

The *Wilts & Berks* Canal Partnership

MEETING Thursday 13th March 2008 at 2.00pm
Ground floor, Civic Centre Wootton Bassett

Attendance:-

✓	ABn	Cllr Andrew Bennett	Swindon Borough Council
✓	AB	Alison Blyth	Vale of White Horse
✓	AD	Amy Dickenson	Environment Agency
✓	AF	Anda Fitzgerald O'Connor	Oxfordshire County Council
✓	BA	Brian Atfield	Cricklade Country Way Trust
✓	BR	Brian Roberts	Inland Waterways Association & W&BCT
✓	CF	Colin Fletcher	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
✓	CG	Colin Goodhind	Melksham 1st
✓	DT	David Tetlow	Cricklade Town Council
✓	EP	Elizabeth Payne	Inland Waterway Association / Cotswold Canals Trust
✓	ES	Ed Stanford	Swindon Borough Council
✓	FDP	Cllr Fleur de Rhe Philipe (Chair)	Wiltshire County Council
✓	GC	Geoffrey Carr	West Wiltshire DC Melksham Town Council
✓	GK	Garry King	Wiltshire CC
✓	IJ	Ian Jarvis	British Waterways
✓	IS	Ian Sharp	White Horse Boats
✓	JL	John Laverick	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
✓	KJ	Karol Jakubczyk	West Wiltshire District Council
✓	KO	Ken Oliver	Cricklade Country Way
✓	RB	Rolf Brindle	Melksham Without PC
✓	RW	Richard Wilshire	Melksham Trust
✓	TQ	Tracey Quinn	North Wiltshire District Council
✓	VV	Cllr Viv Vines	North Wiltshire District Council

Item

1 Apologies:-

David Stirling – NWDC
 Andrew Crawford VoWHDC
 Mary Lambe - Vale of White Horse District Council
 Kennett & Avon Canal Trust
 Cllr Sylvia Doubell – NWDC
 Elizabeth Payne - Cotswold Canals Trust
 Gavin Champion - Cooper Tire & Rubber Company Europe Ltd
 Cllr Viv Vines – NWDC

2	Minutes of last meeting 13th December 2007 (pre circulated)		
	Minutes agreed as correct and a true record.		
3	Matters arising		
	<p>JL – I have contacted the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust but they have indicated that they feel their position may be compromised if they join the Partnership</p> <p>FDR – Will speak to Dr Gary Mantle of the Wilts Wildlife Trust to try and move this forward.</p> <p>Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust could also be invited to join this partnership.</p> <p>IJ - Local Development Framework – the canal will be added to this document.</p>		
4	Chairman's Announcements		FDRP
	<p>No announcements apart from British Waterways has pulled out of the Cotswold Canals Partnership project.</p> <p>BR - The IWA was highly disappointed.</p> <p>IJ – BW had to make a painful decision as funding was needed to support a canal that was already operating following a major landslide. BW were still continuing to support Wilts & Berks project with technical help and small financial contributions</p> <p>KO- WBCT had made written submission to EFRA Committee</p> <p>Post Meeting Note</p> <p><i>WB Canal Partnership President Lord Lansdowne has had a successful operation and is recovering. KO has sent best wishes from Partners. Lord Lansdowne has replied looking forward to attending June meeting.</i></p>		
5	Canal Partnership Report		KO
	5.1	Swindon Central Route	ES
		<p>ES –The shop in the centre of Swindon has had a lot of interest. A Task group has been set up and will meet in 2 weeks time. Cllr Phil Young is leading on this. There were public concerns about the route. We need to keep sending positive and informative messages to the public. The Task group will look at the financial viability, and traffic issues.</p> <p>KO – In partnership with Swindon BC, WBCT has opened an information centre in Swindon (1 Theatre Square) to showcase the scheme. It is manned on Friday & Saturday. It gets the message across and is a huge publicity benefit.</p>	
	5.2	LDF West Wiltshire	
		<p>KO – Thanks to those have supported the WBCT formal objections to the draft LDF.</p> <p>CG Melksham Enhancement Scheme now published – Task group meets next week to discuss the paper and we will compile a list of concerns and we will publish this document.</p>	
	5.3	Swindon Eastern Development Area	
		<p>Expansion to the East – A Task Group is putting together a plan which would embrace the canal aspect of the proposed development. Halcrow has been employed to look into the feasibility and options for the canal.</p> <p>Cllr ABn– There has been a 2nd workshop meeting at the Borough. Highlighted was the positive impact of having a canal to alleviate flooding issues previously experienced in the area. The local Parish Council has had a meeting to get feedback on the proposed plans – there is another meeting planned in May.</p> <p>KO – The canal could be used in all sorts of way – If it looked possible for the canal to follow the River Cole valley into Swindon, going across the Magic Roundabout would be a challenge as an engineering project.!!</p> <p>Cllr ABn – The options are shown in Swindon BC core strategy</p>	

