

**Notes of walkabout & meeting between Bridgewater Canal Company Ltd & Castlefield Forum, Castlefield, Thursday 6 April 2017**

Key:

BCCL: Bridgewater Canal Company Ltd (owned by Peel Holdings)

PP: Peter Parkinson, BCCL

CW: Chris Wareing, BCCL

IC: Ian Christie, Castlefield Forum

CM: Carol Middleton, Castlefield Forum.

Issues raised by the Forum in ordinary typeface

BCCL responses in ***bold italics***.

1. Merchants Bridge: this is in a very dirty condition and needs washing/cleaning/repainting not only now but needs funds built into BCCL's budget for regular maintenance.

***This will be washed in the 3rd Quarter of this financial year, i.e. October to December, probably in November i.e. when there are fewer canal boats visiting the basin than in the summer. It will be washed first and then inspected to see if repainting is needed. Padlocks and stickers will also be removed.***

***No definite commitment was given to building funds for future cleaning into future budgets but bridges would be visually inspected bi-annually. These inspections will guide when future cleaning or painting is to be programmed.***

***It was noted that the black railing on top of the wall on bridge approach and beside steps at the Plot G end of bridge needed a coat of paint. Peel said they would repaint these when cleaning the bridge.***

2. At least 10 lights on Merchants Bridge are not working plus 19 up-lighters lighting the brick wall approach to it.

***Lamps have been ordered and will be installed as soon as they arrive. We assume within the next 2 months.***

3. Semi-circle area of setts in front of approach to Merchants Bridge: are Peel prepared to alter/grass/ improve this area as part of the Plot G development or enter discussions with the Council, the owners./developers of Plot G development and Forum to do so?

***BCCL are certainly happy to enter into discussions about this with the owners/developers, MCC & the Forum.***

***IC pointed out that the Officer's report to the 9 March 207 Planning Committee had said that " The Environment Agency flood maps show...the proposed building would be located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) ....The site therefore has a low probability of river flooding (less than 1 in 1000 annual probability). Removing the wall that separates Plot G from the canal side and integrating the site more into the canal side area, as has been suggested by the Castlefield Forum and the Canal and Rivers Trust, would result in lowering the levels of the development, which would exacerbate the extent of the flood risk, putting the development at greater risk of flooding. It is considered therefore that the wall should be retained".***

***All those present considered the risk of flooding was absolutely minimal.***

***It was noted that the lights within the bollards along the edge of the towpath and the sett area looked not to be working. PP/CW would establish whether these were in Peel/BCCL or MCC ownership. One bollard light near Merchants Bridge beside the towpath going off to Egerton Street was clearly broken with the light section missing. IC & CM agreed they would be happy for this bollard to be removed and replaced by the next one to its west.***

4. Pedestrian bridge across the Bridgewater to Potato Wharf: this bridge is of course currently closed (and is due for re-opening once Potato Wharf phase 2 has been built); could it be cleaned in the meantime?

***PP/CW said they thought cleaning the bridge would be best done just before it's re-opening after the Potato Wharf site had been redeveloped. As the bridge was lower than Merchants Bridge it would probably be more complicated to clean, involving erecting scaffolding within the canal and hence its closure.***

**PP/CW would deal with the graffiti on and around the arch over the towpath in the near future once they have spoken to the MCC Conservation Officer.**

**Under this arch there were also some loose paving slabs which PP/CW said they would be secured in the near future.**

5. Bridge by the Congregational Church: dirty, weeds at sides of steps & lights within the brick end-pieces not working. The metal sheet floor was and should be covered with an anti-slip coating; this has simply worn away making the bridge lethal when it's wet.

**Peel would deal with the weeds in the near future. They considered the lights at either end of the bridge were no longer connected to electricity supply. IC & CM agreed they were not essential but that leaving them as they were was unsightly and gave an unkempt feel to the place. Peel agreed they would arrange for the holes containing the dead lights (and litter) to be bricked up before the end of May 2017.**

**Re-instating the anti-slip coating was already on PP/CW's Action List and would be done before the end of May 2017 (subject to weather).**

**Cleaning the bridge was not discussed.**

6. Bridge behind Barca: light within the brick end-piece not working. The metal sheet floor was and should be covered with an anti-slip coating; this has simply worn away making the bridge lethal when it's wet.

