

Exeter Civic Society; River, Canal & Quayside Group

Minutes of meeting held on 19th January 2015 at the White Hart Hotel, Exeter

Present; Keith Lewis (Acting Chairman), Valerie Davies, John Whitton, Jane Evans (Minutes)

2. Apologies for absence; Bernard Frowd, John Monks, Peter Nichol
3. The minutes of the previous meeting on 4th November 2014 were approved
4. Matters arising
There is a lot of rubbish between the Port Royal and Trews Weir and down to St James' Weir. JE to raise at the Canal Users Meeting.

DCC had responded negatively re the requested improvements to the footpaths near Exe Bridges. They will only upgrade the lighting when the existing lights fail.

The proposed route from Water Lane to Alphinbrook Road is due to be for buses and cyclists only, not general traffic.

5. Correspondence received
6. Website. Some of the RCQ material has been put on the members section of the website.
7. St James' Weir JW has written to Ben Bradshaw on behalf of the Residents' Association. BB has written to the ECC and the EA about the situation. KL had written to Jay Rowntree of the EA about the weir asking what status the report has eg by comparison to the Council's approval process. The approval process is approval by senior officers. The report will not appear on the EA website but KL has put it on the ECS website.
Quite a bit of material about the flood relief scheme is on the EA website.
8. Feedback from the traders on the quayside and Piazza Terracina. KL has collated the traders' comments. VD will visit BF to ask what further may be achieved.
9. ECC consultation with Quay traders / users. JE advised that ECC had advised the River and Canal Users Group that it would be undertaking a public consultation as part of its review into the management of the river Exe, estuary and canal. The ECC management structure is

Sarah Ward Assistant Director of Public Realm

|
Roger Crane

|
Colin Acton (temp)

|
Andy Cousins, Kevin Pearson and a third man (operational staff)

Sarah Ward had held initial meetings with various stakeholders around the quay area. She admitted that she was not very knowledgeable about the issues. The users were assisting in educating her and expressed their concern that the Council repeatedly changes manager and each time the new manager has no experience in maritime matters. The user group had been advised that they could comment on the consultation questions before it went public.

10. JM is keen on preparing a report, he would like some support in writing it.
11. Any other business. JM has spoken to Mike Walker of ECQT and aims to have a chat with him. Are the ECQT minutes published? JE is pretty sure that they are not. JE asked to explain the ECQT accounts at the next meeting.
The gas tanks have gone. What are the plans? JE to provide the name of the landlord [This is National Grid Properties Limited]
Exe Water Sports Association has got its planning permission subject to a couple of small conditions.
12. Date and time of next meeting; 9th (later changed to 16th) March 2015 at 7.30, White Hart Hotel

Exeter Civic Society: River, Canal and Quayside Sub-Committee

Minutes of meeting held on 16th March 2015 at the White Hart Hotel, Exeter

Present: Keith Lewis (chair), John Monks, Jane Evans, Peter Nickol, John Whitton

1. **Apologies for absence:** Bernard Frowd, Louis ten-Holter, Valerie Davies
2. **The minutes of the previous meeting** on 19th January were approved
3. **Matters arising:** KL raised the question of whether we supported more commercial activity on the canal which is presently limited to boat repairs at Gabriel's Wharf. JW will send a letter raising various queries on behalf of the sub-committee concerning St James' Weir to Sarah Ward (Assistant Director, Public Realm ECC).
4. **Chairman's report:** No reply yet received from David Whitton concerning footpath to Topsham in vicinity of Retreat Boatyard- KL to chase up. Exeter Quay & Canal Trust: Trust not doing enough as charitable organization. Problem of worsening silting of river (shown by EA's temporary lowering of river level above Trew's Weir) which is due to sluice gates not being regularly opened. The passage of the quay-double locks ferry is impeded. ECC seems inactive!
5. **Presentation to Civic Society open meeting 21st March:** Presentation to be given by Keith Lewis (history, general overview), Peter Nickol (canal, footpaths, flood relief) John Whitton (St James' Weir, conclusions).
6. **Feedback from traders on the quayside.** Val had sent email with feedback regarding her discussions with a quay trader. This confirmed KL's discussion with leader of quay traders' - disquiet about insufficient ECC support and communications.
7. **Flood relief planning application** Peter Nickol reported on possible cycle/footpath St David's – Cowley Bridge, noting that his DCC contact Zsolt Schuller has been replaced by Ross Hussey at ECC. EA have made planning application in connection with flood prevention. Question arises whether they will leave bank so that it can facilitate cycle/pedestrian track. ECS planning sub-committee did not comment on this application, considering little that was not needed. PN suggested we should send a response.

- 8. ECC consultation with Quay Traders/users and waterways review.** Jane Evans reported on various problems: weaknesses on ECC side (perfunctory treatment by ECC scrutiny committee; lack of public consultation; £270,000 canal deficit); what is role of Exe Estuary Management Partnership; will a new partnership have advisory or management role? The Exeter Canal is unique and the City's responsibility is vested in 1829 Exeter Canal Act. Could ECC hand over responsibility to Exeter Canal and Quayside Trust? What would its remit be? Is the canal an unrealized asset: could it be developed for more recreational use (e.g.in double locks area).
- 9. Developing a report of issues found to date and action:** Feedback and comment needed from RCQ members in connection with John Monk's "Ideas for the Future" which will then need ECS endorsement.
- 10.AOB:** none
- 11.Date of next meeting:** to be decided – later confirmed as April 27th.

John Whitton

Exeter Civic Society: River Canal & Quayside Group
Meeting, 22 July 2015, The White Hart Hotel, Exeter

Present

Jane Evans, Bernard Frowd, Keith Lewis (chair), John Monks, Peter Nickol, Paul Gibbons.

Apologies

Val Davies and John Whitton from the subcommittee; Simon and Heather Goddard (ECS members).

The notes of the previous meeting of 11 June 2015 were approved.

Matters arising

A reply has been received from Exeter City Council (ECC) concerning St James Weir, stating the council did not own the weir and had no funds for repairing it. JE said its condition was worsening and concern was expressed that the mill leat will dry up if the weir collapses. The council has not answered the questions put to them about changes to amenity if the weir does collapse. It was felt the weir could not generate enough hydro-electricity to warrant investment. KL said he will raise the condition of the weir with Exeter Historic Buildings Trust.

Phase 2 of the Flood Defence Scheme has received planning permission and will start in summer 2016. The Canal and River Trust will make a presentation to the ECC Scrutiny Committee on 10 September.

ECC deficit

JE said the ECC deficit on canal and river operations totals in the region of £240,000 a year if Civic Centre overheads are included, and the council will decide by March 2016 how to reduce the deficit to zero by the following year. ECC is setting up an Exeter Waterways Partnership of stakeholders to develop ideas but not including the wider range of stakeholder groups identified in our report. It was noted that the ECS Canal River & Quayside Group is now represented on the River and Canal User Group, and KL will ask if we can be a member of the stakeholders group. It was pointed out the RCQ group's report calls for a wider definition of stakeholders to include residents and other users and interest groups.

Chair's report

KL handed out two ECC tourist information leaflets and said they did not contain enough about the Quay and its history. KL said he wished to stand down as acting chair and it was agreed with acclamation that Peter Nickol should be chair. PN said one of his first aims would be to strengthen the group. He wanted to see the group increasing its influence.

Our Report

The ECS executive committee had approved and adopted the group's report, *A Future for Exeter's River, Canal and Quayside*. Pamela Coleman had designed a layout with photographs and Peter Nickol had prepared a punchier summary based on JM's presentation at the previous meeting. Extensive consideration of how to present and launch the report included the following: • possible addition of a foreword containing the main points • whether to include the Bike Shed Theatre's "Boat Shed" project at this stage • captions, cropping and repositioning of photographs (PN to talk to Pamela Coleman about the final layout) • JM to proof read texts • presentation of the report to ECC (Cllr Rosie Denham and Sarah Ward, Asst Director Public Realm) before launch in the media • press release for local papers, radio and television based on PN's summary • separate leaflet based on the summary to be developed by KL/ Pamela.

