

# NATLAND PARISH COUNCIL

(Meeting 27 November 2006 – Agenda Item 4)

## Lancaster Canal (Northern Reaches) Restoration Partnership Steering Group

Note on **20 November 2006 meeting** attended by Cllrs Dickinson and Peters

This has become an annual event, occupying a morning at the Longlands Hotel, Tewitfield, and comprising a series of presentations to update the Steering Group on progress so far and seek its (vague) endorsement.

This note is based on what we understood the speakers to say; we don't guarantee it's 100% accurate as there was nothing to check it against.

### **The points that struck us most were:-**

- There were no handouts and searching SLDC's website afterwards for relevant documents or reports drew a blank.
- The project is now well into the 'detailed feasibility and design of Phase 1' stage.
- Phase 1 is from Kendal Canal Head Basin to "the Natland end of town" (Hal Bagot) – it may extend to Crowpark Bridge (Hawes Lane), depending on funding. Phase 2 would extend it southwards to Crooklands and Phase 3 would complete it to Tewitfield.
- The benefit of extending Phase 1 to Crowpark is that water could be abstracted from the nearby River Kent to supply the canal; there is an environmental requirement that water must not be abstracted from the Kent catchment upstream of the sewage works (so presumably this rules out Natland Mill Beck). The canal will flow northwards so water will overflow from Canal Head into the Kent via a pipe.
- Alastair Phillips of the Arup/EDAW partnership (a planning/design consultancy) said this abstraction would require an 'intake structure' which he said might be "very sensitive" and was still being investigated. Eventually (Phase 2) the existing Crooklands feeder would be used.
- Keeping the Kent catchment free from American crayfish appears to be a major environmental issue – they're in the existing canal's catchment already.
- An environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the project will be prepared.
- Tim Brownrigg (engineer with British Waterways) felt restoring the fixed span bridge carrying Parkside Road over the canal may be unacceptable to the Highway Authority because it would restrict forward visibility, so a lift span may be needed (we disagree – a lift span would be unacceptable to Kendalians who don't at present overtake there anyway and are already slowed down by a speed table because of the canal cycleway).

- Natland Road bridge would be fixed span, following the present road alignment on a new embankment, with the Watercrock access road re-aligned to climb onto the embankment and join Natland Road. There would be a 'chicane' in the canal to get it under the bridge without too sharp a skew angle. There was (unspecified) development potential for any spare land thus created between the canal and Natland Road.
- Various options (the "Kendal Canal Head Master Plan") for the canal plus ancillary developments (residential, retail, employment and catering – a 'boutique' hotel even!) have been the subject of consultation. There was a public meeting at the Town Hall on 21 September. Some options have sub-options with alternative levels of housing density – 60, 90 and 120 dwellings per hectare. Costings indicate only those options with the most extensive area and highest density of housing could produce sufficient surplus cash ('total development value' – i.e. profit) to fund the canal infrastructure. It wasn't clear to us whether this meant funding Phases 1, 2 and 3 or just Phase 1 (in which case, where would the money for Phases 2 and 3 come from?).
- The next stage in this 'masterplanning' process would be testing the options with 'stakeholder workshops' in 2007.
- A list of main consultees was displayed which did not include parish councils.
- SLDC will come under pressure to relax its current planning policy (50% of new housing to be 'affordable', with the remaining 50% subject to local occupancy agreements) in order to boost profitability. Much was made of an estimated 18% 'property value uplift' arising from a waterside location. We feel SLDC is facing hard decisions to keep this project alive; there is a conflict between the objective of 'affordable housing' (keeping prices down) and the needs of this project (pushing prices up). And don't forget owners in the affected area (e.g. Gilkes) may have their own development plans and might seek compensation if they are frustrated by fresh SLDC policy changes.
- Jason Leach (Project Manager for BW) has spoken to residents of Natland Mill Beck Lane (One property in Kendal and two in Natland) about the loss of their land to the canal; there is the possibility of narrowing the canal hereabouts to limit its impact and leave residents with viable gardens – so we're getting our first whiff of 'winners and losers'.
- A new canal basin in Phase 2 has not been considered yet. There was no mention of a marina on the south side of Kendal in Phase 1, but there will be only sufficient water space at Canal Head for temporary visitor moorings. Longer-term and permanent moorings would have to be "further south" – presumably in as yet unspecified marinas that might be developed. They did mention the need to turn boats round on the south side of Kendal – this would require a local widening at the very least.
- Nothing much was said about Phase 3; this would come "later". Manchester University has been approached to submit proposals for crossing the M6 and other roads.

DP/MRD

24/11/6