	5.4	Land Acquisition	
		<p>KO – Apologised for not having circulated a paper as promised. The anticipated delivery for the whole project was 10-15years and it is essential that acquisition of the land is addressed as a priority to progress. In taking opportunities WBCT is acquiring many different leases. In order that there can be a guaranteed delivery a land acquisition solution is required. This could be achieved by a Local Authority CPO strategy and if this is an acceptable solution planning consent would need to be in place and monies available to actually carry put the CPO process.</p> <p>In raising this now, I am seeking to make partners aware that this is the most crucial issue to be dealt with in the next few years.</p> <p>A successful delivery of the canal track would allow an early public benefit in countryside access via the restored towpath..</p> <p>FDR – Our Capital budget would make it impossible for us as a Local Authority to provide any funds to a purchasing ‘pot’.</p> <p>If there was an external source for the £10m needed to purchase the land I would expect the LA support to follow!</p> <p>KO - WBCT would appreciate a view as to whether the LA’s would be able to take on this role</p> <p>AB -VoWHDC are disposing of assets to charitable trusts where possible.</p> <p>FDR –We cannot resolve this now but the subject has now been raised and we will come back to it when everyone has had a chance to consider it more thoroughly</p>	
6		Project Officer Recruitment	KO
	6.1	Arrangements for funding and Partnership workload	
		IJ - Can DS spell out the financial situation regarding the canal post for the group.	Action DS
7		Project Managers Report on Cricklade Country Way	KO
		<p>We have had a feedback meeting with Big Lottery Fund programme manager. Planning Consent and Land Acquisition were considered high risk in terms of deliverability. We were told that updates to the projects would be accepted after the 31st of May when the business plan and proposal were delivered to BLF. We were concerned that the project seemed to be assessed only on the document and not subsequent information. BLF agreed that all schemes were in fact judged at the same ‘snapshot in time’..</p> <p>FDR – Considering the complexity of the project we did well to get this far.</p> <p>KO – We have engaged Hyder the ES to complete the Environmental Statement required for the NWDC Planning application for the scheme.</p> <p>In terms of funding we are looking at a wider geographic area which aid an application to Development Programme for Rural England.</p>	
8		Trust Chairman report	JL
		Nothing to report further from last meeting.	
9		Open Forum: issues and topics raised by Partners	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AF -Keith Mitchell (leader Oxfordshire CC) has realised what a good thing canals are and is fully supporting the restoration of the canal. KO – We would be pleased to make a presentation and update on the project KO – The Cricklade Country Way Trust is now active and is actively seeking new stake holders. 	
10		Date and times of next meetings for 2008	
		<p>2.00pm Ground floor, Civic Centre Wootton Bassett:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12th June 11th September 11th December 	

The Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership

MEETING Thursday 12th June 2008 at 2.00pm
Ground floor, Civic Centre Wootton Bassett

Attendance:-

✓	ABn	Cllr Andrew Bennett	Swindon Borough Council
✓	LL	Lord Lansdowne	President
	SD	Cllr Sylvia Doubell –	North Wiltshire District Council
✓	CF	Colin Fletcher	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
✓	CG	Colin Goodhind	Melksham 1st
✓	DT	David Tetlow	Cricklade Town Council
✓	EP	Elizabeth Payne	Inland Waterway Association / Cotswold Canals Trust
✓	DE	David Evans	Swindon Borough Council
✓	FDP	Cllr Fleur de Rhe Philipe (Chair)	Wiltshire County Council
✓	GK	Garry King	Wiltshire CC
✓	JW	John Ward	British Waterways
✓	JL	John Laverick	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
✓	KO	Ken Oliver	Cricklade Country Way
✓	RB	Rolf Brindle	Melksham Without PC
✓	RW	Richard Wilshire	Melksham Trust
✓	VV	Jack Konynenburg	North Wiltshire District Council

Item

1	Apologies:-	
	Ed Stanford Swindon BC Cllr Geoffrey Carr West Wiltshire DC Brian Roberts IWA/WBCT David Stirling – NWDC Cllr Andrew Crawford VoWHDC Cllr Mary Lambe - Vale of White Horse District Council Kennett & Avon Canal Trust Gavin Champion - Cooper Tire & Rubber Company Europe Ltd Cllr Viv Vines – NWDC Cllr K Mitchell Oxfordshire CC Samantha Godfrey EA (replaces Amy Dickenson)	
2	Minutes of last meeting 13th March 2007 (pre circulated)	
	Notes agreed as correct and a true record.	
3	Matters arising	
	Elizabeth Payne main noted that she was not at the previous meeting.	

