

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the GRAND WESTERN CANAL JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE held on 1 March 2022 at 7.00 pm

JAC Members Present:

Cllr R F Radford	Mid Devon District Council (Chairman)
Cllr C R Slade	Devon County Council (Vice Chairman)
Cllr A Davis	Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport, Devon County Council
Cllr L Cruwys	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr Mrs C P Daw	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr Mrs S Griggs	Mid Devon District Council
Cllr K Browse	Halberton Parish Council
Cllr J R Rendle	Tiverton Town Council
Cllr D Cutts	Sampford Peverell Parish Council
Mr P Brind	The Tiverton Canal Company
Mr Peter Burgess	Devon Wildlife Trust
Mr R Hodgson	Friends of the Grand Western Canal
Mr Dion Howells	Community Patrol Boat
Mr G Moore	Canal Business Group
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

Officers:

Mr Richard Walton	Public Rights of Way and Country Parks Manager, DCC
Mr M Baker	Country Park Manager, DCC
Mr S Densham	Land Management Officer, MDDC
Mrs S Gabriel	Member Services Manager, MDDC
Mrs S Lees	Member Services Officer, MDDC

17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the following representatives:

- Pat Brind
- Cllr Christine Collis
- John Hampshire
- Ray Jones
- Trevor White
- Cllr Lewis Worrow

18 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public had registered to ask a question.

19 MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting held on 5th October 2021, having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record.

20 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising in relation to the minutes of the previous meeting.

21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that he would be planting a tree alongside the canal to commemorate the Queens Platinum Jubilee on Friday 11th March 2022 in conjunction with hundreds of other local authorities across the nation. This would mark the 70th day in the 70th year of her Majesty's reign. The location would be east of Rock Bridge, near Halberton, and would be marked by a commemorative plaque.

22 CANAL PROGRESS REPORT

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

Tiverton Town Council Funding

It was confirmed that the towpath resurfacing works between William Authers Footbridge and Tidcombe Bridge was due to start next week.

Kickstart Trainee Rangers

Applications had been received for the three Kickstart Trainee Ranger positions and interviews would take place in the following week.

Bankside dredging at Lowdwells

A comment was made that there had been a bit of silt build up near the cottage on the towpath side. It was explained that bankside dredging had taken place but to go beyond that would require waterbased plant and would be very expensive. The situation would be monitored.

Visitor Centre vandalism

The individual responsible had been identified and as part of the restorative justice programme had attended 2 mornings over the half term period working with the Canal Ranger Team.

Events

The Country Park Manager and his team were thanked for the Christmas events that had been offered. Very positive comments from the public had been received indicating that for some these events had now become part of their annual festivities.

Noticeboard

Cllr C Slade will be making a contribution from his locality budget to help with the repairs to noticeboards.

It was noted that there had been some vandalism to cycle dismount signs, this would be investigated and necessary action taken.

Bridge nameplates

Residents had raised concerns through their Ward Members as to who owned 'Black Bridge'? This was as part of wider concerns regarding the Eastern Urban Extension and the proposed footpaths.

After some discussion it was established that the residents may have meant 'Warnicombe Bridge' – a farm accommodation bridge which is painted black that crosses the canal between Glebelands and Snakes Wood, rather than 'Black Bridge' that crosses the Canal in Burlescombe (owned by Aggregate Industries) or 'Black Bridge' that crosses the disused railway line near Tiverton (owned by the Mid Devon District Council) . Warnicombe Bridge is owned by Devon County Council whose Bridges and Structures Team inspect it and undertake maintenance when necessary.

Green Flag

The Chairman congratulated the Canal Ranger Team for achieving the Green Flag Award for the 13th consecutive year running.

23 **CSAS POWERS ON THE CANAL**

The Committee received a presentation from the CSAS Manager from Devon and Cornwall Police. The following was highlighted within the presentation:

- What being "CSAS accredited" meant.
- Examples of the scheme operating in Plymouth and Teignbridge.
- Safeguarding issues.
- The importance of the de-escalation process before formal action was taken.
- The importance of developing partnership relationships.
- The sharing of intelligence.
- The Accredited Police Volunteer pilot scheme involving the Community Patrol Boat and the establishment of a working group to progress it.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The training period required for accreditation depended on the previous experiences of the individuals applying for it, it could be 2 days, 2 weeks or more.
- Concern was expressed regarding the safety of the accredited officers and the need for reassurance and back up should it be needed. There were no powers of arrest but information such as names and addresses could be requested.
- The aims of the scheme were 'noble' but concern remained about the practicalities involved.

- The top speed of the canal boat was 4 miles an hour, were bicycles a better means of getting to an incident quickly?
- Those operating the Community Patrol Boat also had the option of wearing body cameras to enhance their safety.
- Public perception was very important especially if they knew there were additional powers available to officers to deal with anti-social behaviours on the canal, especially in terms of reporting incidents.
- The working group consists of the Country Park Manager, the Community Patrol Boat Manager, the CSAS team and representatives from the local Police. They would be working hard over the coming months to promote the scheme and produce some publicity and marketing in order to promote reassurance.

An update would be provided to the next meeting following work undertaken over the summer months.

24 **WATER TRANSFER SYSTEM - FENACRE BROOK TO THE CANAL**

The following update was provided in relation to the water transfer system from Fenacre Brook to the canal:

- Item 8 within the Progress Report summarised the position.
- Advice had initially been given that the pre-application period could take months, in actuality it had occurred quite quickly.
- Aggregate Industries had been pulling together the additional information required by the EA and would be in a position to submit a full application soon.