Public meeting involving the Inland Waterways Association

The date may now be in early October. It will be held at Haven Banks Education Centre. ECC and Exeter Canal and Quay Trust have been invited. Main points: the focus and advertising of the meeting to be given more consideration; discussion to take place with IWA about forming a "Friends of Exeter Canal" group at the meeting—KL to ask if a separate meeting would be better for this purpose; contact to be made with Gloucester Civic Society about regeneration of the quayside there (JM); and KL to seek contact details from Gloucester Council.

Date of next meeting

10 September 2015, at 7.30 at Southernhay Church (to follow the ECC Scrutiny Committee).

Exeter Civic Society, River Canal & Quay sub-committee.

Notes of meeting held on 10 September at 7.30.

The Garden Room, Southernhay Church.

Present:

Peter Nickol (chair), Keith Lewis, Jane Evans (Civic Society), Dominic Houston, Guy Parker
(prospective new members)

Ray Alexander, Peter Kelly (Inland Waterways Association)

The focus of the meeting was (1) to review the presentation by the Canal and River Trust (Aiden Johnson-Hugill and Graham Holland) given to Exeter City Council's Scrutiny Economy Committee early that evening; (2) establishing a Friends of Exeter Canal; (3) how to take our report forward.

PN advised that we have been invited to a consultation relating to the Riverside Valley Park, with the first meeting on 17 September.

ECC meeting

PN said we had wished to be part of the new Waterways Partnership Board but had not been aware of the deadline to submit our request. We hope to gain membership in the future, possibly through co-optation by the committee. PN will write to Sarah Ward of ECC on this matter. General discussion by JE and GP about how poor the voting system was to elect members to the board from boat users etc.

If the CRT is invited onto the Partnership Board, how can the latter advise on a Service Level Agreement with the former, which JE had understood to be one of its functions?

RA and PK advised that newer CRT officers appear to be more positive about investment and development of the waterways they manage, and seeking funds to achieve this. All attending considered that the CRT presentation was positive and that they could make a better job of managing the canal than ECC. The concern to all is the level of subsidiary development that the presentation showed on the periphery of the waterway holdings they have as a means of raising capital. Guy Parker advised that he has ascertained that parts of the canal basin are still designated as public quay, which protects those areas from development, and necessitates the canal being kept open. We agreed that some investment may be appropriate but we must monitor this if they take on the canal. General feeling is that whoever manages the canal also needs to have the benefit of buildings along its length, including around the basin. These buildings are complementary to the canal and a source of income to invest in existing and new facilities.

The presentation mentioned the development of the 'Grace Road Marina'. This was news to most of us, but GP advised that this could be located on part of the playing field adjacent to the Clapperbrook railway crossing playing fields which are currently boggy. Access by car is difficult though.

JE queried whether ECC is looking at other bids? There might be a requirement that there be an open tender.

There was mention within the Council meeting of revision to the Canal Basin Masterplan. JE queried why there appears so far to be no consultation on this.

Friends of Exeter Canal

PN advised that the Friends should eventually be an independent organisation that can monitor and support the canal, and should be made up of those that use and visit it regularly.

IWA colleagues advised that the IWA would not wish to establish this group as it does not fit with their remit. However, they are happy to support its setting up, and recommended that we talk to the chairman of the Friends of the Grand Western Canal. They explained that running such an organisation can be time-consuming, may need a website, and will need to generate funds from membership to support its activities such as a newsletter and other expenses. On the aforementioned canal the friends have volunteer wardens who have adopted lengths of the canal and report issues. **PN to make contact with the canal's friend's chairman.**

There is much work undertaken on the canal by a number of other groups such as the CRT's own volunteers, as well as others connected to pubs and communities.

KL advised that we could set up the friends of the canal as a sub-group of ECS initially as we did for the Theatre Groups some years ago. 'Friends' will join the society and we will put their membership into a fund that will support their initial activities. They can also have the benefit of ECS website. Oversight will need to be by RCQ sub-committee.

RCQ Report

PN advised that the report gained publicity in the E&E on 10 Sept and that it will soon be on the ECS website for people to download. He will also update web-pages to reflect recent activity. We have a price for printing 50 copies to give to 'the great and good' and interested parties.

The report will be discussed/ presented to ECS members on Saturday 19 at our open morning.

