



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.

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**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>	

Date and time and location of next meeting :
Provisional dates for 2021: Thursday 3rd June

