angling Club as appropriate.
34. A brief report on key incidents and issues encountered in the previous six months shall be prepared by the Community Patrol Boat skipper and be submitted to the Canal's Joint Advisory Committee for their reference as part of the agenda pack which is sent out ahead of meetings in March and October each year.
35. A seat is provided on the Joint Advisory Committee for a representative of the Community Patrol Boat, and attendance at these meetings is expected.