Operating costs of canal

DH asked if the canal running costs were known. JE's financial analysis was discussed and he took the report away for further scrutiny. At present the income from various properties associated with the canal does not go to those that manage it, instead going to the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust. If the proposal to transfer properties to a canal management committee goes through, then many of these would need to be released by ECQT.

Meeting closed about 9.00 PM.

Summary of presentation by CRT to ECC. The presentation slides may be provided as part of the minutes of the meeting within a week.

CRT wishes to engage with public, give access, and use volunteers.

Wish to add value through development such as residential adjacent to its assets. This can be re-invested to benefit the waterways.

Have skilled staff to support the canal and will consider employing ECC maintenance staff.

CRT has about 10,000 principal assets.

CRT has undertaken a visual inspection of the canal and believes it is in good condition. Some revetments need attention and some leakage but nothing unusual.

Possibility the canal may need dredging if greater use envisaged. A hydrographic survey is needed.

CRT will develop a long-term management strategy and vision for the area.

They have access to funds to invest in the canal.

Interested in developing the Grace Road Marina

Would want to promote commercial activities and festivals in the area.

Would need a dowry from ECC as they cannot support canal with their funds alone.

Need to agree performance requirements.

At the end of the presentation Sarah Ward of ECC made a recommendation that ECC writes to CRT to confirm their willingness to continue working with CRT to develop management proposals.

Exeter Civic Society: River Canal & Quayside Group
Notes of meeting, 15 September 2015, The White Hart Hotel, Exeter

Present

Simon Goddard, Dominic Houston, John Monks, Peter Nickol (chair), Guy Parker.

Apologies

Val Davies, Jane Evans, Bernard Frowd, Keith Lewis, John Whitton.

Strengthening the group

PN welcomed GP to the meeting. PN said the group needed strengthening. It would be good to have a membership of ten with someone to take the notes permanently. All members were asked to think about who might join. DH and GP were asked whether they would join the Civic Society in order to become permanent members of the group.

Our Report

PN reported that printed copies of the group's report, *A Future for Exeter's River, Canal and Quayside*, had been ordered and it will be on the ECS website as a publicly accessible document. The *Express and Echo* report on 10 September 2015 was noted and it was agreed wider publicity to other local media should be considered in future. PN will ask to mention the report at the ECS open morning on 19 September and talk to Keith Lewis about a future presentation to ECS members. He will circulate a draft leaflet on the main aims of the report for consideration.

City Council matters

The group considered the implications of the Canal & River Trust's (CRT) presentation to the city council's scrutiny committee on 10 September in terms of its own aims for the future of the river, canal and quay. DH highlighted the importance of feeding into changes to the relevant master plans and a question was raised: would there be formal consultation? The importance of income from the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust (ECQT) towards meeting the costs of maintaining the canal was highlighted. GP said there was an opportunity for the canal if the CRT took over management, which would depend on the financial arrangements. PN said he believed the city council was looking favourably on the CRT as it offered a solution to the problem. JM said we should monitor the implications of changes of management of the canal for the waterways and their surroundings as a whole. Accountability and transparency in drawing up any agreement with the CRT, and the role of the proposed Waterways Partnership Board were also discussed. It was pointed out that the group considered the balance of proposed representation on the Partnership Board needed addressing.

Friends of Exeter Canal

There was some discussion of a suitable acronym: FEC, FoEC and FREXCA were mentioned but no decision was reached. JM outlined the purpose of the Friends as dedicated to safeguarding the canal by securing its future. It would act as a watch dog; campaign; be a source of creative ideas and policy proposals; collect expert opinion and examples of best practice; build partnerships with groups with similar aims; and organise volunteer working parties as required. The Friends as envisaged would be an independent body, closely allied with the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) and with the founding aims of the Civic Society's River, Canal and Quayside group. It was agreed to invite Ray Alexander of the IWA to join DH and JM as an initial steering group to bring forward a model for how the Friends of Exeter Canal would work and proposals for its launch.

