



MEETING Thursday 11th March 2021 at 2pm
Online meeting Microsoft Teams [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Item	<u>Notes</u>	
	Attending	
JL	John Laverick (President)	
CW	Cllr Chris Williams Wiltshire Council (Chairman)	
GS	Cllr Gary Sumner Swindon BC	
SB	Cllr Sue Brown Melksham TC	
JA	John Allan Cotswold Canals Trust	
RB	Richard Broadhead Wiltshire Council	
SM	Sam Meredith Environment Agency	
KO	Ken Oliver Wiltshire Council Partnership Officer	
GO	Gordon Olson Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	
SP	Steve Petty Berryfield Residents Association	
RW	Richard Wiltshire Melksham Trust	
1	Apologies: Dominic Lamb VWHDC; Tim Wheeldon Inland Waterways Association; Cllr William (Bill) Scott Semington PC; Paul Harris Oxfordshire CC	
2	Notes from the last meeting 4 th December 2020 (pre-circulated) were agreed (with minor technical amendment)	
3	Chairman's Announcements CW noted that the meeting was being recorded	
4	Partnership Officer Report- M4 Crossing Highways England Designated Fund KO reported that there has been no progress as the HE team dealing with letting the contract had been furloughed. GO noted that a consultant had at risk progressed some of the work and this would help to speed up the process when the contract was placed. Melksham Link- planning application KO said that EA had confirmed that they could accept a suitably worded condition subject to the outstanding environmental issues being resolved. Head of Planning (Mike Wilmott) has sent suggested wording to EA. WBCT are waiting for a delayed report from a consultant to complete the work on net biodiversity gain. JL commented that although progress was being made it was very slow. RW noted that Melksham Trust & Town Council are ready to form a group of interested parties as soon as the application is progressed.	

5

Projects update – Swindon Wichelstowe

Canalside Landowner issue.

KO reminded the meeting that the privately owned section of the canal to the north of Canalside had been closed for nearly a year following an ongoing issue concerning a covenant on the sale of Westleaze farm by Wiltshire County Council to the current owner's family. Wiltshire Council legal and property teams are currently examining the sale documents to try to determine the current implications of the covenant. **GS** noted that Swindon BC property service are trying to determine whether there is any legal right of passage on the canal. **KO** said that partners would do whatever they can to help WBCT to resume the revenue earning boat trips. **GO** said that once Covid restrictions were lifted the canal closure would deprive WBCT of approx. £1200 per month.

East Wichel- canal leak

New contractors have been appointed and will continue the programme of works to remove bunds to the east and to inspect underwater the section where the suspected leak is occurring. **CW** asked if there was a timescale for the works. **KO** said he had not been given a timeline but early spring was probably the best time for a suitable amount of rainfall.

Swindon New Eastern Villages-

WBCT have submitted a pre-app for the canal which will run in parallel with the Southern Connector Road.

Pewsham Locks

GO reported that work was still suspended due to the Covid situation. HSE were preparing a report on the 2016 fatal accident. WBCT are concluding a general Health and Safety review. The HSE may at the conclusion of their investigations decide to prosecute which could lead to the Trust being fined. This uncertainty is affecting the ability of the Trust to interact with commercial and local authority partners and therefore WBCT is keen to conclude the matter.

Shrivenham

GO said that like other work sites there was no progress due to Covid restrictions – funding is available from Inland Waterways Association to rewater a section of the canal adjacent to Stainswick Lane in Shrivenham (Pocket/Canal Park). Some work has been completed on the wildlife trails

Questions and other updates.

JA asked when WBCT were intending to restart work parties. **GO** said that in general WBCT were following IWA guidance and of course the Government framework 'road map'. Normal working would likely be June. **CW** thought that smaller groups might be possible before that time subject to what individual organisations assessed. **GO** noted that the average age of the WBCT workforce was on the higher side and therefore WBCT is being cautious. **GS** said that SBC are keen to get the East Wichel residents volunteer group back into action. **GS** was seeking to confirm if the agreement between SBC & WBCT for local maintenance was still operational as comments on social media seemed to indicate this was not the case. **GO** said that WBCT had previously organised work with the residents and he would be happy to deal with the matter if GS could write directly to him.

