



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MEMBER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Cotswold Canals Connected Project Board
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	29 March 2023 (Project Board Meeting)
BRIEF REPORT:	
<p>A Canal Project Update was provided for the S&R Committee Meeting in February 2023 and this briefing follows the latest Project Partners' Board Meeting, held on 29 March 2023.</p> <p>In the February update to S&R Committee, it was noted that: "The next NLHF review meeting is on 7th February 2023. We have submitted a bid for a further grant of £2.3 million from the NLHF Covid Fund; this is anticipated to be considered at the NLHF March Board meeting." It was agreed at the NLHF review meeting that we would defer the grant application until we had secured planning approval.</p> <p>Positive progress has been made on the planning application for 'the missing mile'. Flood modelling and all concerns raised by the Environment Agency have now been addressed. We are currently working on an updated Environmental Statement (incorporating Flood Risk Assessment) which will be re-circulated to the statutory consultees for comment and approval. As a result, we expect to secure approval from the statutory consultees in time for consideration by the Development Control Committee meeting on 12th September 2023.</p> <p>Volunteers from the Cotswold Canals Trust, Stroud Valleys Canal Company and Waterways Recovery Group continue to work on the restoration of the canal in Phase 1B. This work includes towpath maintenance and improvements, vegetation clearance, dredging and lock restoration. Volunteers from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and Stroud Valleys Project are continuing with the environmental projects. We expect to be start working on the Missing Mile section of the canal in March 2024 once planning approval has been secured.</p> <p>The Community Engagement team is building momentum and we have an action-packed set of events and activities lined up for the Canal Spring Festival on 13th & 14th May 2023. This event is being supported by Stonehouse Town Council, corporate sponsors, project partners, organisations and community groups.</p> <p>The main challenge for the project relates to increasing construction and engineering costs and project funding. The £1m additional funding agreed at the S&R Committee Meeting in November 2022 clearly demonstrates SDCs commitment to the successful delivery of the project. We are now working with the project partners to identify and secure the remaining funding required for the project. We will be in a position to pursue and secure the additional funding from National Highways and National Lottery once we have obtained planning approval. We are also working on an active plan to secure funding from Charitable Trusts, Foundations, Public Grants and private donations. We will keep the S&R Committee updated on progress.</p>	
FUTURE MEETINGS	22 June 2023
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Chris Mitford-Slade
DATE	12 April 2023