



Canal &
River Trust

Keeping people, nature & history connected

NOTES KENNET & AVON PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Date Wednesday 30th July 2014

Venue Newbury Stone Building, Newbury

Attendees WP Members

Tamsin Phipps (Chair), Alan Aldous (AA), Rob Dean (RD), Emma Fearnley (EF)

CRT Staff

Susie Mercer (SM), Richard Rutter (RR), Matthew Symonds (MS), Alison Jordan (AJ)

Apologies WP Members

Andrew Harry (AW), Ian Williamson (IW), Terry Fell (TF), Ken Oliver (KO), Alistair Millington (AM)

Mark Stephens (MJS)

Action

1. Welcome

TP (Chair) welcomed Partnership members to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

RD declared an interest in his role with the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust (KACT). KACT had looked at CRT plans to replace Dog Head Stakes Weir below Newbury and believed these plans to be badly flawed. The KACT would not be commenting through the West Berkshire planning process but intended writing to Vince Moran, Technical & Operations Director to register its concern.

3. Notes of previous meeting

(Friday 16th May 2014 Devizes Office)

Notes of the previous meeting were circulated and discussed.

The following points were raised:

MJS to investigate if a report was obtainable to measure the damage caused by hire boats or other boats along the K&A.

MJS to feedback to members.

MJS

RD met with Elaine Stanley (Education Volunteer Co-ordinator) with regards to arranging an 'Explorers' schools group next year in Newbury which will mean that the Kennet & Avon will have three active explorer groups. A recruitment campaign was now under way. The workload of managing this was such that recruitment of a volunteer manager to help with bookings and events is needed.

TP reported to members that a group has been set up and is functioning on the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. This group was set up by local council authorities.

4. Business boating – verbal update SM

SM discussed a range of new proposals with the partnership, including new holiday hire boats, new hotel boats, a new passenger boat and a new fixed location trading boat for various locations in the waterway unit. It was agreed that an 'options report' for the trading mooring at Bradford on Avon would be discussed at a later date. The Partnership discussed how important it was for the waterway to consider fully the impacts of new fixed location trading boats and it was observed that as these are deemed to be 'development' in planning terms that local authorities might like to consider placing requirements on operators to make improvements to the canal infrastructure as part of the consent. SM urged members not to seek to make such applications so burdensome as to be unviable. SM explained the national policy of permitting one self-drive holiday hire boat to be operated from each suitable directly managed mooring site so as to allow 'private' owners wishing to hire out their boats a route to do this legitimately. She added it was now very difficult indeed for new prospective owners to find suitable operating bases on the western end of the canal.

5. Kennet & Avon local plan update MS

MS reported that CRT has received communication on 166 separate issues about the K&A local plan through either the KAMooring@canalrivertrust.org.uk email address, customer service phone number or direct contact with enforcement officers.

The communication has mainly been regarding extended stays, clarification of visitor mooring stay times, requesting information on the local plan from boaters who say they have not received it (although our records show that the information was sent to all the boaters who contacted CRT with this query) or clarifying information about the local plan. One boater has requested their CRT sighting record, this has been provided.

Volunteer mooring rangers have been recording more frequent sightings at the following visitor mooring locations Bath, Darlington Wharf, Bathampton, Dundas, Avoncliff, Bradford on Avon.

CRT are recruiting volunteers to undertake increased sightings at visitor moorings at Widbrook, Hilperton, Whaddon, Semmington, Seend Cleave, Sells Green or Foxhangers.

*Volunteers have now been recruited to start sightings at Widbrook from August

A final report on 14 day movement patterns will be completed and a three month summary report of movement patterns will be published in August.

AA suggested there should be a national press release to promote the plan and movement of boats as a 'good news story'

RR to liaise with Joe Coggins (National Press Officer) to develop a communications plan. **RR**

Waterway Partnership expressed satisfaction that the majority of boaters seemed so far to be complying with the guidance.

6. K&A Action Plan

The Partnership Group discussed the activities and actions required to implement the plan.

RD reported successful recruitment stands at Reading and Newbury Water Festivals and RD & EF have been working on a User's Guide which will cover Kennet navigation advice.

AA to arrange a meeting with Tony Sims, Principal Waterway Engineer CRT, to discuss a navigation advice system on the River Avon. **AA**

Some of the actions were filled by members present and AJ will send out the plan to the members that were not present to help populate the remaining responsibilities. **AJ**

7. K&A Microsite AJ/TP

AJ and TP presented the new microsite to the Partnership members explaining the areas that can be changed and/ or added to going forward.

It was suggested a volunteer may be able to assist with adding changing content, MS to make enquiries. **MS**

8. K&A HLF Partnership RD

CRT has produced a second annual report which summarises maintenance and expenditure on the Kennet & Avon Canal as divided by Local 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 & Avon Canal) agreement.

RD reported to the Waterway Partnership members that the local authorities are very keen for these meetings to continue in the future.

Local authorities felt that the Partnership profile needs to be raised.

Group discussed recruiting a member of Council to sit on the Partnership.

9. Trustees visit

RR reported to the Group that a Trustees meeting will be held on the 19th November 2014.

Suggested area for the trustees to visit is Newbury and the Trustees will spend the day visiting significant areas of the canal.

10. AOB

Advisory signage is being produced for a 'Quiet zone' at Avoncliff.

A date has been fixed for the next APM – which is November 12th 2014 at Bath Cricket Club.

11. Date of next meeting

Friday 26th September 2014 Canal and River Trust Office Devizes 10:00 hrs – 13:00hrs