Riverside and Ludwell Valley Parks master plan

The city council is consulting on producing a master plan for these parks. The RCQ is represented by PN, who would attend a meeting on 17 September. Among the points raised in discussion were • the rapidity of the process with a draft master plan scheduled for completion in two months • the possible inclusion of the Exe Valley Way to Cowley Bridge in the scheme • the importance of developments of the Riverside Valley Park being in harmony with the strategy for the waterways and their surroundings as a whole and in particular not to conflict with any future plans for the development of the canal.

Bike Shed proposals and St James Weir

It was agreed to postpone discussion of these items to a future meeting.

Date of next meeting

In three to four weeks, to be decided by a Doodle poll.

Exeter Civic Society River Canal and Quayside Sub-Committee

Meeting in the White Hart Hotel, South Street 15 October 2015

1. Present

Val Davies, Simon Goddard, Dominic Houston, Keith Lewis, John Monks, Peter Nickol (Chair), Guy Parker, John Whitton

2. Apologies

Jane Evans, Bernard Frowd

3. Notes of Last Meeting

The notes of the 15 September were accepted

4. Friends of Exeter Canal

DH mentioned similar organizations to the proposed "FoEC" in other parts of the country. It would be interesting to see how they worked, attracted members and how they related to the local authorities. Of those mentioned Bude actually own a stretch of their canal. JM wondered how and when such an organization could be launched. A meeting of the local Inland Waterways Association (IWA) branch was to take place the following Wednesday. This would be a good chance to canvass people on support. Perhaps there could also be a survey among CS members. A public meeting would be held subsequently. In any case a Friends organization should be set up before transfer of responsibility for the canal from the Council to another body. PN, JM, GP would attend the IWA meeting. KL proposed that as in the case of the Theatre Group, the CS could be of assistance in the short term. The initial CS public meeting had been instrumental in setting up that group.

5. City Council

The timetable for the Council's proposed Waterways Partnership Board was unknown, but a meeting was scheduled to take place in November. As set up it is mainly concerned with the estuary rather than the canal. GP & JE were involved, but not as members of the CS. There was a discussion on how the CSRCQ might be involved. DH said that apart from river users, there was little representation of environmental, residents or other interest groups. KL & GP considered that canal and estuary should be separated within the PB, perhaps each with an advisory role. PN: we will come back to this issue after the first WPB meeting.

6. Open Meeting on Saturday with Exeter Canal & Quayside Trust

The discussion centred on how critical of the ECQT CS members could be at this meeting. How could questions be framed? JM: technical questions should be avoided. JE has suggested the following to be raised: (i) Will ECQT be on the WPB? (ii) Would the Trust should engage more with interested parties such as canal users and the CSRCQ? (Perhaps Alan Williamson could be invited to a future meeting.) (iii) ECQT meetings and decisions should be more open.

7. Promotion/Publicity

Text from the draft one page A5 leaflet on the ECS's report "A future for Exeter's River Canal & Quayside" has been added on the CS website. Copies of the leaflet could be distributed at the upcoming CS open meeting. The report itself could be distributed to relevant ECC Councilors, and later to FoEC when set up. Remaining copies could be available at £2.

8. Valley Parks Masterplan

The Council's consultation process is to include interested stakeholders. PN reported on the meetings of Sept 17 and 27. The next meeting will be on November 4th. The heritage dimension of this plan might generate funds for projects such as the cycle path to Cowley Bridge or repairs to St James' Weir. PN mentioned that the possibility of a Clyst Valley Regional Park could become significant in connection with projected housing growth (i.e. Cranbrook)

9. Bike Shed proposals

The proposals by the Bike Shed theatre to develop a new theatre and creative centre in "Maclaine's Warehouse" on the quay (which had been part of the old Maritime Museum) were to be discussed at a meeting on 25th November.

KL mentioned the issue of respect for a historic building and the implications of a planned extension on the north side. JM said that we do not know the impact of this redevelopment or of the possible non-theatre aspects of the project. There must be respect for existing green spaces. The CS role should be to find out what the plans are.

10. St James' Weir

There was a discussion around how to react to the response JW received from Sarah Ward (ECC) dated 19/6/15 to his letter relating to the deterioration of SJW. In essence ECC like the EA is not prepared to commit themselves financially to repairing the weir. She proposes the possibility of forming a trust to acquire and protect the weir. PN mentioned consulting ECQT and raising the issue at the meeting (Nov 4) of the Valley Parks Masterplan. A trust might be able to secure other sources of funding.