Consideration was given to:

- A request that should there be any updates they be issued to the JAC members as they occurred rather than wait till each meeting.
- The hydrological data being used would not be based upon what happened 20 or 30 years ago but would be based on current information.

It was **AGREED** that further updates be received as and when and that an additional item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

25 **ANAEROBIC DIGESTER PLANT AT CROWNHILL**

The Planning Department had been unable to send an officer to the meeting to respond to comments made at the last meeting. However, they had provided the following statement:

a) New silage clamp

- a. The agent was advised that a new planning application would be required for the new silage clamp and as such, we understand this is being prepared for submission with a view that it will be submitted in March.

b) Noise condition cannot be enforced

- a. The noise condition requires the agent to submit further information of which the agent is again preparing and will submit in due course.

c) Traffic – nothing can be done

- a. We understand this relates to the concerns arising around the traffic movements – unfortunately it is a working farm and as such there is nothing the planning authority can do to assist with this problem.

d) Output evidence was fine

- a. Part of the condition required the applicant to submit details of the amount of power that was output from the digester, in this instance, 500kw. The information we have received to date would not give us cause for concern and as such we are not pursuing this further at present.

e) New building and dwellings on adjacent land

- a. We do not currently have any further information on this at present. Are there any more details that can be provided to assist us with this?

f) Land used for Housing

- a. As above. We would need more information. However if there was an application in regard to housing on this land, the application would need to be assessed on its own merits. If the land is outside the settlement, not boundary, then there would need to be clear justification as to why this should be granted as we steer development away from the open countryside unless the Council does not have a 5 year land housing supply.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- The lapsing of the Liaison Group. The previous owner of the site had agreed to allow the existence of the group and worked with them but the new owner had not and the 'good will' was not there anymore.
- Halberton Parish Council strongly wanted the reinstatement of the Liaison Group and for information regarding the AD plant to be made available to them. They would be working hard to try and make this a condition of any future planning application.
- The Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement confirmed that this fell within her portfolio area and she would be keeping an eye on it.
- The lack of availability of data and information regarding the working of the site was of great concern. The public needed to know what was happening.
- Should an FOI request be submitted?
- Potential seepage from large amounts of built up silage into the canal was a serious concern. Also concerns regarding phosphates on the offside of the canal.

- The need for the JAC to see the original Planning approval document with the conditions.
- A new planning application was expected imminently and the JAC would have an opportunity to comment and make representation.

It was **AGREED** that when the new planning application was received by the Local Planning Authority a special meeting of the JAC would be called to discuss the detail and effects of the application upon the canal. Mr Adam Pilgrim agreed to research the planning portal to ascertain what information was currently available and would circulate this to committee members.

Note: (i) Mr Peter Saupe declared a personal interest in that he had worked on site previously.

(ii) Cllr L Cruwys explained that as he was the Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee he would not take part in the special meeting to discuss this issue.

26 **MEMORIAL - MANLEY BRIDGE**

Cllr Sue Griggs had requested that this item be placed on the agenda for discussion in response to an email she had received from a member of the public.

Since the publication of the agenda she had spoken with the Country Park Manager and agreed a way forward. He acknowledged that the wooden frame around the panel had started to rot and needed to be replaced. A quote had been received for a new frame and Cllr C Slade agreed to make a contribution towards the costs through his locality budget as this was an important memorial.

27 **QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE**

Cllrs Sue Griggs and Les Cruwys had requested that this item be placed on the agenda in order to discuss what could take place on the canal to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee at the beginning of June.

Tiverton Town Council had begun to think about what could be done as a town to commemorate this important event. A working group had been established and would be meeting on Thursday this week to begin consideration of this issue. It was hoped the whole town would get on board and of course the canal was an essential part of the local area. Possible ideas involving the canal included the following:

- A floating carnival?
- Bunting, royal regalia and decorations on the horse drawn barge and other boats along the canal?
- Boat handling taster sessions?
- A barge pull between two groups?
- Classic car exhibition?
- Stalls?

The Tiverton Canal Company stated that 'anything was possible' but that they had been severely hampered in recent times due to a lack of staff therefore resource and available time was an issue.

Cllr Cruwys stated that the ideas provided at this meeting would be taken back to the working group where a plan could start to be put together.

The Canal Ranger Team would not be able to assist during the specific Jubilee period as they had with past events due to staff leave at that time but they could have involvement beforehand and assist where resources allowed.

28 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following matters were raised:

- A television production company had visited the Tiverton Canal Company as the last drawn horse barge in the country and they had filmed them at the end of last year. The programme would be available at the beginning of the summer season.
- Two running events would be held along the canal on 13th March and 20th October. Such events provided some much needed additional funds for the canal.
- Mr Phil Brind had been unable to progress discussions with the Canal Business Group since the last meeting due to a lack of resource connected with his business and time pressures.
- A summer site to visit to the canal would be arranged and the Clerk would circulate a range of dates in due course.

29 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The following was **AGREED** to be on the agenda for the next meeting:

- An update on the Anaerobic Digester plant at Crown Hill
- CSAS powers - update from the working group
- An update on the water transfer system at Fenacre Brook

30 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next official meeting would be held on Tuesday 4th October 2022 at 7pm. However, a special meeting would be called before then to discuss the JAC's response to a planning application submitted in relation to Crown Hill.

(The meeting ended at 9.05 pm)

CHAIRMAN