The Kennet and Avon

Canal Heritage Lottery Fund Partnership (HLFP)

ANNUAL REPORT (*Draft: Rev4: 24 July 2014*)

April 2013 to March 2014

Executive Summary

This report summarises maintenance and operation expenditure on the Kennet and Avon Canal, as divided by Local Authority Area, for Business Year 2013/14. The report sets out information that fulfil the Trust's reporting obligations that are set out in the HLF (Restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal) agreement.

Role and Objectives of the Canal and River Trust

The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) was established in July 2012 and has responsibility for canals, rivers, docks and reservoirs, along with historic buildings, archives and three waterway museums, including the National Waterways Museum.

These valuable assets are recognised as a national treasure and a local haven for people and wildlife, and they are held and managed by the new Trust on behalf of the nation. The principal role of the Trust is to care for this unique legacy, holding it in trust for the nation in perpetuity.

The Canal and River Trust has been working hard during the last twelve months to develop and refine its long term strategy, recognising that the Trust has a different focus and to British Waterways.

Guided by the Trust's new Chief Executive, Richard Parry, the organisation is under-going a significant change in emphasis to ensure that this longer term strategy is achieved.

The Trust recently unveiled its key values that will provide the context for all of its future work; Excellence, Openness, Caring, Inclusive and Local.

Funding

Funding streams remain as reported in the 2012/13 summary, noting that the Trust is becoming increasingly engaged with raising money from individual donors and sponsors. Income is derived from the following sources:

- individual donors and corporate sponsors;
- commercial income including revenue from the licensing of boats, moorings and angling; and revenue from property and utilities;
- grants from the other organisations e.g. HLFP; and
- a 15 year contract with government.

Many individuals and organisations are supporting the Canal and River Trust on both local and national levels. The Trust has been able to raise funds to address local, specific issues. For example, locally, the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust recently made a significant donation toward funding flood damage repair works on the River Kennet.

With respect to grants and contributions from other organisations, the Trust is similarly continuing to explore new opportunities all of the time. For example, the Trust hopes to secure funding to rebuild lengths of public towpath that were washed away during winter floods. West Berkshire Council is attempting to obtain government funding to pay for repairs to flood damaged lengths of towpath.

The Trust is proactive in utilising its property assets and joint venture vehicles to bring forward land to deliver regeneration, wider benefits to the community and to attract private sector investment. As a charitable trust, all net rental income and capital receipts generated from our property estate and other commercial activities are used to maintain the waterways.

Waterway Partnership

As reported in 2012/13, as part of the Trust's governance arrangements, 13 local partnerships have been established to help the Trust shape strategic plans. The Partnerships guide the Trust's decisions about spending and help develop local engagement, external funding while championing the interests of the waterways

The three year strategic action plan for the Kennet and Avon Waterways will be published shortly. This plan was developed in consultation with the waterway's many partners and stakeholders (see Draft Plan in Appendix).

Kennet and Avon Canal: Key Statistics

The following tables summarise key statistics about the Kennet and Avon Waterways:

Canal length in each area		**km**
Reading	R Kennet - London St to Fobney lock	3
Reading	Fobney Lock to boundary	2
West Berks		43
Wilts		65
B&NES	Boundary to R Avon	9
B&NES	R Avon to Hanham Lock	18
Total		**140 km**

In addition to the towpath there are numerous engineering, environmental and heritage assets which are managed and maintained by CRT;

Eng Assets	Wilts	B&NES	West Berks	Reading	Total
Locks	57	12	34	3	106
Bridges	90	42	78	12	222
Aqueducts	8	2	2	0	12
Tunnels	3	2	0	0	5
Reservoirs	0	0	0	0	0