11. AOB

- A possible visit to Gloucester to be considered at the next meeting.
- PN to replace KL on Canal Users Group
- PN might contact Stewart Barr in University with interest in flooding (new member of CSRCQ group?)

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed (Subsequently fixed for Wednesday November 18th)

John Whitton

RCQ group

Notes on meeting held at the White Hart on 18 November 2015

Present: Peter Nickol (chair), John Whitton, Bernard Frowd, Jane Evans, John Monks, Guy Parker, Dominic Houston, Jean Hall, Kimberly Bryan

Apologies: Simon Goddard, Keith Lewis

Two new members were welcomed: Jean Hall (ECS and IWA member); and Kimberly Bryan (PhD student at Exeter University)

Valley Parks Masterplan

PN reported on the last meeting of the advisory group, Nov 4. Draft proposals were presented to the group and discussed. Next they will be costed, prioritised and formed into a further draft for presentation to ECC Executive Committee on 26 Jan. The draft proposals include things we have pressed for – repairing St James Weir, extending Exe Valley Way northwards – but these are expensive items and may remain aspirational. It was queried when the masterplan would be available to view, and when it would be signed off: **PN will seek clarification on these points.**

Canal Users Group

JE, GP and PN attended the meeting on Oct 28. PN asked whether the FEC steering group could join the Users Group and do a presentation similar to the recent one to the IWA; this was accepted. JE asked about any revision to the Canal Masterplan, and for assurance that the Users Group be consulted at an early stage in any revision. PN noted the range of matters discussed: from strategic issues to detailed problems (e.g. weed clearance) – a good forum for airing problems.

ECS open morning with presentation by Alan Williamson (ECQT)

It was noted that AW described ECQT as being mis-named, in that ‘we don’t have much to do with the canal’. (BF: ‘the canal is definitely part of ECQT’s remit’.) AW expressed a willingness to meet the RCQ group, so we will come back to this.

Waterways Partnership Board

JE and GP reported on the Board’s first meeting on 16 Nov, and expressed strong dissatisfaction and frustration. (JE: ‘the worst meeting I’ve ever attended.’) As anticipated, the predominance of estuary people on the Board skewed the discussion. (JH contrasted this with the board of the Grand Western Canal, which has a broad membership and influences DCC, who have three members on it.) JE has received a list of action points, **which will be circulated.** The next Partnership Board meeting is on Jan 13. We (RCQ group) could ask to have input; we will come back to this.

Friends of Exeter Canal

This received extensive discussion. DH/JM presented the papers which had been circulated prior to this meeting. DH had contacted three other Friends groups: all

had different motivations, functions, structures. Much effort to set up, but enjoyable/sociable once up and running, organising events. Necessary to establish a 'need' for forming a friends group. JH: best model for comparison is the Grand Western Canal – friends group helped to initiate a revival.

JM: a point of no return has been reached; either we go ahead or not. We need to establish 'why' – a purpose. FEC would draw from a wider group than exists. It would lobby for the canal's wellbeing, and provide volunteers to directly engage with the canal. We should do it.

JE: the canal is under threat; lobbying is important. PN: it would be good to have FEC in place while ECC are making decisions about the future of the canal.

JH: great potential for voluntary activity, plus a move to get more boats on the canal. A slipway is needed to enable visiting boats to visit.

BF: it would educate people in wider Exeter about the canal, and would generate needed activity. But we would need to sell the benefits of becoming a Friend. JH: what would people get out of it? – events, activities. DH: it would be good to have a specific project – perhaps the slipway?

JM: Sarah Ward had welcomed the concept, but fullest possible cooperation needed. Trade Union considerations: we should not undermine the work of existing employees. FEC would be independent of ECS but affiliated closely with IWA. Proposed that the steering group applies to ECQT for a grant to fund the launch event.

JM: we need to have the answers to all likely questions. There is a need to strengthen the steering group. GP and JH volunteered to join. DH: a spokesperson needed.

There was clear advice from IWA that a public meeting should be arranged with maximum publicity; this should be in the New Year. JH: advertise in Waterways World, Devon Life. Possibly contact Ben Bradshaw.