4	Chairman's Announcements	FDRP
	FDP welcomed Lord Lansdowne to the meeting	
5	Canal Partnership Report	KO
	5.1 Swindon Central Route	KO AB
	<p>The project had taken a lower profile during the recent local elections. A task group had now met twice and was concentrating on work around the forthcoming Examination in Public of the Swindon Central Area Action Plan, and in contacting British Waterways to discuss viable funding sources for the project.</p> <p>AB noted that a recent on line poll conducted by the Swindon Advertiser had the canal as the top project voted for to revive the town centre</p>	
	5.2 LDF West Wiltshire	KO
	<p>July 18th has been set for the inspector to review the LDF Tourism & Recreation policy where W&BCT had objected asking for the new route in Melksham to be included. A number of other organisations had written in support of WBCT. It was not clear what Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has submitted and CG undertook to find out what had been written. RW noted that the officers at WWDC had the view that this process would demonstrate the robustness of including the route, as the matter will have had the full opportunity for public debate</p>	
	5.3 Swindon Eastern Development Area	AB
	<p>Work was continuing on the Master Planning process and a second workshop had been held. Halcrow were working on a report for the canal restoration as part of the development.</p>	
	5.4 Land Acquisition	KO
	Nothing further to report	
6	Project Officer Recruitment	DS
	<p>DS apologised for his absence from the meeting and had pre-circulated papers with a recommendation for the Partnership to agree a short –term solution to engage Tracey Quinn and a consultant to provide Partnership Administrative support from now to April 2009 .</p> <p>JK gave further information about the proposal: Further to the report an action agreed at previous meetings for Ken Oliver to provide continuing support for the Partnership on a one day a week basis, the changes to staffing arrangements at North Wilts DC have caused a further impact on the ability of the ADR team to provide staffing support. It had been agreed that desk space and IT facilities would continue to be provided . It was proposed that £20k held by NWDC on behalf of the Partnership would be transferred to W&BCT and that the Trust would engage Tracey to work on a 4 day a week basis , based principally at Monkton Park. The work programme for the Partnership is outlined in the papers.</p> <p>JL confirmed that W&BCT had agreed to this arrangement subject to confirmation from the Charity Commission.</p> <p>KO noted that without this arrangement the Partnership would lose a considerable knowledge base, and although it was better to have a clear distinction between the Trust & Partnership this was a workable short-term solution.</p> <p>SD noted that there was currently under-spends on most NWDC budgets.</p> <p>FDP confirmed that the arrangement was acceptable to Tracey. KO said that the Trust had confirmation of this.</p> <p>It was agreed to accept the recommendation from DS report and to proceed with the contract as soon as possible.</p>	

7	Project Managers Report on Cricklade Country Way	KO
	<p>A bid had been submitted to SWRDA for the Development Programme for Rural England (Leader) The bid is a new partnership with Cotswold Water & Gt Western Community Forest and other stakeholders as a Local Action Group- Vale of the Upper Thames. The application was for £2.2m. The funding available is £28m . Total bids received are in the order of £56m . The result will be known in July.</p> <p>Hyder have submitted a draft Environmental Statement, and ecological surveys are being carried out on the canal line and at Mouldon Hill. We expect to submit a Planning Application to NWDC in September . S&C Railway have recently opened a new section of track. Subject to the results of the ecological surveys work on the car park at Mouldon Hill is expected to start in the autumn</p>	
8	Trust Chairman report	JL
	JL noted progress on the Trust construction projects and a number of successful funding initiatives including a £10k award from BLF/BBC Breathing Places.	
9	Open Forum: issues and topics raised by Partners	
	<p>RB asked for clarity on the rate of building at Wichelstowe. AB noted that like all developments construction had slowed.</p> <p>CG wanted to know what had happened to the motion presented to Swindon BC to stop the central route proposal. AB noted that the motion had not been carried.</p> <p>JL asked the partnership to consider renaming to the Wiltshire & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership with a strap line 'restoring the Wilts & Berks Canal.'</p> <p>It was agreed to consider this at the September meeting</p> <p>LL asked the Partnership to not lose sight of the planning aspects of the project and while the short term economic situation may prevent capital investment , we must work to maintain the route through the LDF procedures</p> <p>CF noted some progress with discussions with a landowner near Calne.</p> <p>KO reported meeting with VOWHDC to discuss S106 contributions from the Grove Airfield housing development.</p> <p>AB noted that a revised planning application had been submitted for the Coate Water site in Swindon.</p>	ALL
10	Date and times of next meetings for 2008	
	<p>2.00pm Ground floor, Civic Centre Wootton Bassett:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11th September • 11th December 	

The Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership

MEETING Thursday 11th September 2008
Ground floor, Civic Centre Wootton Bassett

Attendance:-

	ES	Ed Stanford	Swindon Borough Council
	DS	David Stirling	North Wiltshire District Council
	AW	Cllr Audrey Wannell	Wootton Bassett Town Council
	BR	Brian Roberts	Inland Waterways Association
	CF	Colin Fletcher	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
	JL	John Laverick	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
	RB	Richard Bellamy	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
	BA	Brian Atfield	Cricklade Country Way Trust
	DT	David Tetlow	Cricklade Town Council
	EM	Eileen McKeever	Environment Agency
	JA	Cllr John Archer	Haydon Wick Parish Council
	JS	Jim Sherry	Planning Policy Manager, West Wiltshire DC
	AB	Alison Blyth	VWHDC Planning Policy Officer
	FDP	Cllr Fleur de Rhe Philipe (Chair)	Wiltshire County Council
	GC	Cllr Geoffrey Carr	West Wilts DC, Melksham Town Council
	JW	John Ward	British Waterways
	IS	Ian Sharp	Commercial Member
	KO	Ken Oliver	Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership
	RB	Rolf Brindle	Melksham Without PC
	RW	Richard Wiltshire	Melksham Town Council, Melksham Trust
	PH	Pauline Hoskins	Scribe – North Wiltshire District Council
Item			

1	Apologies:- Lord Lansdowne, Liz Payne, Gavin Champion, Terry Kemp. Anda Fitzgerald-OConnor, Mary Lambe, Samantha Godfrey, Cllr Sylvia Doubell, Colin Goodhind, Gary King, Cllr Andrew Bennett	
2	Minutes of last meeting	
	The Minutes of the Previous meeting on 12 th June 2008 were agreed and noted.	
3	Matters arising	
	No matters arising.	

4	Chairman's Announcements	
	The Chairman informed the meeting that the Trust is planning to place an application to the BURA Waterways Renaissance Awards 2009, comments were welcome. Applications must be made by 30 th September 2008	ALL
5	Canal Partnership Report	
	KO reported that he is continuing to work one day a week to deal with Partnership duties/issues.	KO
	5.1 Swindon Central Route	
	<p>The Task Group Committee is set up and meeting regularly. The task group has now discussed progress on transport and economic studies, and on how funds will be raised.</p> <p>KO discussed two possibilities for accessing European Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Life Plus – This is an annual programme exploring bio-diversity. A representative from the Canal Task Group is attending a Workshop in London on September 26th b) Interreg (Transnational Co-operation) – Are currently looking for general partnerships with an idea to promote common work. As we are already twinned with Nates a Brest Canal we are talking Inland Waterways Association (Ireland) who may have some project possibilities to consider. <p>FDP commented that Wiltshire groups had done well in receiving £7m funding from SWRDA Leader funding, but unfortunately not for the canal project</p>	<p>ES</p> <p>KO</p>
	5.2 LDF West Wiltshire	
	<p>KO has been involved in trying to include the route corridor for the canal in West Wilts DC Recreation and Leisure LDF (as outlined in Black Veatch report)</p> <p>As reported to previous meeting the Trust had not felt comfortable about being on the 'opposite side of the table' to a partner (WWDC) but as the route had not been included in the LDF , this seemed to be the only option available.</p> <p>The LDF was examined by a Government Inspector at a public meeting in July. The process was less formal than the Local Plan Enquiries</p> <p>The route corridor plan was discussed in much detail</p> <p>Following the enquiry the Inspector asked a number of questions to WWDC. A response to those questions was made and has been commented on by the Canal Trust. The inspector will announce his finding in October 2008. It was noted that there is an unresolved issue with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. JL reported that he had attended a very favourable meeting, with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, where they agreed to give their support for seeking funding for an EIA. Colin Goodhind had been in email contact to offer his services to the Partnership to try to resolve the issues with WWT.</p> <p>Jim Sherry commented that if the route was not accepted as part of the LDF it would be included in the core strategy and that he would make time available to discuss this further with the Trust</p> <p>ES commented that Swindon Borough Council were considering the correct place to put the route is in the Core Strategy of the Framework.</p> <p>It was noted that the historic route (as protected in the saved Local Plan) didn't include Melksham Town as there is no route through, with the historical line stopping to the North of Melksham.</p> <p>There were some concerns about the delay in getting an assured route through the Core Strategy which will need to be integrated into the new Core Strategy for the County . This could take up to 2 years .</p> <p>The Trust noted that they have an aspiration to create the new junction at Semington to coincide with the joint 200th anniversaries of the opening of the K&A and Wilts & Berks canals in 2010 .</p> <p>JS confirmed that he could not see any reason why a separate planning consent could not be applied for ahead of the route in the Core Strategy</p>	<p>KO</p> <p>JS</p>