	B&NES	**Wiltshire**	**West Berkshire**	**Reading**
Conservation Areas	5	8	8	0
Non stat wildlife sites	Entire canal corridor	10 approx	14 approx	4
SSSI	5 (in or adjacent)	3	6	0
Permit holder moorings	26	41	36	2
Visitor moorings	17	28	12	0
ANOB	Cotswolds AONB	North Wessex Downs AONB	North Wessex Downs AONB	
Heritage Sites (See Appendix 2)	1 World Heritage Site 5 Grade II* 2 historic Parks and Gardens 6 Grade II 1 Scheduled and Grade 1 Aqueduct	1 Scheduled lock flight 1 Grade 1 Pumping Station 1 Historic Battlefield 1 Grade II* 9 Grade II	1 Scheduled Lock 2 Scheduled and listed Locks 7 Grade II 1 Grade II*	

Expenditure - Kennet & Avon Waterway April 2013 to March 2014

CRT has undertaken an analysis of what was defrayed on the K&A Waterway in 2013/14 on activities ranging from lock repairs and vegetation management to bank and weir maintenance.

In 2013/14, the cost to the Canal and River Trust of operating and maintaining the Kennet and Avon Canal was just over £4 million. This compares to a total invoiced contribution from the Councils of £295,410.

CRT also analysed what should be spent on the waterway if sufficient revenue resource were made available, a model it refers to as 'Steady State'. This model however does not take in to account the expenditure it would need to spend on arrears to reach a position at which 'Steady State' could be adopted. In comparison, the 'Steady State' model suggests that a budget of £5,516,640 + RPI would be needed each year to maintain the waterway within the three funding council areas. The Council contributions therefore make a significant step toward bridging the gap between the waterway budget and the Steady State figure.

Maintenance works along the canal are prioritised every year, taking account of factors such as public safety, structural condition, amenity and usage. This being the case, the proportion of total expenditure in each Local Authority area varies from year to year, depending on current priorities. Note also that each of the Local Authority areas is different in both length and number of principal assets (bridges, locks, aqueducts, culverts etc) that fall within its boundaries (see Key Statistic information, above).

The figures below have been abstracted from the Canal and River Trust's accounting system. As such, they will be largely accurate with the exception of possible cost coding errors that may not have been identified and corrected.

Bath and North East Somerset

A length of approximately 27 kilometers of the Kennet and Avon Waterways falls within the Bath and North East Somerset Local Authority area. Note however that of this 27km, the Canal and River Trust only owns approximately one third. The River Avon section is generally in riparian ownership, with the exception of the locks and associated structures.

Over £215k was spent within the B&NES area during 2013/14. Similar to previous years, a significant portion of this expenditure was river related. Flooding events during the winter required a concerted tidying up effort and around £40k was spent on spot-dredging to reopen the locks.

Routine vegetation management cost over £20k, including £16k on grass cutting and £6k on hedge trimming. A further £20k was spent on tree management. Weston Cut benefitted from a nationally funded campaign of offside vegetation management; the channel is now clear of overhanging vegetation. Associated dredging works removed around 30 bicycles from the channel.

Waste disposal and recycling accounted for approximately £12k of expenditure within the Bath and North East Somerset area.

Works to the towpath adjacent to Cleveland House have improved drainage; volunteers were successfully engaged with this project and there continues to be a strong volunteering base in Bath (**Figure 1**). Volunteer Lock Keepers are now an integral feature of the Widcombe Lock flight and a section of waterway around Deep Lock has been adopted.

Further afield from the City, nearly £7,000 has been spent on the continuing restoration of Claverton Pumping Station, an important local visitor attraction. Works have been entirely undertaken by skilled volunteers, saving the Trust significant maintenance costs.

The Canal and River Trust has recorded 7,500 hours of volunteer effort in the Bath and North East Somerset area for the year 2013/14.



Figure 1: Volunteers, Saltford, River Avon

Wiltshire Council

A little over one million pounds has been spent on the 65km of waterway and towpath within the Wiltshire Council area in 2013/14, including routine vegetation works.

Bank protection works and associated towpath reconstruction remain the most significant area of expenditure in Wiltshire. Notable projects from 2013/14 include works between Bradford on Avon and Widbrook (£90k) and Milkhouse Water, Pewsey (£71k).

Large scale offside tree management works have been undertaken, notably at Muir Hill (between Dundas and Avoncliffe Aqueducts).