The discussion was rounded off by establishing that there was indeed a clear opinion within the meeting that we should proceed with the formation of FEC, and that the steering group should continue with this.

AOB

GP described the historic (but still legal) concept of Public Quays, and showed a map identifying Exeter's two: one on the basin (east side) and one on the Quay.

Date of next meeting

Agreed for 15 December.

Exeter Civic Society: River Canal & Quayside Sub-committee
Notes of meeting, 15 December 2015, The White Hart Hotel, Exeter

Present

Jane Evans, Bernard Frowd, Dominic Houston, John Monks, Peter Nickol (chair), Guy Parker.

Apologies

Kimberly Bryan, Simon Goddard, Jean Hall, Keith Lewis, John Whitton.

Note-taker: John Monks

Previous meeting

Mention of GP's explanation of Public Quays has been added to the minutes.

1. Valley Parks Masterplan

PN reported that the Masterplan covered the next ten years and that it was intended to keep the User Group going for the time being. As a representative on the User Group, he had been asked not yet to make the document public. It proposes some improvements that the RCQ sub-committee have been pushing for.

Concern was expressed about the lack of public sight of the plans, and whether there would be further consultation on the detail before approval was given by the City Council executive committee. It was felt the process was too quick. It was agreed to convey the meeting's disquiet to Simon Bates.

JE said she would make contact with Simon Bates on behalf of the River and Canal User Group.

Action: PN to question consultation and timetable, and report back.

2. Waterways Partnership Board

The sub-committee considered whether to ask to join the Partnership Board. It was felt strongly that this was one way of holding the process to account. JE reported that financial information she had requested from city council officers to prepare input for the Partnership Board was not forthcoming despite the fact that she had been requested by Councillor Rosie Denham and Sarah Ward to gather it. It was agreed:

- to write to Councillor Denham requesting that the RCQ group is represented on the Partnership Board
- to raise a question at the Board about the future of the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust and its funds.

JE voiced concern over what she called 'secret huddles', i.e. meetings of internal council groups on the future of the Quay and the Canal Basin.

Action: PN, and PN/JM

3. Meeting with David Lockwood

PN referred to his notes of the meeting that had been previously circulated. He highlighted two particular implications of the Bike Shed Theatre's proposals for Maclaines Warehouses: the future of the green space next to the warehouses and questions regarding service traffic. It was agreed to arrange a meeting with David Lockwood in the New Year to discuss how the proposals could become more integrated with the future of the Canal and Canal Basin as a whole.

Action: PN

4. New wine bar for the Quayside; development at Mill on the Exe

JM reported that planning permission had been given for a Victorian-themed wine bar in what used to be Hotteas café next to the Custom House. He asked whether the ECS planning sub-committee had been aware of it, and what steps the RCQ group should take to make itself aware of future planning applications.

He drew attention also to the proposed development at the Mill on the Exe public house and neighbouring Head Weir House (listed as a building of local importance) by St Austell Brewery, and suggested that the Brewery, which also developed the Samuel Jones public house on the Quayside, should in return put something back into river and quayside conservation.

Action:

PN to contact the planning case officer responsible for the Mill on the Exe application to discuss securing from St Austell Brewery a planning gain for the future of the river.

ALL to monitor planning applications as well as they can. PN to clarify with KL the roles of the RCQ sub-committee and the ECS Planning sub-committee.

5. Future of the former information centre, Quay House

JM reported that the site is under offer. It is an ECQT property and a Grade 1 listed building.

Action: PN/JM to establish what the plans are.

6. Friends of Exeter (Ship) Canal

The notes of the steering group's meeting on 5 December 2015 were received with approval. KL's emailed feedback was noted and will be taken on board.

7. Any other business

JM said the Environment Agency had been felling trees on the riverside in the vicinity of Exe Bridges. It was felt to be too big a task to monitor point by point the Agency's implementation of flood defence work.

Another walk by sub-committee members from Cowley Bridge to Countess Wear was suggested for the New Year to look at the progress of the flood work so far, and to remind ourselves about what is to come.

8. Date of next meeting: 8 February 2016 at 7.30pm.