

MINUTES of a MEETING of the GRAND WESTERN CANAL JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE held on 1 October 2024 at 7.00 pm

JAC Members Present:

Cllr C R Slade Devon County Council (Chair)
Cllr L Cruwys Mid Devon District Council
Mr P Brind Tiverton Canal Company
Mrs P Brind Mid Devon Moorings
Cllr K Browse Halberton Parish Council
Cllr S Bush Tiverton Town Council
Cllr G DuChesne Mid Devon District Council
Cllr B Fish Mid Devon District Council
Mr John Hampshire Cycling UK
Mr R Hodgson Friends of the Grand Western Canal
Cllr J Lock Mid Devon District Council
Cllr A Pilgrim Holcombe Rogus Parish Council
Mrs J Pilgrim Inland Waterways Association
Cllr R Radford, Devon County Council
Mr P Saupe Tiverton Sea Cadets
Mr M Trump Tiverton and District Angling Club

Also Present:

Mrs J Brind Tiverton Canal Company
Cllr E Buczkowski, Mid Devon District Council
Cllr C Harrower, Mid Devon District Council

Officers:-

Mr R Marsh Director of Place and Economy, MDDC
Mr R Walton Public Rights of Way & Country Parks Manager, DCC (online)
Mr M Baker Country Park Manager, DCC
Mrs A Howell Democratic Services Officer, MDDC

36 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2024/2025

RESOLVED that Cllr C Slade be elected Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2024/2025.

(Proposed by Cllr L Cruwys and seconded by Cllr R Radford)

37 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR 2024/2025

RESOLVED that Cllr L Cruwys be elected Vice Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2024/2025.

(Proposed Mr P Saupe and seconded by Cllr A Pilgrim)

38 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr A Davies, Cllr L Kennedy, Cllr D Palmer, Cllr S Taylor and T White.

39 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

40 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes from the meeting held on 23 July 2024 having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record.

41 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

42 **GRAND WESTERN CANAL CONSERVATION AREA CONSULTATION UPDATE**

The Director of Place and Economy gave a verbal update on the Grand Western Canal conservation area consultation and highlighted the following:-

- The consultation had run for an 8 week period from 22 July 2024 until 16 September 2024 and had received a total of 107 responses.
- Two drop in sessions were held one on 23 July 2024 where 60 people attended and another on the evening of 5 September 2024 where 15 people attended.
- The public were encouraged to supply evidence so that the Council could reflect on the proposed changes.
- Out of the responses received, 65% outlined that they were not in favour or raised concerns with regards to the boundaries and 32% responded with concerns around future development in the vicinity of the site.
- Historic England had been consulted although they did not offer any detailed comments on the proposals.
- The work would continue to reflect on the comments received and consider any appropriate amendments. This would then be presented to Cabinet on 12 November 2024 with the adoption of the Management Plan to be recommended to Full Council for approval on 18 December 2024.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- How pleased the Committee was to see that officers were being respectful and how the whole process was being dealt with.
- Whether investigations had been made with regard to the historical connections relating to fields and Tidcombe Hall. It was explained that the Conservation Officer had engaged with the Historical Records Officer at Devon County Council but that there did not appear to be any direct evidence linking the fields of Tidcombe Hall to the canal. However, the Council were

aware that there were hints or suggestions on their relationship and were mindful of this and would consider this for any revisions required.

43 FENACRE WATER TRANSFER SYSTEM UPDATE

The Chair read out an update which had been received via email on 30 September 2024 from Chris Herbert, Planning Manager, Aggregate Industries UK.

“I am writing to advise that due to our previous consultants no longer being in a position to continue on this project due to resourcing issues we have had to re-start our approval process and approach new consultants to take the project forward. Company processes require us to have a minimum of 3 quotes before we can then move forward and we also need to go back through our financial approval process because of this change.

