



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Telephone 01453 766321 • Facsimile 01453 750932

www.stroud.gov.uk

## STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### OFFICER REPORT

<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY</b>	Cotswold Canals Connected (CCC) Project Board
<b>DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED</b>	28 September 2023 (CCC Project Board Meeting)

#### BRIEF REPORT:

The CCC restoration project is the largest, and most complex, National Heritage Lottery Funded (NLHF) project in the South-West. Members of the NLHF Board visited the project in mid-July and saw the progress on the engineering, environment and community programmes. They remain committed to the long-term strategic goals but recognise the challenging economic situation, with spiralling costs and high inflation.

The focus for the Engineering programme is from Stonehouse to Eastington (Section 3) with good progress being made by volunteers on restoring Newtown Lock, John Robinson Lock and the towpath west of Bonds Mill.

Work cannot commence on the Missing Mile section of canal (Section 2) until we have secured planning permission. The Environment Agency concerns with the flood modelling and canal design have all been addressed. However, further information is required to show how the application will mitigate the potential wildlife and habitat impact of increased visitor numbers on the protected area of the Severn Estuary. The application will be re-submitted shortly, with determination by Development Control Committee now anticipated in early 2024.

A new wetlands area is being created west of the A38 roundabout at Fromebridge (Section 1). The scrapes have been dug and the site is already attracting a range of birds. A series of workshops, consultations and surveys are being conducted on the future design and accessibility of this area. This area brings together the heritage of the canal (Occupation Bridge), the role of the canal in the Second War (Stop Line Green pill box), the environment (wetlands area and traditional orchard) and connecting communities (multi-purpose accessible towpath).

The Stonehouse area is the focus for the Community Engagement programme. We are supporting the Working Group which is being established for the former Ship Inn site; planning the Canal Spring Festival over the early May Bank Holiday and assisting Cotswold Boatmobility with building out their capacity and resilience.

The main challenge for the project relates to increasing construction and engineering costs and project funding. We are working on a phased Engineering programme with NLHF to



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allow time to secure the additional funding required for the project through fundraising, grants and donations.

We will keep the S&R Committee informed and updated on plans and progress.

<b>FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> December (CCC Board Meeting)
<b>REPORT SUBMITTED BY</b>	Chris Mitford-Slade
<b>DATE</b>	3 November 2023