	5.3 LDF Paper protection of Canal Route	
	<p>A number of papers had been tabled by the Trust concerning ongoing work on the LDF's along the length of the canal and the continuing work to assure the route after the current Local Plans are replaced</p> <p>Some consideration needs to be given to the deliverability of the canal in the lifetime of LDF.</p> <p>AB noted that Vale of the White Horse are undecided about whether the canal policy would be in the core strategy, and reminded the Trust that the evidence base for the project still needed to be supplied.</p> <p>Partners were asked to note the need to continue to include a protected route in the emerging LDF's</p>	
	5.4 Cricklade Country Way	KO
	KO informed the meeting that the Environmental Survey is back, and the next steps is to apply for planning consent with North Wiltshire District Council.	
	5.5 Partnership Web Site	KO
	<p>KO reported that in considering how the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership delivered the message of the Canal Project, it had been suggested there was a need for a Canal Partnership web site A temporary site is now running at www.wiltsandberkscanal.org.uk which includes a brief mission statement and a vision to 2025.</p> <p>KO was exploring the possibility of getting a college based Post Graduate Student, with technical knowledge to further enhance and design the website.</p> <p>KO also asked partners to consider having a specific page on their web sites which could be cross-linked to the Partnership web site</p>	
6	<p>Local Authority Reports and Issues - Previously discussed in these minutes 5.1 & 5.2.</p> <p>Administrative Support - The position of Administrative support assistant is still vacant, and we are still looking to recruit this post directly.</p>	
7	Wiltshire unitary Authority Update	
	<p>DS gave an update on the position regarding the recruiting of senior management in the Unitary Authority. Corporate and Service Directors are in place, with future interviews for Heads of Service being carried out in September or October '08.</p> <p>There is ongoing discussion as to which Service directorate the Canal Project is allocated</p> <p>There should be some clarity by the end of September and when the new structure is in place the Partnership Officer post would be considered.</p> <p>The Chairman informed the meeting that there will be elections in June 2009 for the Unitary Authority, along with European Elections.</p>	DS
8	Trust Chairman Report	
	<p>An update report was given regarding the continuing work being carried out on various sites on the Canal:</p> <p>Lock 4 at 7 Locks Tockenham is now complete Design work has been started for Lock 2.</p> <p>Hayes Knoll Lock has received at grant for £5000</p> <p>Drainage work at Childrey Wharf is under way.</p> <p>Work is nearing completion at Chaddington spillweir and Steppingstones Lane bridge</p> <p>Wilts & Berks Canal Information Book 2008/09 was circulated at the meeting, and picked up some favourable comments, as it highlights the good work being done, It had been produced by the Swindon Advertiser at no cost to the Trust.</p> <p>After 2 years of negotiations, the lease for about a mile of canal and Pewsham Locks has been signed. The plan is to create an Education and Heritage Centre at the Locks, focusing on what the Wilts & Berks Canal was used for. The Trust is applying to Heritage Lottery Funds for a substantial grant</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>KO</p>

9	<p>Open Forum:</p> <p>9.1 Name of Partnership – Several options were discussed and it was agreed that unless there was a strong desire from Oxfordshire CC to change it would be better to continue with the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership</p> <p>9.2 Issues and topics raised by Partners</p> <p>The Swindon EDA Report was discussed and work is still ongoing looking at a route to East of the Town, with a feasibility study to be incorporated into the Master Plan.</p>	
10	<p>Date and times of next meetings for 2008/9</p> <p>2.30pm Ground floor, Civic Centre Wootton Bassett:-</p> <p>11th December 2008 (PLEASE NOTE LATER START TIME)</p> <p>Dates for 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12th March, 11th June, 12th September, 10th December • 	



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17 July 2008

John Laverick
117 High Street
Wootton Bassett
Swindon
Wilts
SN4 7AU

Our Ref: P1/58/019884/08
Your Ref:

Dear Mr Laverick,

Charitable trust disadvantaged as Local Development Frameworks replace Local Plans

Thank you for your letter to Prime Minister Gordon Brown which was received by my office on 8 July and to which I am providing this reply on behalf of the Prime Minister, in my capacity as a Senior Planning Officer in Communities and Local Government.