Annual grass cutting cost approximately £38k and waste management and recycling cost £29k.

Volunteers play an important role in the operation and maintenance of the Kennet and Avon Canal in Wiltshire. Notably, a very strong group of volunteers are present in Bradford on Avon and have contributed enormously to the upkeep of the canal.

The Canal and River Trust has recorded over 13,500 hours of volunteer effort in the Wiltshire Council area for the year 2013/14.

West Berkshire Council

Over £990,000 has been spent in the West Berkshire area (a navigation length of approximately 43km) during 2013/14. Lock Repairs contributed to around half of this total, with major works undertaken in Hungerford and at Tyle Mill.

Around £34k was spent on routine grass and hedgerow management.

Other significant expenditure was made toward towpath and bank repairs, both planned and unplanned.

Planned works included the towpath west of Newbury (**Figure 2**, below), toward Guyer's Lock (£70k). Unplanned works have arisen in the Burghfield area (west of Reading, see **Figure 3**, below) where flood water significantly damaged the towpath and canal embankments. Repair work commenced in 2013/14 and has continued into Business Plan 2014/15.

The Canal and River Trust has recorded just under 1,000 hours of volunteer effort in the West Berkshire area for the year 2013/14.



Figure 2: Planned Bank Protection Works and Towpath Reinstatement, Newbury



Figure 3: Flood Damage and Overtopping, Burghfield

Planned Future Works

The Canal and River Trust operates a three year rolling programme for more significant works. The works programme is subject to variation and is updated to account for unforeseen arising works; for example repairs to flood damage. Major works (generally works that will cost in excess of £100k) are part of a National programme; therefore works arising on other waterways can have an impact on the Kennet and Avon programme.

At present, significant forthcoming works on the Kennet and Avon Waterway are as follow:

Year 2014/15:

- Dog Head Stakes Weir replacement and associated navigation improvements, £500k – due on site late summer 2014 (Newbury, West Berkshire)
- River Avon Navigation Improvements (installation of weir booms and signage, landing stage improvements – tall mooring bollards and canoe ramps, installation of electronic warning system etc.), £700k in – due on site October 2014 (Bath to Hanham, BaNES)

Year 2015/16:

- Seend Wharf Bridge, abutments stabilisation and bridge refurbishment works, £250k (Seend, Witshire)
- Dredging schemes – exact locations to be agreed but currently Avoncliff £100k (Wiltshire)
- Sheffield Lock Refurbishment, £300k (West Berkshire)
- Biss & Semington Aqueducts Refurbishment, £75k for design development and £425k for construction. Note aspiration for 50% HLF contribution to fund works to these Listed structures (Semington and Trowbridge, Wiltshire)

Year 2016/17:

- Dredging, Long Pound £600k (Devizes to Wootton Rivers, Wiltshire)
- Dredging, Crofton, £300k (near Marlborough, Wiltshire)
- Pewsey Embankment Moorings (bank protection and wharf brick work repairs), £500k in (Pewsey, Wiltshire)
- Pewsey and Milkhouse, protection of embankments from badger damage, £300k (Pewsey, Wiltshire)

In addition to the above major schemes, the Waterway will be continuing with its programme of bank protection and towpath improvement works.

Much of the work that the Canal and River Trust does has a strong emphasis on maintaining or enhancing the natural environment. All of the bank protection works referenced in this report are undertaken in an environmentally sensitive way that protects and enhances the emergent reed fringe and provides connectivity for flora and fauna at the water's edge. An insight into this work is well provided in the following linked YouTube video that was filmed and edited by one of volunteers:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71aiWage1IU&feature=youtu.be

Summary

CRT continues to recognise the importance of the contributions made by each of the HLF funding partners. Without this support the gap between current expenditure and 'Steady State' would grow and inevitably non-essential activities such as vegetation maintenance and towpath refurbishment could be reduced in scope or curtailed.

A loss of amenity would be counter-productive to all parties involved; the Canal and River Trust remains committed to working constructively with its Partners.

Mark Stephens, Waterway Manager,

Kennet and Avon Waterways,

July 2014