CW introduced Sam Meredith who was attending for the first time on behalf of the Environment Agency. SM said he is the Catchment Co-

	<p>ordinator for the Upper Thames a post previously held by Stuart Malaure. The role is intended to be the first point of contact for stakeholders and user groups. SM said that if specialist technical advice is needed from EA please initially make contact and he would channel enquiries to the right people. KO noted that the Wilts & Berks project spanned both the Upper Thames and Bristol Avon catchments. To avoid duplication it had previously agreed that Stuart would also deal with the Avon catchment issues by contacting the catchment coordinator there. SM confirmed that this arrangement would continue</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Partners Reports and Issues</p> <p>Cotswold Canals – With Phase 1b under way there is now an emphasis on delivering Phase 2 of the Cotswold Canal. JA said that the project was defined as running from the junction with the River Thames at Inglesham (Lechlade) to the Cotswold Water Park (Gateway bridge – county border) . <i>[The schemes and phasing are shown at the end of these notes Phase 2 is 10 miles long – 6 miles in Wiltshire 4 miles in Cotswold DC/ Gloucestershire].</i></p> <p>Advance planning is now taking place and one of the key elements will be assuring a water supply. A water strategy is being worked on and discussions with EA will be a key part of the plan. Reservoir storage, back pumping and some small abstraction will be required. JA reported that Offwat have been funding water resource projects across the water companies’ areas. Water Resource South East (WRSE) is one of those projects. One of the things being looked at (by Thames Water) is transfer of water from the River Severn either by pipeline or canal . As part of the overall study funding is being considered by one or more water companies for projects that are innovative and/or environmentally friendly and financially viable to contribute to water supply for the South East. CCT has applied for a number of projects, two of which involve use of water from Sewage Treatment Works at Cirencester and Swindon. One of the possible outcomes from these proposals would be the dilution of phosphates and nitrates in the canal before water is discharged into the river systems. If the proposals are accepted, then WRSE/water companies would provide a financial contribution to the studies. KO suggested further discussion between WBCT and CCT would be useful as part of the plans for the North Wilts canal restoration. KO also asked if the Phase 2 maps could be adjusted to show the new junction of the North Wilts at Eisey (not Latton as shown). JA concluded by reporting that the next major project on the western side (Phase 1b) is the new railway under bridge at the Ocean. Work originally scheduled for May has now been postponed until Christmas/New Year.</p> <p>SB noted Melksham Town Neighbourhood Plan is now with Planning Inspector and work was already starting on its next review. SB also said this would be the last meeting that she was attending as she was not standing in the elections in May. CW on behalf of the Partnership thanked her for all her work.</p> <p>RW thought that following too much television watching in lockdown there ought to be a canal equivalent of Great Railway Journeys.</p> <p>KO noted that Wiltshire and Swindon’s Local Plan review would be taking place during the year. GS said that Swindon BC will be carrying out a final consultation in July.</p>	



MEETING Thursday 30th September 2021 at 2pm
Online meeting Microsoft Teams [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Item	<u>NOTES</u>	
	Attending	
JL	John Laverick (President)	
NN	Cllr Nabil Najjar Wiltshire Council (Chair)	
MH	Cllr Mark Harris Melksham Without PC	
BS	Cllr Bill Scott Semington PC	
GS	Cllr Gary Sumner Swindon BC	
JA	John Allan Cotswold Canals Trust	
PH	Paul Harris Oxfordshire CC	
SM	Sam Meredith Environment Agency	
DM	Dick Millard Sustrans (volunteer)	
GO	Gordon Olson Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	
KO	Ken Oliver Wiltshire Council (Partnership Officer)	
SP	Steve Petty Berryfield resident	
PS	Peter Scatchard Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	
1	Apologies: Natasha Gumbrell Wiltshire Council; Tim Wheeldon IWA; Dominic Lamb VWHDC; Mark Evans CRT; Colin Goodhind Melksham Town Council	
2	Notes from the last meeting 11 th March 2021 were pre-circulated	
3	Chairman's Announcements The new Chairman Cllr Nabil Najjar Wiltshire Council Portfolio Holder for Arts, Heritage and Tourism made a brief introduction to the meeting.	
4	Partnership Officer Report- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M4 Crossing National Highways (Highways England) Designated Fund -KO reported that the work by consultants Stantec was nearly completed to produce a report of the feasibility of a canal culvert to cross under the M4 close to Wichelstowe. The report is intended to be the pre-cursor of a fully costed design to enable the project team to seek funding. KO noted that as part of the Wichelstowe southern access road construction, a culvert for the canal has just been completed under the re-alignment for Wharf Road. GS noted that this would future proof the canal restoration south of the motorway but for the short-term the culvert would be infilled with soil to protect the structure until it is required 	



