

Berkhamsted Town Council Canal and Riverside Partnership
Minutes of Towpath Walk, 20th October 2011 at 9.00 am

Present:

D Collins (DC) Berkhamsted Town Council, Chair

F. Macdonald (FM) Berkhamsted Town Council

J Clifton (JC) British Waterways

Karen Fishwick British Waterways

Martha Holdom British Waterways

R Cassidy (RC) Dacorum Borough Council

1. The group carried out an inspection walk from the Canal Fields section of the canal towpath to the Castle Street Bridge and then back along that stretch and beyond to the Stag Lane bridge.
2. The group generally noted the condition of the towpath along this stretch, along with any other items which required attention e.g. bridges, locks.
3. In particular the following was noted:
 - (i) Waitrose bridge – requires a non slip service
 - (ii) Large hole in verge near Castle Street bridge (British Waterways reps reported this for immediate attention)
 - (iii) Cracked wall by Castle Street bridge (British Waterways reps took photos to be passed on to engineers for assessment as to whether it is dangerous and needs repairing)
 - (iv) Railings by Mill Street in need of repainting
 - (v) Nettles to be cut back between Bulbourne and Canal towpath past Canal Fields bridge
 - (vi) Lock no.53 needs repainting
 - (vii) Lock No.52 needs repainting and graffiti removed
 - (viii) Lock No.51 needs repainting
 - (ix) Towpath particularly muddy and requiring attention around Castle Street and past Canal Fields towards Stag Lane
 - (x) Brass rubbings in need of cleaning

4. JC confirmed that large items of rubbish in the canal such as supermarket trolleys should be reported to British Waterways for removal. There may be a delay in such removal unless the items block navigation along the canal.
5. British Waterways confirmed that regular grass cutting and tree trimming is carried out to allow a passable passageway along the towpath and any incidences where this has not occurred can be reported to them.
6. The flooding which occurs underneath the Castle bridge was discussed and it was identified that because of the levels involved here it would be too difficult and costly to carry out works that would prevent this occurring.
7. It was noted that there are only two rubbish bins by the towpath on the Moor sections. To be followed up with DBC what bins will be put here when it carries out its rubbish bin replacement programme.
8. The LEADER funding project was discussed and D Collins to follow up status of this.

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Minutes of meeting 17 November 2011, Berkhamsted Civic Centre

Present:

D Collins, BTC Chair
J Clifton, British Waterways
C Cox, Berkhamsted Community Partnership
G Bluck, Berkhamsted Citizens' Association
R Cassidy, DBC
D Hilling, Inland Waterways Association

Apologies:

F Macdonald, BTC
A Beechey, Chiltern Chalkstreams

The draft minutes regarding CARP Canal Towpath walk were tabled and approved for circulation. DBC has approved an increase in the Canal Footbridge budget from £13,250 to £65,397, 9 November 2011.

Concerning the cleaning of Brass Rubbing stands alongside the canal, G Cox is to discuss options with National Trust and other appropriate bodies. G Cox will also liaise with Town Warden.

Concerning the painting of lockgates 51-53, British Waterways agreed to fund materials and to provide advice.

G Cox will discuss with Community Payback at DBC.

D Collins will seek possible help from Swan Youth Project.

Engineering actions identified from walk have been logged by British Waterways.

Towpath Refurbishment, Castle Bridge to Stag Lane: cost budget for resurfacing the towpath is projected to be £70,000. Potential sources of funding include Leader Project Grant (bid submitted), Herts County Council (to be bid for). Comments from the Leader Project organisers indicated concern that British Waterways, which owns the towpath, was not contributing towards the cost. JC, for British Waterways, confirmed that they owned the towpath. After a wide ranging discussion it was agreed to:

- Review other funding options – G Cox
- Cost up an alternative focussing on repairing the worst spots rather than a total resurface. JC, British Waterways to advise.
- JC, British Waterways, confirmed that it would fund up to 15% of project cost but preferred to focus on a complete resurface of footpath from Castle Street Bridge to Stag Lane.

DH Confirmed that there is an ecological drought which is affecting the flow of the River Bulbourne. If the current rainfall patterns continue there could be a formal drought status early in 2012.

DH suggested CARP revisited proposals for a Town Heritage Site at Lock 51. The objective would be to produce an educational resource. DH to provide more information. JC confirmed BW would work in partnership and provide project management. G Cox indicated such a project could unlock additional sources of funding. He will investigate these opportunities.

**Date of next meeting: 9.00 am 2 February 2011,
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted**