

## Notes of actions and decisions

### LCRP Full Partnership Meeting

**Date** Tuesday 10 November 2020

**Venue** Virtually via MS Teams

### Attendees

**Chair** Robin Yates **RY**

**Partner members** Cllr Chris Hogg **CHg** (CCC), Cllr Nick Cotton **NC** (CCC), Doug Rathbone **DR** (SLDC), Ruth Leahy **RL** (SLDC), Peter Jones **PJ** (LCT), Sir Robert Atkins **RA** (IWA National), Carrie House **CH** (CRT), Cllr Ian Blackman **IB** (Kendal TC), Wendy Humphreys **WH** (IWA L&C)

**LCRP Project Management** Richard Frank **RF** (MBP/LCRP), Gareth Field **GF** (MBP/LCRP)

**Apologies** Mark McTigue **MMc** (Lancaster CC), David Gibson **DG** (CCC), Cllr Dyan Jones **DJ** (SLDC),

### 1. Introductions & Apologies

RY welcomed Gareth Field to the meeting. Gareth is replacing Susannah Bleakley to provide the strategic management support element of Morecambe Bay Partnership's contract with LCRP.

### 2. Previous meeting & actions

Previous minutes were approved as a fair and accurate record of the last meeting. Actions are addressed by items on the agenda.

### 3. Financial overview

RY presented a financial overview paper.

Partners contributions – Letters went out asking for partner contributions toward project management costs. These cover the period April 2020 to March 2021.

**ACTION:** **RF/RY** to monitor and follow up outstanding payments.

## **4. Towpath Trail Development**

### **Feasibility Study**

The contractors brief was shared and RF/RL explained the scope of the study. NC asked why the study was covering the towpath in the Lancaster vicinity when the standard of path was already much higher here. Reasons given:

- A high standard towpath is required along the whole route and examples where this exists provide a comparison and case for improvement elsewhere
- People cant picture what we are trying to achieve and these higher quality towpath locations help visualise the improvements
- We want to develop and sign the whole route as a marketable trail and improvements are needed everywhere, some large, some small
- By having an assessment of everything we aren't just focussing on the known 'problem spots' and can use the study to attract funding along the whole route.

We have received 8 good tenders and will be running an assessment panel next week involving RF/RL/RM.

The consultants will provide regular updates on progress to RF who will forward on to Exec as appropriate. The stakeholder engagement will involve all partnership organisations and Exec Members who will be contacted by the consultants for their opinions.

An interim report will be presented to the next Exec meeting in February prior to the final report being produced by end February/early March 2021.

When the report is produced it will give us the material needed to engage the wider public in consultation on future plans.

### **Feasibility Study funding requests**

These were made to the following with initial response shown:

- South Lakeland District Council
- Cumbria County Council
- Lancashire County Council
- Lancaster City Council

## **5. Towpath Trail Delivery**

### **Kendal to Natland**

RL provided an update on this section. Following a recent internal finance meeting at SLDC the grant remains allocated to this area despite pressures on budgets.

In DG's absence, RL gave an update on Burton Road to Natland Road works. The last that was heard was CCC were tendering for the improvement works including the drainage issue, but SLDC have yet to receive quotes or further communication.

Frustration about the ongoing delays was expressed by several members and NC agreed to chase this up in CCC.

**ACTION:** NC to follow up Burton Road situation with CCC officers.

There has been no movement on previous negotiations with landowners during the pandemic, with nothing being heard from the landowner or his land agent we had engaged with. All landowners will be engaged by the consultants during the feasibility study.

### **Sport England**

The newly resurfaced path is near completion – expected by end of November. When it is signed off by Sport England the press embargo will be lifted and we will promote it.

### **NLHF Project**

CH provided a written report on recent and planned activity.

CH and Bill Froggatt at CRT have produced an online virtual tour along the towpath from Crooklands to Hincaster. The 'storymap', a standalone webpage, has received lots of positive feedback and RF will also embed it in the LCRP website for additional access.

An extension to the project due to time lost during lockdown has nearly been agreed by all parties and will hopefully give a new end date of 31 October 2021.

