



MINUTES OF USER GROUP MEETING

HELD IN THE PARK HOTEL, FALKIRK

SATURDAY 29 March 2008

10.00 – 12.30 HOURS

Representing British Waterways:

Phil Martin, Customer Operations Manager, Scotland

David Lamont, General Manager, Scotland

John Black, Contracts Manager

Guest Speakers

Chris Breslin, ISIS

Chairman

Professor John Hume, OBE

Attendance

An Attendance Sheet is incorporated within the minutes of the Meeting.

1.0 Welcome

Professor Hume declared the meeting open and thanked everyone who had come along to hear the presentations.

2.0 Apologies

Apologies from Liam Griffin.

3.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and approved.

4.0 Glasgow Regeneration: Chris Breslin ISIS

Chris Breslin gave a general overview of the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Project re-connecting Glasgow with the north of the city.

- **Maryhill Locks**

The history of Maryhill Locks was centered around industry and housing. The new development will create 700-800 new homes at Maryhill – both affordable housing with some more expensive properties also.

- **Whitehouse Bar**

ISIS has involved the local community with regards to the future of the White House Bar. The general consensus was that it should be used as a community facility, i.e community centre/Canal café.

- **Speirs Locks**

Previous proposals included a 17 storey tower, however in consultation with local residents, a new development is now being considered with housing complementing the environment, allowing sunlight into the buildings and offering energy efficiency.

- **Firhill**

The Firhill Illuminating Links event brought people from the local communities together.

5.0 Customer Operations Update

Phil Martin gave an overview of the past and current works and operations projects. More than £5m was spent across Scotland, with the majority this year on Lowlands works.

- **Lock Quadrant Replacement**

There have been Lock Replacements at various locations, this principally as a safety feature for BWS operatives, but also to improve local amenity.

- **Weed Control**

We recognise that weed control on the lowland waterway is a key issue to this end we have worked up a comprehensive programme of weed control using mechanical and other treatments. In addition the purchase of an additional weed cutter this year brings the fleet to three.

- **Pontoon Extensions**

Pontoon extensions have been carried out at Ratho and Harrison Park

- **Activities/ Events**

Over 70 Events have been organized on the canals ranging from cycling activities to festivals and all requiring detailed health and safety schedules and a lot of staff time.

- **Skippers Guide**

This has just been published and will be sent out to customers in due course.

- **Website**

The website has now been updated , your feedback on this is welcome to enable us to continuously improve our site. www.scottishcanals.co.uk

- **Signage**

New warning signs have been installed for cyclist and boaters and a comprehensive roll out of a national set of minimum safety standards.

6.0 Future Projects

David Lamont gave an overview of future projects and aspirations including:

- The Helix
- The Falkirk Wheel
- Loch Lomond

6. Questions & Answers

Action

Q: Peter Hawkins, Spokes

I have a great interest in Glasgow and Speirs Wharf. At the moment there is a steep bank from Speirs Wharf and the connection into the city is a long flight of steps which are inaccessible for cyclist. When will there be a proper connection to the city?

A: We are keen to establish an at grade crossing to replace the underpass, however there are considerable design & safety issues associated with this that require to be worked through & this is delaying phase 2 of the pedestrian link.

Q:

With regard to moorings at Maryhill Locks how would security be implemented?

A: There is an issue here, we need to both create activity on the canal, whilst making it a safe attractive place to be. There are a number of ways to do this. One is through CCTV linked to the Glasgow City Council, 24hour security cover. Another way is to increase activity levels to reduce the number of lone boaters and vulnerable locations Another scenario is to use private security at key locations, we are looking at all these options, If however people have concerns about safety at any stretch of the network then I would ask that they talk to us about it and we can review possible interventions.

DL

Q: Seamus Conway, Dar-Il-Hana

Would it be possible to make the canal a feature in the Commonwealth Games, to be linked into the River Clyde and perhaps a way of transport for the Commonwealth Games?

A: We will look at any opportunity there is to support the development of waterspace & links to the lowland canals via the games.

Q: Robert Hunter, Stirling Council & Falkirk District Canal Society

Regarding Speirs Wharf, I think a lighthouse-type building or some kind of prominent building would be worth considering.

Q: David Brown, Mytho

The boaters at Auchinstarry were promised a nice new marina. The terracing has prevented people getting onto their boats. The terracing is also incredibly high allowing us very little privacy. The hotel is far too close, is there going to be a boaters car park?

A: We are sympathetic to the boaters at Auchinstarry. You have had to put up with a fair amount of inconvenience during construction. We did recognise that we would have to work closely with the boaters and the pub landlord to remediate the land and issues surrounding Auchinstarry. I would like to engage all the people involved at Auchinstarry to make it a two-way process.

DL

Q: Colin Galloway, Linlithgow Union Canal Society

Can the dredging start from Linlithgow to Edinburgh and then from Philipstoun to Linlithgow? British Waterways have taken away three moorings at Linlithgow.

A: A hydrographic survey takes place prior to dredging and tells us where the high spots are. We do have limited funds for dredging and we need to target these funds properly. However it would be advantageous to have a method of harnessing boater information on silted areas which in turn could inform the dredging programme, we will consider how this could be done.

Q: Anne Street, Bridge 19-40 Canal Society

There was going to be moorings put in at Drumshoreland and so far nothing has happened. Can you have a meeting with the Canal Societies?