**Same as 5 above.**

7. Graffiti on benches and litter bins along much of the basin towpath.

**PP/CW said graffiti had appeared on benches within days of them being newly painted. They would remove the graffiti before the end of May 2017 and then monitor the situation.**

**Litter bins were a MCC responsibility. IC to contact MCC**

8. Apparent gap in the newish white railings over the towpath bridge that goes over the canal basin at back of Slate Wharf. Also, to match all other street furniture in the basin, could these railings be painted black instead of white?.

**The gap in the railings would be temporarily filled in the near future with wire or rope so as to prevent pedestrians or cyclists falling through it. The missing railings would then be retrieved from the canal where they were probably lying and reinstated. This would be done before the end of May 2017. PP/CW said they thought the white instead of black railings were as a result of them being installed as part of the Bridgewater Way cycle route on which white was thought to be standard for street furniture..**

9. Weeds along edge of and on footpaths around same basin

**The ownership of the footpaths to be confirmed but the vegetation in the basin walls would be removed before the end of May 2017.**

10. Lack of sand or gritting of this towpath bridge and the one in front of The Wharf during winter so that people often fall over or nearly do so

**PP/CW said the surfaces of both these bridges were designed as anti-slip surfaces. IC said it was the slopes up to the bridge that caused the problem as these were ordinary paving stones, although the new railings on the Slate Wharf bridge helped in this regard. He would alert PP/CW to any problems once icy weather started again.**

11. When the clocks change from BST to GMT and indeed as the darker nights draw in, could Peel be more proactive in changing the time-clocks on their lighting? The opposite occurs as the nights stay lighter for longer and lights are often on sooner than necessary.

**BCCL undertook to be more pro-active.**

12. Has Peel granted the Council the necessary easements to enable the installation of the 8 new lights along the towpath from Merchants Bridge to Egerton Street/Mancunian Way? These were given planning permission 17 months ago in November 2015 as can be seen here: <http://pa.manchester.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=NUI3GJBC6K000> In September 2016 Cllr Kevin Peel sent the Forum this message passing on advice from the Council's legal team:

*As you know Nigel Murphy and I have been working away for some years to get towpath lighting along the stretch of canal from the basin to Mancunian Way. You asked for an update at your last meeting as this has been stalled for some time despite being approved quite a while ago. Here is the latest from our legal team:*

*"The Council will require Peel to grant them easements so that the Council (and their contractors, Amey) have a legal right to install the lighting and thereafter maintain and repair it.*

*The City Solicitor does not have authority to enter into documentation without formal instructions from Corporate Property. Jacobs, who have been instructed to act on behalf of Corporate Property, have been trying to contact Peel for some months to negotiate heads of terms for the transaction but have had no response so far. Terms will have to be agreed before Corporate Property issue instructions to the City Solicitor to proceed with the documentation. As Peel are the land-owner, it is presumed that they will want to issue their own form of documentation for the granting of such easements and this will be issued by Peel's legal representative. No response has been forthcoming from Peel Holdings and I understand the person who was previously dealing with the file at their end has now left the organisation. Jacobs have confirmed that they have spoken to Peel this morning and have asked Richard Bradley and Peter Parkinson of Peel Holdings to arrange for terms to be sent to Jacobs as a matter of urgency."*

**BCCL said they waiting to hear from Jacobs (Engineers for this project) in response to their request for a formal agreement to be signed between BCCL & Jacobs to allow installation to proceed.**

**Post Meeting Note: PP been in discussions with Jacobs (w/e 21.04.17) and believes that the terms are almost agreed.**

13. In relation to the permanent moorings planned for the basin area, PP/CW said they had had some signs designed saying which mooring 'bays' were for which named boats and these now had to be discussed with the MCC Conservation Officer.

ENDS