Kate Rodenhurst, the NLHF project external evaluator has nearly completed her interim report following consultation with partners, stakeholders and towpath users. This will be shared when it is published.

Stainton Aqueduct works are now complete and the site is fully open to the public (a no entry sign does need removing from the gate down to the steps). There has been an article in the Gazette and a BBC Radio Cumbria news feature. RF suggested we run an event when the time is right to celebrate the completion of work. CH offered to start planning something.

**ACTION:**        **RF** to embed virtual tour in LCRP website.  
                     **RM** to arrange removal of no entry sign at Stainton Aqueduct.  
                     **CH/RF** plan an event to celebrate completion of Stainton Aqueduct.

## **6. Chair position**

RY will hold the role until the February meeting and then stand down. Recruitment is of the highest priority. The role specification has been revised by RY/RL/RF to make the task less onerous and a new notification will be written to accompany it. This will be sent out again and all partners are asked to help with this. Cumbria and Lancashire CVS's will be approached to help reach a wider circulation.

RA reported a great response to recent recruitment for Trustees of Garstang Sports and Social Club.

CH suggested the idea of making an honorarium payment to a Chair to attract interest. This will be revisited if a new recruitment drive fails.

**ACTION:**        **RF** to request help from Cumbria and Lancashire CVS to promote Chair opportunity.  
                     **All** to help publicise and identify potential candidates.

The role specification will be made available for download via the LCRP website. If no appointee is made by February, existing Exec members will be asked to Chair meetings until the vacancy is filled.

## **7. Project Manager Position**

It was noted that the service agreement with MBP ends in March 2021. Members agreed there was an ongoing need for project management and are happy to renew the MBP contract. They are aware of staff changes within MBP but would encourage the employment of the same staff member as now.

## **8. Northern Reaches Restoration Group**

CRT have been approached by representatives from a revived NRRG. This group has had previous interaction with LCT, CRT and LCRP, but not for a number of years. They have approached CRT for support, although it is unclear what they are asking for from their communication. We believe they have plans for reinstatement of the canal to water in the northern reaches, along with other grand designs for attractions along the towpath. They are understood to be talking to funders and rallying support but it is unclear who leads this group, who it represents and what exactly they aim to achieve.

It was agreed they should be invited to present their plans to a future Exec meeting. LCRP's position is clear, we welcome working with anyone with ideas and something to offer that is in line with our aims. A presentation to this meeting will enable us to assess the NRRG's purpose and aspirations and decide if we can support them with their endeavours. We need to avoid duplication and miscommunication to stakeholders and the wider public.

**ACTION:**        **RM** to pass on details for **RF** to send an invite from the Chair to a representative of the NRRG to make a 10 minute presentation at the next Exec.

## **9. AOB / Members Reports**

- **IWA** – WH reported meetings and events continue via webinar and have been very well attended with up to 80 participants at some. Links can be accessed here:

<https://www.waterways.org.uk/waterways/branches/iwa-lancashire-cumbria-branch>

A Family Camp is being planned and the hope is it will take place during 2021.

A recent webinar hosted by IWA with Highways England was very useful and informative.

- **LCT** – PJ reported the last working party had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions but these plan to be resumed as soon as possible.
- **CCC** – NC reported his/the Council's involvement in various schemes where there is crossover and potential opportunity. These include the Environment Agencies £75m flood defense works and the development of the riverside corridor in Kendal. Also, the development of the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Kendal.  
NC suggested LCRP explore potential funding via the Borderlands programme.

NC also questioned the feasibility of reopening the route under Burton Road where it is understood the bridge void was filled with concrete.

**ACTION:** RF to ask the consultants to look into feasibility of Burton Road underpass.

- **Kendal Town Council** – IB reported KTC have appointed a new Clerk, Chris Bagshaw, who takes over the role from Liz Richardson. Chris has previously worked in Workington as Town Clerk for the last seven years

10. **Dates of future meetings** (via Microsoft Teams until further notice)

Tuesday 9 February 2021, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

**New dates for 2021/22:**

Tuesday 11 May 2021, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Tuesday 10 August 2021, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Tuesday 9 November 2021, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Tuesday 8 February 2022, 2.30pm – 4.30pm