I am delighted to hear of all the hard work and success that your organisation has had in restoring the Wilts and Berks Canal. I also appreciate that this is an ongoing project which requires the partnership of many organisations including the relevant local authorities.

The change from Local Plans to Local Development Frameworks should, in fact, make this partnership working far easier than before, rather than preventing it. Under the old system, local authorities were not able to produce joint local plans, and consequently relied more on 'unofficial' channels to ensure consistent policies across boundaries. However, this meant that, on occasion, one local plan may have been progressing some years apart from another, and a coherent strategy would not therefore be in place until all individual plans were adopted.

The Local Development Framework system encourages joint working, and this, along with the re-emphasis on spatial planning, is intended to ensure councils can deliver a wide range of different services, and support the co-ordination of those services.

All local authorities were asked to 'save' whichever of their 'old style' local plan policies they needed, until these were replaced by policies in the new style development plan documents. I am assuming from what you said that all local authorities in your Trust area chose to save policies safeguarding the route of the canal. If this is not the case, this is not due to the change in system, but a change in local authority policy.

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If the local authorities did save those policies, then they will remain in force until replaced as I mentioned above.

I acknowledge your point regarding 'certainty' in terms of delivery and funding, and revised national Planning Policy Statement 12, 'Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities through Local Spatial Planning', certainly emphasises this message, that all necessary infrastructure must be able to be shown to be deliverable.

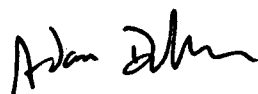
However, this does not mean that every penny needs to be accounted for at this stage. What is important is that the overall project can be shown to be both viable and deliverable, by way of showing that there is 'buy-in' from all parties expected to assist in the delivery of it. This would include yourselves and all local authorities. I would expect that this is very easy to show, given the commitment and success achieved thus far.

To summarise therefore, I would like to assure you that the change in system is actually designed to encourage joint-working of the kind your Trust has been involved with, and will actually make it easier for a group of local authorities to adopt a joint development plan document which would ensure, in this case, the safeguarding of the route of the canal through each authority. This would need to be backed up with evidence not only of buy-in, in terms of commitment to the work, but also of a reasonable chance of the project being able to be completed. Despite funding being 'ad hoc' I do not foresee there being a problem with showing overall deliverability.

Finally, your sentence which states 'we are advised that the formally protected route will no longer be protected' is not as a result of the new system. If each local authority wishes to continue to protect the route, they now have a system which will help them produce a single, joint plan, to achieve this, rather than relying on all their individual plans, coming forward at different times, making the same commitment.

I trust this response will help allay your fears, and suggest that, should you encounter further problems, you will need to ask each local authority why they are no longer protecting the route, as I can see no reason based on what you have stated in your letter, in terms of the new system, why this doesn't continue to be the case.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Dodgshon', with a stylized, cursive script.

Adam Dodgshon

10. Planning

10.1 In paragraph 6.73 of WfT, the Government undertook to

- support the development of the inland waterways through the planning system;
- review each Planning Policy Guidance when it is revised, with the aim of developing the potential of the inland waterways through the planning system;
- invite IWAAC to prepare a good practice document with a view to it being published jointly with DETR, explaining the contribution that inland waterways can make to regeneration and other projects, and highlighting examples of good planning.

10.2 IWAAC's good practice guide on planning for the inland waterways was published in 2001, but otherwise progress in this area has been disappointing.

10.3 On the national scene, the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) format has now been replaced by the Planning Policy Statement (PPS). There has been little success in amending policies to incorporate the particular needs and opportunities of waterways because the new format of such policies has removed most of the already limited detail in the older PPGs. Examples where waterways have actually lost ground include the revisions to PPG17 *Recreation and Sport* and the new PPS11 *Regional Spatial Strategies* and PPS12 *Local Development Frameworks*. In these, although "BW, canal owners and navigation authorities" are listed as "other" consultation bodies in the preparation of the Strategies/Framework, there is a lack of understanding at regional and local level of:

- the multi-functional nature of inland waterways;
- the inherent constraints i.e. they are "non-footloose" assets;
- the economic value of inland waterways;
- their role as public assets with 93% of visitors using them free of charge;
- the scale and impact of third party development and the costs these can impose;
- the regeneration potential within national priority areas for growth and revitalisation; and
- factors affecting the long term sustainability of the system and the impact of planning policies on them, e.g. the national shortage of offline moorings, the future provision of freight wharves.

10.4 There is no reference to WfT or to the subsequent Government-endorsed IWAAC Good Practice report in any of the new PPSs and, indeed, no recent evidence that national planning policies are even aware of the documents.