- Melksham Link- planning application- **KO** reported that consultant's report on Biodiversity Net Gain has now been delivered to Wiltshire Council's ecologist . The next stage is to define what further works are required and also seek consent from the EA.
- Wiltshire Council Climate Change- Blue/Green Strategy –**KO** said that it had been noted that the original consultation had omitted canals , and Wiltshire Councils team were fully aware of the contribution made by canals and this would be reflected in the final text.

5

Projects update –

- Swindon Wichelstowe
 - Canalside- **KO** reported next phase of housing development has started- this will lead to the design work for linking section of canal from East Wichel to be carried out.
 - East Wichel- canal leak. **GS** confirmed that contractors would start work in October on the section identified as leaking(subject to weather conditions).
 - Landowner issue .**GS** reported that SBC had written to the landowner confirming that SBC were the 'owners' of the covenant and that it could be varied subject to WBCT having access to the canal.
- Swindon New Eastern Villages- **KO** reported that in parallel with the start of construction of the Southern Connector Road WBCT have now received the pre-app report on the canal. **GO** noted that to take this to a full planning application there was much work to be done particularly around flooding issues and appropriate consultant's reports. **GS** reported that many of the proposed housing schemes had been consented and although the canal design has been integrated into the various schemes, the developers have not been persuaded on the viability of construction of the canal. **JA** said that the experience of developers in Stroud has been a significant uplift in the value of housing by the canal. **GS** confirmed that Canalside housing had also seen this value uplift but the developers appear to think that this is not sufficient to justify the construction costs of the canal. Clearly this would be one of the considerations for WBCT to

	<p>look at as part of any decision regarding spending money at this stage on a planning consent. JL noted from his experience that sometimes developers did not use the best designs for housing to fully exploit the potential of the waterside environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swindon Local Plan consultation. GO confirmed that WBCT are responding to the consultation following further discussion with SBC officers and the canal restoration policy would be part of the conversation with a forthcoming meeting with SBC Chief Exec and Council Leader . KO noted that the Local Authorities have been very supportive in policy terms for many years in safeguarding the route of the canal and perhaps now, as delivery of the project is starting to gather pace, some more consideration of active support of the restoration may need to be considered. The strategic sections of restoration (discussed later) may be important in this process. PS said that the canal restoration from the River Thames at Abingdon to Grove was included in the recently published plans for the Water Resources South East (WRSE)reservoir. JA noted that the Cotswold Canals proposal for water transfer via the canal was still being considered and that contrary to the previous situation, it would appear that both the reservoir and water transfer are likely to be required. • Pewsham Locks – HSE update GO reported that a thorough review of all Health and Safety policies procedures had taken place at WBCT. WBCT has made HSE aware that all the terms of the prohibition order issued in 2016 are now being complied with and that WBCT would like to restart works • Shrivenham- the project at the ‘Pocket Park’ has stalled although funding is available. • North Wilts Canal – water supply – as part of the WRSE review the possibility of using the treated output form Swindon (Barnfield) STW was being considered as part of water supply for the North Wilts and Thames & Severn Canals . 	
6	<p>Partners Reports and Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to form M.P.s group for the Wilts & Berks project – JL said that before reporting on the national scene he had a regional update. JL noted the long term support from Wiltshire and Swindon but there had of late been a gap in political support in Oxfordshire. JL had been in touch with Cabinet member Duncan Enright who is the portfolio holder for development strategy, waterways and tourism, and Cllr Enright is very keen to join the WSO Partnership. He apologised for not being able to join this meeting but would like to be added to the distribution list and hoped to attend the December meeting. <p>JL said that he thought that the national contact with MP.s might best be handled by Nabil . GO noted support from a number of the MP’s along the line of the canal. KO said that forming an ‘interest group for Wilts & Berks would enhance the work already being carried out by the Parliamentary Waterways Group.</p> <p>NN said that he thought there was merit in organising a briefing and perhaps an initial meeting where we shared some of the issues discussed at this meeting and invite support and feedback . Likely</p>	<p>KO</p>

