



MONMOUTHSHIRE AND BRECON CANAL – CRUMLIN ARM WORKING GROUP – 6TH FEBRUARY 2025

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE CANAL

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND
ENVIRONMENT**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Canal Working Group Members on all matters relating to the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 This report details the current and planned maintenance, and any capital works planned for the forthcoming year. Details are provided on current funding availability and a general statement is provided outlining any current operational issues regarding the usage and the condition of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal – Crumlin Arm.

2.2 Members of the working group are asked to note that ensuring the integrity of the canal channel and connecting culverts thus maintaining water flows and levels is the priority of the Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the working group note the contents of the report, and the updates provided.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To provide members with an update of details of the current and planned maintenance and any capital works planned for the remainder of this year.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 MAINTENANCE UPDATE

5.1.1 Canal Channel

Weed cutting/channel maintenance for 2025 will be scheduled for the usual months - September/October with additional supervision from Parks Officers to assist in the successful management of the operation.

5.1.2 Grass Maintenance

The first cut of the season is due in March 2025 continuing onto a 3 to 4 weekly cycle with the final cut of the year in October 2025.

5.2. 2025/2026 WORKS PROGRAMME

5.2.1 Towpath

Subject to a successful funding bid to Welsh Governments Brilliant Basics fund, there will be some towpath enhancements works associated with the repairs to the leaking Aqueduct.

5.2.2 Access Enhancement

Subject to priority and available funding, new removable cycle barriers will be replaced along the entire length of canal.

5.2.3 Water Control

The canal feed was turned off in late October 2024 and is scheduled to be reinstated in March 2025. Over the past quarter, no issues with water levels have been reported other than water levels rising during the storm events in December. These were monitored daily with no issues of concern raised,

The abstraction licence fee of £6,517 has been paid to Natural Resources Wales (NRW), and confirmation of a valid application has been received. The statutory determination date for the application is 13 May 2025, and if approved, the licence will be valid until 31 March 2041.

There are no further updates regarding DCWW and the Manor Road emergency feed.

Gabion installation for silt control at the uncontrolled feed near the Darran is planned to begin week commencing 27 January 2025. The work will be conducted under a temporary towpath closure. If this method proves effective in managing silt and debris build-up, it may be implemented at other problematic locations.

Subject to available revenue funding, there is an intention to cleanse all culverts at the five breaks along the canal corridor during 2025/26. These locations include Darran Road, Navigation Road, Thistle Way, Gelli Avenue, and Manor Road

5.2.4 Dredging

There are no planned dredging works for 2025/26.

5.2.5 Tree Maintenance

Planned tree maintenance is progressing and being managed by the authority's Arboriculturalists. Reactive works to deal with tree falls is also ongoing.

5.2.6 External Funding

Engineering and Regeneration officers are currently preparing a funding bid for the Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics Funding stream. The application seeks £300k, with £60k in match funding sourced from the canal capital budget 2025/26. The bid aims to secure funding for repairs to the leaking aqueduct

5.2.7 Channel Leak Repair

Phase 5 re-lining works (from Greenmeadow Bridge approximately 500m north) remains a priority for the council (subject to securing external funding).

5.2.8 Emergency Works

Following Storm Bert, a minor landslip occurred on the outer edge of the towpath near Sarn Place. Structural engineers inspected the site and, as a precaution, the passing bay on the canal towpath behind the slip was secured with Heras fencing. Subsequently, officers arranged for alternative access through the vehicular gate at Temperance Hill in response to a request from an elderly resident.

The landslip has been regularly monitored for further movement, with no additional movement observed to date. A funding application for stabilisation works was submitted to the Welsh Government's Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme but was unsuccessful, as the works were unfortunately classified as maintenance.

5.3. FUNDING

5.3.1 Capital

Exact figures are yet to be confirmed; however, based on the planned works at the Darran Gabions scheduled to begin in late January 2025, the remaining capital budget for the financial year 2024/25 is estimated to be approximately £50k. It is expected that this remaining amount will be carried forward to supplement the anticipated capital allocation of £200k for 2025/26, resulting in a total budget of around £250k.

5.3.2 Revenue

The budget allocation for 2025/26 remains uncertain, as it is unclear whether any portion will be removed and redirected as a cost-saving measure. If no reductions occur, the budget allocation is expected to be £100k. The revenue

budget is allocated to miscellaneous maintenance activities, including grass cutting, tree maintenance, culvert cleansing, and de-weeding.

5.4. BOATS

No further updates in this respect.

5.5 Conclusion

A full programme of works for the coming year is being developed subject to considerations relating to the aqueduct and subject to available funding from the Capital and Revenue budgets together with potential external funding to achieve objectives.

It should be noted however, that reactive/emergency works will be undertaken and take precedence over planned works with respect to time and budget.

Note: CCBC's 5-year Canal Management Plan is currently being updated to record any works undertaken and any priority changes. Copies will be forwarded for consultation as required.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made regarding the information contained in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Report is for information only.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The budget details for 2025/26 are outlined in section 5.3 above. As of the end of December 2024, the capital budget stands at approximately £118k, while the revenue budget for 2024/25 has been fully utilised.

Of the £118k capital budget, approximately £69k is committed for works in 2024/25, leaving around £50k to be carried forward to 2025/26.

The capital budget for 2025/26 has not yet been allocated to specific projects, as there is uncertainty regarding the availability of funding for major or significant works. This budget may also act as a contingency for unforeseen events or to supplement the revenue budget if it becomes exhausted

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 Consultation as below for information only.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 No requirements in this respect, information only.

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Consultees: Dave Street – Interim Chief Executive
Mark S Williams – Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Marcus Lloyd – Head of Infrastructure and Waste Management
Robert Tranter – Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
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