10.5 The situation at the regional planning level in England has been, at best, fragmented. The London Spatial Strategy is very positive but very few of the other published or revised regional planning strategies encompass the full range of policies in WfT. Most do not even cross-refer to them under various policy headings. One or two concentrate only on the potential freight-use of inland waterways (following the lead in PPS11) in the mistaken belief this is the only function that needs to be emphasised for economic development. The DCLG *Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism 2006* does refer to "the unique characteristics and attributes of inland waterways" but regional spatial strategies consistently fail to address the role of inland waterways as a regional leisure, tourism, recreational and heritage resource and so fail to set out land use requirements needed to protect, develop, regenerate and improve the waterways. The exceptions are the Broads and the Thames, which are covered reasonably well in terms of leisure contributions to the economy and as environmental resources. Elsewhere, waterways are either seriously underplayed or ignored completely.

10.6 Such inadequate coverage at national and regional level has cascaded down into very patchy coverage of waterway potential at local planning level, where only enthusiastic local authorities have given comprehensive coverage.

10.7 The draft Wales Spatial Plan, published for consultation in 2003, made only one reference to waterways in its policy sections, and failed to develop any significant waterway component in its sub-regional frameworks. Despite representations, the final approved Plan ignored the strategic importance of waterways in Wales. Work on regional strategies within the Plan is currently underway. Efforts are being made to incorporate specific support for the restoration and development of inland waterways in Wales:

- National planning policy guidance in Wales is also embodied in *Technical Advice Notes* (TANs) and here the picture is somewhat more positive. Waterways are referenced in TAN18 *Transport* and in draft TANs13 *Tourism* and 16 *Sport, Recreation and Open Space*, although the quantity and quality of advice is limited.
- As in England, local coverage relies very much on the attitude of individual local authorities. Only a few, such as Newport and Torfaen, with a major local restoration project on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, and Neath Port Talbot, which has assisted the Neath Canal restoration, are very supportive.

Chapter 10 – Conclusions

- 1 The unsatisfactory nature of planning coverage of waterways at national and regional level highlights the failure of Government to present an integrated approach to the implementation of WfT's planning commitments.
- 2 A PPS is needed for England specifically on the importance, value and potential of inland waterways.
- 3 In Wales, pressure needs to be maintained on the developing regional strategies to encourage further waterway use, development and restoration.

The Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership

MEETING Thursday 11th Decemeber 2008
Ground floor, Civic Centre Wootton Bassett

Attendance:-

ES	Ed Stanford	Swindon Borough Council
DS	David Stirling	North Wiltshire District Council
AB	Cllr Andrew Bennett	Swindon Borough Council
BR	Brian Roberts	Inland Waterways Association
CF	Colin Fletcher	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
JL	John Laverick	Wilts & Berks Canal Trust
LL	Lord Lansdowne	President Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership
EP	Elizabeth Payne	Cotswold Canal Trust
KB	Ken Burgin	Cotswold Canals Trust
TR	Tony Robinson	Cotswold Canals Trust
DT	David Tetlow	Cricklade Town Council
RR	Russell Robson	Environment Agency
GC	Gavin Champion	Cooper Tires
JS	Jim Sherry	Planning Policy Manager, West Wiltshire DC
AB	Alison Blyth	VWHDC Planning Policy Officer
FDP	Cllr Fleur de Rhe Philipe (Chair)	Wiltshire County Council
IS	Ian Sharp	Commercial Member
KO	Ken Oliver	Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership
RB	Rolf Brindle	Melksham Without PC
RW	Richard Wiltshire	Melksham Town Council, Melksham Trust
AF	Cllr Anda Fitzgerald-O Connor	Oxfordshire County Council
CG	Colin Goodhind	Melksham Town Council
	Also in attendance as observers: Lione Washington Campbell Hannah Oakley	Bath University

Item		
1	Apologies , Terry Kemp., Cllr Mary Lambe, Cllr Sylvia Doubell, Garry King, John Ward, Cllr G Carr, Mark Smith, Cllr Andrew Crawford, Brian Attfield	
2	Minutes of last meeting	
	The Notes of the previous meeting on 11 th September 2008 were agreed and noted.	