	<p>timing would probably be best in January. PS noted that the MP's in Oxfordshire were also aware of the project. GO endorsed that a coordinated approach would be very useful</p> <p>NN agreed to look at possible dates and agenda and would keep Partnership members informed. It was noted that some MP's have already been directly approached by the canal trusts. NN thought that in putting together this kind of event would be an opportunity for early engagement and also noted that if approved in 2023 there would be constituency boundary changes. The meeting agreed that NN should progress this item .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to form Partnership working groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Melksham Link -Swindon – Royal Wootton Bassett (RWB) <p>KO proposed that to progress these two major projects it would be more effective to set up working groups of interested and relevant Partners to look at specific projects – Canal & River Trust is keen to have a more focussed group for the Melksham Link , which might specifically look at third party funding . KO had already spoken to colleagues in Economic Development as they would be key to the scheme. BS wondered if Town and Parish Councils would be included. KO said that all organisations who had a direct interest in the scheme would be welcomed.</p> <p>It was agreed that this would be progressed for initially Melksham and then extended to the Swindon to RWB project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotswold Canals –Phase 2 Issues -JA reported that the main issues were around restoration of gravel abstraction sites. There is a number of outstanding planning issues on two sites that need to be resolved. • Cotswold Water Park -SSSI boundary changes. GO had been notified of changes that would now exclude the Wilts & Berks Canal from the SSSI- JA asked if that information could be shared as the SSSI extension was still impacting on the Cotswold scheme. 	NN
	<p>AOB</p> <p>JA asked if was correct that Wiltshire Council had approved the gifting of land it owned to the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. KO responded that officers had been empowered to make such transfers by the Strategic Assets Committee. The process had started with Morningside farm in RWB but was currently on hold pending the outcome of the HSE situation and any possible fine. JA asked if a similar arrangement could be made for the Cotswold Canals – KO suggested that this request is pursued outside the meeting while noting there were commercial constraints on the land where gravel is to be abstracted.</p>	
7	<p>Date and time and location of next meeting : Thursday 2nd December 2021 at 2pm – This will be an online meeting</p>	



MEETING Thursday 2nd December 2021 at 2pm
Online meeting Microsoft Teams [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Item	<u>Notes</u>	
	Attending	
JL	John Laverick (President)	
NN	Cllr Nabil Najar Wiltshire Council (Chair)	
CG	Cllr Colin Goodhind Melksham Town Council	
MH	Cllr Mark Harris Melksham Without PC	
PS	Cllr Peter Smith	
GS	Cllr Gary Sumner Swindon BC	
JA	John Allan Cotswold Canals Trust	
CC	Chris Clark Wiltshire Council	
ME	Mark Evans Canal& River Trust	
SM	Sam Meredith Environment Agency	
DM	Dick Millard Sustrans (volunteer)	
GO	Gordon Olson Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	
KO	Ken Oliver Wiltshire Council (Partnership Officer)	
SP	Steve Petty Berryfield resident	
PS	Peter Scatchard Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	
TW	Tim Wheeldon Inland Waterways Association	
LW	Luke Walker Wessex Waterways Restoration Trust (Guest) part of meeting	
1	Apologies: Dominic Lamb VWHDC & Cllr Enright Oxfordshire CC.	
2	Notes from the last meeting 30 th September 2021 (pre-circulated) were agreed.	
3	Chairman's Announcements noted that the meeting was being recorded for administration purposes.	NN
4	Presentation by Wessex Waterways Restoration Trust -Luke Walker outlined the work of WWRT and how it intends to work with the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust and requested that they join the WSO Canal Partnership. LW then left the meeting and the proposal was discussed. It was agreed that the presentation was circulated to all Partnership members following the meeting to allow time for any non-attending members to express their point of view. Members were invited to contact KO or JL or GO for any further background. Post meeting note <i>Following the deadline of 11th December it was agreed 'nem con' that the Wessex Waterways Restoration Trust would be invited to join.</i>	
5	Partnership Officer Report- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M4 Crossing National Highways Designated Fund. GO said that the work of Stantec should be completed by the end of the month and it is likely that the report will indicate an increase in biodiversity and that the proposal is feasible. The report will be informally 	GO KO KO