We are currently going through the appointment and financial approval process so that the project can proceed and it is our intention to have this approval process completed by the end of the year so that consultants are in place to move the project forward at the beginning of 2025. Subject to the necessary approvals from the Environment Agency being in place by the middle of next year it is hoped that works can then be undertaken in the second half of 2025 in line with the commitments the company has previously given.

This unfortunately means we have been unable to progress matters as quickly as we had hoped this year but the company remain committed to progressing this project in 2025.”

Discussion took place regarding:-

- That this issue had gone on too long and needed to be resolved as a matter of urgency.
- Cllr J Lock informed the Committee that she had requested a seat on the Quarry Liaison Group and hoped that if accepted she would be able to apply some pressure on Aggregate Industries (AI) to move forward in a more timely manner.
- Mr R Walton, Devon County Council (DCC) explained to the Committee that he had spoken to the Planning Manager at DCC to see if there could be a designated planning officer to help in moving this forward.
- Mr M Baker informed the Committee that letters have been written to AI to apply pressure.

The Committee **AGREED** for the Chair of the GWC JAC to write a letter to AI in response to the above statement expressing the disappointment of the Committee asking for clarification for the future timeline of works to be carried out and to also copy in their parent company Holcim for the attention of the Chief Executive Officer.

Notes:

- (i) Mr P Saupe declared an interest as he was a member of the Aggregate Industries UK (AI) pension scheme.

44 PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a Progress Report from the Country Park Manager summarising the work that had taken place on the canal since the last meeting. A brief discussion took place regarding the following issues:

- **Tree Works**
Mr P Brind, Tiverton Canal Company wished to formally thank Devon County Council (DCC) for their emergency tree work which was carried out after hours to enable him to get the barge back to the Canal Basin that evening and to continue to trade the following day.
- **Lowdwells Culvert**
Cllr J Lock wished to thank DCC for the work carried out and asked if the work would continue through October. It was explained that work was due to continue this month and the Ranger Team were waiting on Wessex Water to move a water main that lay in the way.
- **Horsedrawn Barge 50th Anniversary Open Day**
Mr P Brind, Tiverton Canal Company wished to formally thank everyone on the Committee especially Mark Baker for all their hard work. It was a spectacular day. Mr Baker also passed on his thanks to all involved and to Mr Brind for doing a great job of MC-ing the event.
- **Green Flag Award**
Cllr C Slade congratulated the Canal Ranger Service on achieving the Green Flag Award for 2024/2025.
 - **Events**
Cllr C Slade was pleased to see the wonderful turnout for the events
 - Mr M Baker also wished to thank all those that attended the Canal summer site visit.
 - Mr R Walton commented on the Review of the Definitive Map and Statement which was included in the Progress Report and hoped to receive representations from the residents of Tiverton. There was an opening meeting on 7 October at the Town Hall, Tiverton.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

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45 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following was raised:-

- The occurrence of water leaking at Sampford Peverell down the road and into the canal despite efforts from Devon County Council. Developers were still not complying with regulations. This was affecting the ecology of the water as there were very few fish in that stretch of water. Mark Baker stated that he believed a local resident had referred a lack of planning enforcement with regard to drainage arrangement on the housing development to the Ombudsman.
- Cllr G DuChesne raised the Greenway Planning Application and asked if any members of the JAC wished to attend the DCC Planning Committee Meeting on 23rd October. Cllr A Pilgrim confirmed that he had been asked by Members to draft a response and raise an objection and would be interested to attend. Cllr R Radford would also attend to represent Sampford Peverell.
- Signs for dog fouling as this still continued to be a problem. Mark Baker explained that he had been in touch with Enforcement Officers over the last few weeks. With regard to signs Mark Baker would look into this further but stressed that he did not want to see excessive signage along the towpath and doubted how effective they would be.

46 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

It was requested there be an update on water transfer at the next meeting and to continue to keep this as a standing item on future meetings.

It was **AGREED** that the clerk would contact Aggregate Industries to invite them to the next meeting of the Committee along with their Consultants.

47 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Monday 3rd March 2025 at 7pm.

(The meeting ended at 7.50pm)

CHAIR