



Rutland County Council

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RUTLAND COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM

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THE OAKHAM CANAL GREEN CORRIDOR - PROJECT UPDATE

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1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on the progress of the Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project is creating and maintaining a leisure, environment and heritage “green corridor” based around the remains of the Oakham Canal between the Springfield Estate and Kimball Close, to the north of Oakham.

3 PROGRESS

3.1 SPRINGFIELD ESTATE

3.1.1 The Project continues to progress the rationalisation of ownership of the canal and adjacent permissive footpath with RCC and Persimmon Homes. RCC have commissioned a survey, leading to the production of a specification, for the remedial works.

3.1.2 When the remedial works have been carried out, and ownership rationalised, the Project will support RCC in maintaining this section.

3.2 NORTH OF BURLEY PARK WAY

3.2.1 The Project is in communication with RCC, the Ramblers Association, and the agents of the two landowners (Mr Hill and Mr Hanbury) seeking the formal diversion of the E154 footpath between Burley Park Way and the spillway bridge to align the footpath with the canal corridor. No formal undertakings are yet in place, but the Project is hopeful that agreement can be reached.

3.3 E154 SOUTH (ANGLING SECTION)

3.3.1 The Project has replaced the bridge over the dam to provide a wider, safer, link from the E154 footpath to the permissive footpaths on the western banks. The Project continues to maintain the vegetation on this section and is developing plans to upgrade the footpath surface over the coming winter if funding permits.

3.4 E154 NORTH

3.4.1 The new steps from Burley Road, new bridge over the cattle drink, new gate / fencing, and improved footpath surface have been well received by the public. The Project has recently made and installed 4 new benches along this section and continues to maintain the vegetation.

3.5 WESTERN BANKS

3.5.1 The Project continues to maintain the vegetation to the newly created permissive access paths and has secured a quantity of bark chippings to deal with any sodden areas of footpath later in the year. The Project hopes to secure further bark chippings to further improve the footpath surface over the coming winter. Access from the Kimball Close layby has been improved by the creation of an aggregate surface. The Project hopes to work with RCC to improve the surface and general appearance of the Kimball Close layby in due course.

3.5.2 As required under its Permissive Path Agreement with St. John and St. Anne, the Project intends to install new pedestrian access gates and fencing either side of Burley Road.

4 OTHER MATTERS

4.1 The Project continues to engage with the community. It has given talks about the history of the canal and has operated a series of Guided Walks throughout the summer. The Project is in the early stages of developing a 'Talking History' of the canal with a local theatrical group which it is hoped can provide an interactive trail along the canal corridor.

4.2 The Project's work parties are well supported and it has recruited a number of community volunteers to act as Rangers, carrying out litter picking, cutting back overhanging vegetation and identifying other maintenance issues.

4.3 The Project has worked with the Rutland Natural History Society, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group and the Environment Agency to begin to identify and catalogue the wildlife species which occupy the canal corridor. It is hoped that the results will be available on the Project's website during 2023. The Project also continues to play an active part in the local Climate Action Group.

4.4 The Project continues to monitor the development of the new Local Plan and is committed to securing protection for the canal corridor and adjoining watercourse. The Project asks group members to continue to promote the importance of the canal corridor as a heritage asset, diverse wildlife habitat, and benefit to the local community wherever they have the opportunity.

Paul Dadford, Project Manager

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www.oakhamcanal.org