	<p>reviewed by Swindon BC before publication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melksham Link- planning application- KO reported that the progress was still slow and not assisted by the fact the head of planning (who was acting as case officer) has left the Authority. The new head (Kenny Green) has asked for a briefing note about the project (<i>post meeting note-it has now been compiled and sent by WBCT.</i>) The current status is that issues around the habitat loss in the river (created by impoundment) need to be resolved to the satisfaction of EA and Wiltshire Council’s ecologist. A report proposing some wetland mitigation/compensation has been commissioned by WBCT. KO reported that WBCT were still struggling to find a process to agree with EA the proposed planning conditions. SM agreed to see if there was any way he could help. • Wiltshire Council Local Plan- status of route protection GO had asked this to be discussed at this meeting to clarify the situation. KO said the work on reviewing the canal policy would start in 2022. The policy in any local authority’s plan should prevent via development control any development on the protected route. However there have been examples where the LA has ignored its own policy. The only certainty for route protection is a formal planning consent for the whole canal. GO said that WBCT would fully engage with the consultation next year. 	
6	<p>Projects update –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swindon Wichelstowe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Canalside KO said that the housing development is moving on into the next phase. Preliminary design work is starting on the linking section of canal between East Wichel and Canalside. GS said the work on this section of the canal could start as early as 2023 ▪ East Wichel- canal leak. KO said the contractors were working to repair the leak into the culvert and other sections further west are being leak tested ▪ Landowner issue SBC have indicated to the landowner of the closed section that they would be willing to lift the covenant regarding land use. There has been no response yet. • Swindon New Eastern Villages- KO reported that the pre-app response from SBC now being considered by WBCT team. WBCT is also seeking to liaise with new developers who have purchased the Lotmead site (2000+homes). It would seem sensible that if funding could be found, then construction of the canal while all the machinery is on site would be less disruptive and more cost efficient • Pewsham GO said that discussions still ongoing with Health and Safety Executive about restarting work on top lock. The coroner has sent the papers from HSE to the Director of Public Prosecutions where another review will be held into whether WBCT will face prosecution for criminal negligence. WBCT solicitors are making the point that WBCT has already had an explicit statement from Crown Prosecution Service that there would not be criminal proceedings. In the meanwhile other works continue on this busy site. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Levelling up Funding KO reported that the – Montgomery Canal restoration has received funding from the Government’s levelling up fund of over £15m. This had been almost exclusively due to the lobbying from the local M.P. At the current time there is no funding in Wiltshire from this source . • IWA National Policy Panel –KO (who sits on this panel) reported that there was a proposal for a Canal Restoration Fund to be established in a similar way the railway restoration fund where groups could bid for projects. IWA will investigate if this could be a possibility 	
7	<p>Partners Reports and Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to form M.P.s group for the Wilts & Berks project. NN said that a letter had been prepared and would be sent out shortly to hopefully convene a meeting early in the New Year. • Proposal to form Partnership working groups : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Melksham Link KO noted that this had been discussed by Wiltshire Council’s economic development team and it had been agreed that the project will be included in their work. It is the aim to set up a working group of interested organisations, with particular emphasis Canal & River Trust involvement.. CG asked if the Parish and Town Councils would be included. KO said that they would be invited to join. CG noted the Town Council interest in the hydro power scheme. -Swindon – Royal Wootton Bassett This group to follow on successful inauguration of the Melksham Link group • Cotswold Canals –JA reported on the Stroud to Saul section (Phase 1b) the installation of the new railway culvert (under bridge) will take place over the Christmas and New Year holiday. The process to get permission to spend the Lottery funding is now nearly complete with a start date for the project anticipated for March 2022 • 	
8	<p>Date and time and location of next meeting : Thursday March 3rd 2022 2pm online</p>	