3	Matters arising	
	No matters arising.	
4	Chairman's Announcements	
	Letters to the Partnership from Waterways Minister (Huw Irranca -Davies) and Michael Wills MP were noted (Circulated with these notes)	
5	Canal Partnership Report	
	<p>Partnership Strategy Document was pre-circulated. KO apologised for the short notice in getting this document to everyone but asked partners to identify any areas that needed amendment. The intention was for an initial discussion at this meeting . By mid January KO asked all to email any comments or amendments so a second version could be circulated in early February for approval by Partners at March meeting</p> <p>CG asked if there was a view on who would receive the final document. KO thought that it would be sent to all interested stakeholders rather than used a general PR tool. [A later discussion also noted that Parish Councils along the canal route should be sent the document]</p> <p>ES asked that a timescale is included for the standalone sections proposal</p>	ALL
	5.1 Swindon Central Route	
	ES reported that a summary of planning, funding and traffic issues would be tabled for lead members to consider in early 2009. It was now clear that the proposal was achievable but there remained questions on deliverability. AB noted the difficulties in funding streams from developers but also drew attention to the major projects that were about to start in Swindon town centre. BR congratulated Swindon BC on the report from Planning Inspectorate confirming the proposals in Central Area Action Plan.	
	5.2 LDF West Wiltshire	
	<p>JS confirmed that WWDC is currently working with WBCT to include the canal route corridor in the Core Strategy. This would be part of the work for the Wiltshire Core Strategy and was due for completion in 2011. JS noted that there were still some environmental issues to be resolved. KO reported that he will be meeting Bill Jenman from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust in the next few weeks to try to resolve the outstanding issues.</p> <p>AB noted that the Vale of White Horse Core Strategy will be available for public consultation in January 2009. The canal route will be an Development Plan Document within the strategy</p>	KO
	5.3 Cricklade Country Way	
	<p>KO informed the meeting that the CCWay Outline Planning Consent application will be sent to North Wiltshire District Council in week commencing 15 December. It was hoped that it would get to a planning committee before April 2009.</p> <p>DS noted that NWDC planners advised the project that if consent was granted , reserved matters would need to be discharged within 3 years and that substantial work on the project must have started in that time to keep the consent valid.</p>	
	5.4 Thames Crossing Cricklade	
	<p>Russell Robson introduced himself as the new representative of the Environment Agency, and out lined his role within the Thames Region. He had only being in post 4 weeks but was familiarising himself with a number of partnerships and was looking at the issues of the Thames crossing at Cricklade and would be communicating with KO in the near future. He reminded everyone that there would be a public consultation next spring on the implications for the Thames River Basin under Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>RW asked if he would be able to persuade EA colleagues to help find solutions for problem areas of the project. RR responded that he would be championing the project</p>	

	within EA but would need to take due regard of technical expertise of his colleagues.	
6	Local Authority Issues	
	<p>Partnership Funding 2009-10</p> <p>KO reported that the Service Director (designate) for Wiltshire Council (Mark Smith) had sent letters to all Partners asking for funding commitment for 2009/10. KO had a meeting with Mark Smith at outlined the project . British Waterways have responded to confirm their funding. JL said WBCT (subject to final confirmation) will be able to fund the requested contribution for 3 years. ES confirmed Swindon BC contribution. RR said that EA contribution would be subject to funds being available from project under-spends. AF note that Oxfordshire CC are finding a contribution difficult.</p> <p>FDP noted that it would be considerably easier for Wiltshire Council t o embrace the project if partners were able to commit funding .</p>	
7	Wiltshire unitary Authority Update	
	<p>FDR notes that the plans for transition were on time and to budget. Wiltshire Council will come into existence on 1st April and will be run on transitional arrangements until elections in June 2009</p>	
8	Trust Chairman Report	
	<p>JL noted the very well attended Trust AGM at Abingdon in October, which included a tour of local restoration sites. All would be welcome to attend the next AGM which will be hosted by the Foxham & Lyneham Branch. JL noted the retirement after 21years of the Membership Secretary (Chris Toms) and the recruitment of Mike Lang and Chris Coyle as Membership and Co Secretary respectively. JL also reported that the Trust would be making an appointment of an Environment Director shortly.</p>	
9	Any Other Business	
	<p>IS thought that ways should be found to get a commercial trip boat operating on any isolated section of restored canal</p> <p>LL asked that the partnership investigated any Government infrastructure funding that might be available</p> <p>BR asked that Partners note the responses from Thames Water regarding what canal infrastructure would be built if they gained consent for the Abingdon Reservoir. AF noted that there was local opposition to the Thames Water proposal.</p> <p>KB introduced Tony Robinson as the newly appointed Director for CCT Eastern projects, and gave some updates on the Cotswold Canal project.</p>	
10	Date and times of next meetings for 2008/9	
	<p>2.00pm Ground floor, Civic Centre Wootton Bassett:- Thursday 12th March 2009</p> <p>Dates for 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12th March, 11th June, 10th September, 10th December • 	