A: There are a number of issues with moorings. David Lamont will speak to Ronnie Simpson and Richard and will arrange for a mooring review with representatives from each Society & boating community.

DL

Q: Sustrans

The towpath is excellent. The drains were well built at the time but now there is a lot of surface water, can we get on top of the drainage problems?

A: We will need to look into the issue you have raised. Moreover you don't need to wait until a user group meeting to raise such issues, you can speak to us at any time.

DL

Q: David Brown, Mytho

The guys on the Canal have come up with a solution for boat movements that doesn't require us giving 24 hr notice. Can this be implemented?

A: We are currently reviewing more effective means of managing bridge & lock openings.

Q: Donald MacKinnon, Forth & Clyde Canal Society

With regard to the war time stop locks. These have no historic value and they are dangerous

A: We have had breaches in the past, and we are conscious of the vulnerability posed along the network in this respect, however our Inspection programme manages some of this risk and we are continually updating our emergency response plan.

Q: Ian Campbell, Edinburgh Canal Society

The Kelpies were supposed to be at Grangemouth.

A: There is a difference in level to be overcome at the existing location so the footprint of the project had to be changed.

Q: Andy Devenport, Edinburgh Canal Society

As part of the moorings in Harrison Park will the boathouse be moved? Is there anything else likely to happen?

A: There is always a possibility and while we would like to increase moorings, we do need to consider space issues and mixed use. Ronnie Simpson is dealing with this project just now.

Q: Andy Carnduff, SIWA

These matters have been raised since 2006, we have asked British Waterways for the detailed plan of when the defects are to be fixed, Phil Martin is doing his best to respond to these issues but there has been no plan. We come here as group to say pay attention to us!! Why is Ronnie Simpson not here? David asked Andy not to personalise this issue. John Hume asked if we could have a list of points being taken and the actions undertaken and if there has been no action undertaken then why.

A: We are keen to listen to your suggestions for improvement, however we have to balance, safety, time & money via a tight annual works programme, inevitably we cannot do everything. We will review all of the points raised from this meeting and will create an action list.

Q: There is a bridge that somebody has failed to move. Let us get unlimited headroom, there is no reason why that cant be replaced by a swing bridge, it is essential that we get maximum use out of the canal and we want to get more boats on the canal.

A: Its about resourcing and money

Q: There is money coming from us, it is essential that this is addressed at this meeting. There is no communication from BW and you wonder why we cant get boats onto the Canal. Can I propose 53p per metre? Ronnie Simpson compiled a "less than satisfactory" correspondence. To ask a transit boat for £2.50 per metre per day is ridiculous. It is cheaper to moor at Kip Marina and dredging is an absolute joke.

A: You are being unfair. Dredging is an expensive operation, in particular the disposal of waste material, we use hydro surveys to provide advance detail of high spots and this is programmed relative to available budgets. I accept we can improve upon this.

With regards to communication, we have updated the website and we have a new Marketing Manager.

Q: This will be the last meeting before Campbell Christie retires, can we express our gratitude to him for all his help and support through the years and his commitment to BW and wish him well in his retirement.

14 Any other business

No other business was discussed. Prof Hume thanked everybody for attending.

15.Date of Next Meeting

The next User Group meeting will be held on Saturday 25th of October @ 10.00am at the Park Hotel, Falkirk.

In attendance:

Name	Organisation/Vessel
Ralph Allardyce	Thomas Telford
Barbara Braithwaite	Linlithgow Union Canal Society
David Brown	Mytho (Auchinstarry)
Iain Campbell	Edinburgh Canal Society
Andy Carnduff	SIWA/FYCA/RYA
Paul Carter	Friends of Kelvin Valley Park
Seamus Conway	Dar-Il-Hana
Peter Currie	Hedwig
Richard Davies	Seagull Trust Cruises/Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Andy Devenport	Edinburgh Canal Society
Renata Edge	Edinburgh Canal Society
Colin Galloway	Linlithgow Union Canal Society
Peter Hawkins	Spokes
Robert Hunter	Stirling Council/Falkirk District Canal Society
Guthrie Hutton	British Waterways Scotland Group/Forth & Clyde Society
David & Anne Innes	Crammond Boat Club
Nancy Lawton	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Tommy Lawton	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Sandy Le Pla	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Jim Lonie	Linlithgow Canal Society
Peter McAllister	Airde
Derek McDonald	Edinburgh Canal Society
Donald MacKinnon	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Jim McLachlan	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Margaret McLachlan	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Tricia McLuckie	Edinburgh Canal Society
Stan McWhirter	Sustrans/Edinburgh Canal Society
Nola Meikle	Nolas Ark
Mr & Mrs Morrison	Fiona (Auchinstarry)
Alan Muir	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Mary Neilson	Seagull Trust
Barrie Pendlebury	Seagull Trust
James Ross	Seagull Trust
Harry Rumsby	Seagull Trust
Ronnie Rusack	Ratho Princess/Seagull Trust Cruises
Audrey Simon	Edinburgh Canal Society
Lisa Sneddon	Ratho Princess
Chrissie Southgate	Seaskills Inland Waterways/Indi
Peter Stewart	Forth & Clyde Canal Society
Alison Storrar	Highlander (Auchinstarry)
Ann Street	SIWA & Bridge 19-40 Canal Society
Lena Sutherland	Linlithgow Ramblers
Hamish Taylor	Aramis
Richard Toleman	Sustrans
Maurice Watson	Linlithgow Ramblers
Eric Weightman	Falkirk District Canals Society

