



MEETING NOTES

Title	South East Partnership Meeting
Date	Monday 18 September 2017
Venue	Foxton Locks Tour followed by Partnership meeting at Foxton Locks Inn, Foxton
Attendees	John Best (Chair), Dick Pilkington (DP), Tim Carter (TC), Kathryn Dodington (KD), Samantha Bradford (SB), Matthew Hunt (MH) Jenny Ballinger (JB) CRT Staff –Vicky Martin (VM), Emily Nicholas (EN), Alison Crofts (AC) Alex Goode (AG)
Apologies	Lynda Paynton Cath Fincher (CF)) Ann Davies (AD)

Tour of Foxton Locks

AG, Foxton Site Manager, advised that his role was to support Foxton as place to visit and flagship attraction for Canal & River Trust. He has been working on new signage and interpretation as part of Project Compass, improving maintenance & site presentation and enhancing the quality of the visitor experience to help attract more visitors. Other developments include

- Dipping platform - planning and conservation permission has been agreed and materials purchased.
- Duke of Edinburgh Award – young volunteers are taking part in an adventure camp for a week to assist with lock keeping and learn new skills. There is also a bronze award volunteer who has been coming over a 4/5 month, accompanied by an adult due to his age.
- Help the Heroes – in discussion about offering volunteering opportunities as part of a rehabilitation programme. Includes looking after flower beds and grass cutting which is one of the sites biggest costs.
- A grass tractor mower/trailer - hoping to purchase to assist with grass cutting and moving supplies on site (£5-10k for grass tractor motor versus £800-900 for one cut by contractors)
- Inclined Plane – looking to make safe area for outdoor theatre performances / music. Historic England has given permission to cover the inspection chambers. Partnership suggested glass plate and make the chambers a feature. AG to liaise **AG** with Phil Emery

1. Welcome to, introductions and apologies

JB welcomed the group and introductions

2. Declaration of Interest

No further declarations of interest

3. Minutes of last meeting

Previous meeting notes were approved as an accurate description of discussions of the last meeting at Bulbourne

Langford Lane development - 'Green Zone' pilot in London to provide an operating framework and inform costs. Pilot costs (£120k) have been funded with grants from DEFRA, Islington Council & the Trust. Progress has been slow due to disagreement over issue of zero tolerance on smoke and fumes, which the Trust is not able to support. Partnership suggested BWML may have knowledge of costs and infrastructure required.

Batchworth Education Centre - Rickmansworth Waterway Trust has within a 6 month period reached a £200k funding target and have decided to fundraise for the full amount. It is disappointing that the Trust was not able to be more responsive to the opportunities presented due to business planning priorities. However we have been offered the opportunity to have a multi-media kiosk in the existing Lock Centre. Would need to bid for funding in BP18.

VM

4. Tring Reservoirs/Marsworth/Wendover Arm DMP

A summary of progress to date was given. Site visits, a boat trip, review of local/regional policies & strategic plans, internal & external stakeholder consultation, SWOT analysis & visitor research has been undertaken.

Findings suggest that visitor numbers, whilst still significant, are much lower than has been previously suggested. A sensitive approach to development of the reservoirs as a visitor destination is required due to the SSSI status. The HMWT Lease & Management Agreement and lack of support for growing visitors and developing a visitor centre were discussed.

Three strategic options were outlined:

- 1) A pay to enter environmental themed visitor attraction
- 2) A free to enter visitor centre with pay for use activities
- 3) A nature reserve resort

Options are not mutually exclusive and elements of each can be combined.

Recommendations: to work closely with Natural England, look at short term general improvements and consider a mix of the above

Action: VM to circulate Tring DMP draft version for any further comments or views.

VM

5. Hillmorton

JB had reviewed the draft report on archaeological investigations and assessment. Whilst incomplete, it was a competent, technical piece of work.

Members discussed the Old Mortonian's proposal to restore the basin and acknowledged the benefits of creating a heritage attraction on a busy flight and close to a new housing development.

Concerns were raised about water resources, the level of internal resource (engineering, environmental, heritage, hydrological, waterway etc) required to oversee and support the restoration. Also that any restoration should be for public benefit and not the exclusive use of a small number of boaters.

The importance of the restoration of the arm at Hillmorton was considered in the context of existing regional priorities: Wendover Arm, Buckingham Canal, Daventry Canal Arm and Bedford & MK Waterway Park. It was agreed that

- 1) The restoration of the arm at Hillmorton is not currently a strategic priority, to review in BP20
- 2) DMP to be developed for Hillmorton in the future (BP18 priority is Oxford – city and country)
- 3) All activity at Hillmorton should be authorised and overseen by the Trust.

6. Business Planning 2017-18 update

An update had been circulated and members were invited to feedback

7. A.O.B

Partnership agreed AMP to be held on 19 October and combined with User Forum, to be held:

- 1) Milton Keynes or
- 2) Braunston

TC invited partnership meeting to be held at Weedon in Summer 2018. (Portacabin and trip boat available)

AC about to have major operation but will be returning to work in the New Year.

VM leaving the Trust in November to take up role as Head of Visitor Attraction Strategy for Welsh Water. A new Waterway Manager will be appointed as an internal secondment so that there is a handover period. The Waterway Manager will take forward Stoke Bruerne developments. External recruitment is in progress for a Destination Development Leader, who will take forward developments at Foxton & Ponty.

DRAFT