



**British
Waterways
Scotland**

MINUTES

Title British Waterways Scotland Group - Public Meeting

Date 19 October 2006

Venue Southbank Conference Centre, Kirkintilloch

Attendees Campbell Christie (Chair); Steve Dunlop; Professor George Fleming; Guthrie Hutton; Eva McCracken; Kenneth MacKenzie; Rod Michie; Sandra Purves; Richard Millham; Captain James Simpson.

Nicola Christie (Minutes) Sue Bruce, Chief Executive East Dunbartonshire Council; Duncan Hamilton, Project Director of the Kirkintilloch Initiative. Andrew Thompson, Strathkelvin Development Company.

Other Attendees: See Appendix 1

Introduction & Purpose of Meeting

Campbell Christie, Chairman of the British Waterways Scotland Group (BWSG) opened the meeting. CC gave a brief overview of the concept of the British Waterways Scotland Group - a non-statutory Group established in September 2000, following the formation of the Scottish Parliament. The Group meets several times a year in areas where the canals have an impact on the community. This gives people with an interest in the canals the opportunity to come along and join the discussions.

CC introduced Sue Bruce, Chief Executive of East Dunbartonshire Council, who welcomed the audience to Kirkintilloch and confirmed that the canal played a significant part in Kirkintilloch's regeneration. East Dunbartonshire Council had a strong and dynamic relationship with BWS which was vital for partnership working to further develop the canalside corridor through Kirkintilloch.

Duncan Hamilton, Project Director of the Kirkintilloch Initiative, a regeneration initiative working in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Strathkelvin Development Company gave a presentation, which provided an overview of current and planned key activity around the Forth & Clyde canal in the Kirkintilloch area. Kirkintilloch had developed around the canal and, in the past it's economic prosperity had been linked to the canal. With the closure of the canal in the 1960's and without a link to the motorway network, Kirkintilloch had experienced a decline. However, the reopening of the Millennium Link had presented an opportunity to re-establish the importance of the canal to Kirkintilloch town centre. Several canal-related developments were at the delivery stage including a 44 berth marina, a pedestrian bridge over the canal linking the marina to the town centre. Further canal-side development was planned including the Kirkintilloch Arts Culture Centre and additional longer term canal-related projects for Kirkintilloch to achieve its aspirational goal of being the Canal Capital of Scotland.

CC thanked Duncan Hamilton and introduced the other members of the panel - Steve Dunlop,

Director British Waterways Scotland and Richard Millar, Service and Business Development Manager and opened the meeting to questions.

Donald MacKinnon of the Forth & Clyde Canal Society objected to the plans to build a boathouse over the only slipway on the canal west of Auchinstarry, preventing trail boats from entering the canal at Kirkintilloch.

BW were aware of the concerns and had been in discussions with the Kirkintilloch Initiative. There are slipways at Firhill and Port Dundas and BWS would be looking for other slipway opportunities in the west. Andrew Thompson of Strathkelvin Development Company added that an additional slipway at Twechar was being looked at and the more the canal is used the more enhancements could be introduced for boaters and canal leisure users in the future.

Penny Sinclair agreed that the loss of the slipway requiring boats to launch some distance away from a new marina in Kirkintilloch was not helpful for Kirkintilloch.

It was noted that a marina without a slipway was not a marina and that the partnership should consider the next stage of this longer term plan. It was agreed that further discussion between BWS and the partners in the Kirkintilloch Initiative regarding the loss of the slipway was required.

Tom Lawton of the Forth & Clyde Canal Society suggested that the slipway at the Stables could be adapted to allow trail boats to be launched.

Hamish Nicol of the Seagull Trust pointed out that the new marina had no boat facilities or refuelling facilities resulting in the marina operating as the equivalent of a carpark.

BW responded that pump out facilities will be available at the marina at Kirkintilloch. Engineering, cranes and fuel purchases are available at Auchinstarry. It was acknowledged that this was some distance away and that options for fuelling at Kirkintilloch would be looked at. Toilet facilities would be available in the buildings around the marina but a separate toilet facility would be incorporated within the marina complex. The existing toilet facilities would be moved but the board walkway would be retained.

Kemp Meikle of the River Clyde Fishing Management Trust was concerned about the canal management systems for fish, particularly for spawning salmon.

BWS are dedicated to looking after the canal environment in a sustainable way. A meeting would be arranged with BWS environmental scientist to discuss these concerns regarding fish management.

Mr Dougall, local community councillor questioned whether any action would be taken to address the very steep incline to the canal at the bridge for wheelchair users.

The Kirkintilloch Initiative agreed to look at this existing situation. It was confirmed that the new bridge and access to the marina would be DDA compliant.

Tom Lawton raised a concern over the proposal to raise the water level at the bridge which would affect boat operations.

BWS confirmed that there were no plans to amend the navigation window. The spread and weight of boats was being assessed to ensure turning at the new bridge was possible.

A concern was raised that the wildlife corridor between the jetty and the Townhead bridge would be affected by the development.

BWS confirmed that the waterways edge was being preserved and that environmental assessments are carried out with development partners to ensure the diverse wildlife within the canal corridors is safeguarded.

Nancy Lawton was concerned that the trees at Cadder Bends had been cutback too much and that a wildlife habitat was lost.

BWS would look into this issue with the local supervisor.

Michael Clancy of the Seagull Trust asked whether the marina would be managed by a third party.

BWS advised that no decision had been taken. BWS are delighted with the regeneration of the canal-side at Kirkintilloch and were keen to be involved in canal-side community planning issues. BWS were open-minded as to whether it could manage the marina.

BWS were asked whether they were a member of the local bio-diversity group.

Scotland's waterways are all wildlife corridors and the BWS environmental scientist liaised widely with local bio-diversity groups.

It was raised that the gritting of pontoons between Kirkintilloch and Bishopbriggs by BWS was outstanding and that recently installed landing stages at Cadder were in disrepair. It was also raised that holiday hire boats were travelling too fast at the Glasgow road bridge and that cautionary go slow signs should be erected.

BWS noted these comments and would address the issues raised.

Alan Muir of the Forth & Clyde Canal Society asked whether the announcement of BW grant cuts by Defra would affect Scotland.

BWS received funding from the Scottish Executive and this remained unchanged. Discussions with the Scottish Executive were underway ahead of the comprehensive spending review next year to ensure that the SE understood the broad BWS agenda and that major funding was required to continue to deliver this broad agenda. The Defra cuts will have an effect on the waterways in England & Wales. BWS was not a static organisation and continued to strive for further effectiveness and efficiencies.

It was noted that the boat users acknowledged that the BWS lock and bridge operators do an excellent job.

CC closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their contributions .

The next British Waterways Scotland Group Meeting and Public Meeting will take place on 1 March 2007. The details of the venue would be confirmed on the BWS website www.britishwaterways.co.uk/scotland

Appendix 1

Kemp Meikle – River Clyde Fishing Management Trust

Donald MacKinnon – Forth & Clyde Canal Society

Tommy Lawton

Nancy Lawton

Alasdair Wood

Alan Muir

Penny Sinclair

Robert Welsh

Alison Payne

Peter Stewart

George MacAngus

John Broadhurst – Seagull Trust

Michael Clancy

R Brown

P McDougall – Community Councillor

Liza Coates – NB Jessica