

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BATHAMPTON CONKER CROSSING ASSOCIATION

25th February 2019

8.0 pm The George, Bathampton

Chair's Report

On behalf of all the Trustees, I would like to extend my thanks to the very many individuals, businesses and organisations who have supported the Conker Crossing in the past year. Their support has helped us deliver a community-endorsed and just-approved Planning application and, Planning obtained, a financial/resource commitment from B&NES Highways to take over the detailed design/procurement process as the next step towards them ultimately adopting the bridge into their network. We are thrilled with the progress.

Those to thank include local organisations and businesses – our Parish Council, Ward Councillors, local schools (Bathampton and King Edwards School), The George Inn, Mac McKillop of Bathampton Farm, as well as wider Bath-based donors such as The Medlock Trust, St John's Foundation and Orseis Trust. Individuals have also been very generous, contributing £7,171 in total in personal donations and fundraising events. Organisations contributed £4,754.

We are extremely fortunate to live in a community with professionals willing to give their time and skills to bring forward our design and planning application supporting materials for reduced rates or pro-bono. For their involvement we thank Format Engineers as our designers, as well as the network of businesses supporting the application including LPC Trull, Nicholas Person Associates, Hillside Trees and Planning Heritage Ltd. accessed through the network and financial support of Alastair Gibson at Charcombe Homes.

Summary of main actions and outcomes in 2018/19

1. Delivery of Planning Permission for a new foot and cycle bridge

During this first year, the Conker Crossing has developed a design for a new foot and cycle bridge over the canal between the canal path at Tying Road and a new path to run along the boundary of King Edward's School to the bottom of Dark Lane.

Having considered several options, in Spring 2018 we tested our preferred design with the Canal & River Trust and B&NES using Pre-Planning processes. We simultaneously held public consultation events at the village hall and primary school, making these materials available online and using both the Parish Council newsletter and communication channels, as well as a separate leaflet to all homes in Bathampton, to ensure everyone in the community had the chance to comment.

We took the feedback from our engagement phase and worked further on the design to ensure our proposal balanced the many competing constraints on the site especially the well-loved and historic setting vs. the dimensions available in a narrow space and the need to meet certain height, width and gradient restrictions to be a bridge that B&NES Highways could ultimately adopt. These included a requirement from B&NES Highways to slightly increase the bridge useable width from 2m to 2.5m, the height to 2.7m from 2.55m as well as

soften the gradient slightly further. We believe that the design we submitted to Full Planning on 2nd October 2018 is the very best fit we could achieve on the site (Planning Ref: 18/04394/FUL).

In December 2018, B&NES Planning indicated that with some conditions, including provision of a scheme for a short area of low-level lighting on the corner wall of the south footpath along the edge of the King Edward's Sports Grounds, Final Permission would be approved for the Conker Crossing. At the time of writing, it is hoped that final Planning Permission is now imminent.

The Trustees are confident that work will progress with the scheme in 2019. B&NES Highways have now set aside £90,000 for initial work in 2019/20 to begin work on delivering the bridge, focusing firstly on detailed, technical design, as well as a procurement exercise.

Throughout the design development, we sought to minimise the cost to the community by negotiating and networking tirelessly to find the best local skills at the lowest cost. Those that have helped us with their donations, time and expertise have helped us deliver a highly professional planning application at an actual cost of £11,334, far lower than would have been incurred on the open market.

As a result, the role of the Trustees will change in the coming year to being one of:

- a) On behalf of the community, seeking to champion and safeguard the design approved at Planning
- b) Maintaining focus on the project with stakeholders to ensure we keep a pace that reflects the urgency of the safety situation we are seeking to improve
- c) Acting as a conduit of progress updates and information to the community

2. Change of our structure as an Association

Context

Our Constitution dated January 2018 established us as an Unincorporated Charitable Association and this used as the basis for successful registration with HMRC, which is still valid today. Our purpose was clearly defined – developing a new bridge by fundraising to bring forward a planning application as well as contributing to the cost of the detailed design and build.

As we came to pay our first set of liabilities at the pre planning stage, our income temporarily exceeded the Charities Commission's income threshold of £5k and so we applied to register with the Commission in line with their policy for unincorporated charitable associations. This application process lasted several months in which we discussed with the commission why we felt our purpose was valid in the context of bringing forward a new public amenity.

The challenge from the Charity Commission was that while a new bridge is a new amenity, we could not act in partnership with the Council and be charitable, despite this being a new approach favoured by councils in austere times. We could not therefore 'contribute' to costs that a Council also shared. Raising money for Planning as only a step in the project wasn't in itself charitable even though the outcome will be a new amenity.

While we suspect that this partnership approach and charitable status will evolve over time, we accepted that this is the current approach taken by the Commission. It is also the case that as B&NES has taken ownership of the next phase of the project there will be no costs to share and, as written above, our purpose has therefore shifted away from fundraising towards being a User Group from the community who will champion the design and provide a flow of information to the community.

We have taken HMRC through the outcome with the CC and they nevertheless remained content with our registration with them.

Outcome

Given that we could see that our relationship with the project is changing post Planning as responsibility passes to B&NES Highways, we took the decision on 22nd October to become an Unincorporated Association and updated all communication materials accordingly, still planning to hold our AGM and publishing accounts etc as set out in our original constitution. An unincorporated association has a temporary purpose, is not for profit, is not regulated and its trustees accept liability for its affairs - but it is not a charity.

Once Planning Permission is obtained, we will formally wind up our Unincorporated Association and become a community-based User Group reporting progress to the Parish Council. We will continue to use the CC website/Twitter to provide progress updates in line with our new purpose as set out in Section 1 above.

Fiona Powell,
Chair, Bathampton Conker Crossing

See next page for Financial Statement

31-Jan-19					
Prepared by Cheryl Cook (Treasurer)		Bathampton Conker Crossing Annual Accounts			
	Notes	Amount	Total		
Opening Balance B/Fwd	1	0			
Receipts					
Mac McKillop	2	£ 2,000.00			
Individuals via Golden Giving & Sumup	3	£ 3,168.42			
Individuals via pub donation boxes (including quiz night)	4	£ 304.83			
King Edwards School	5	£ 2,000.00			
Bathampton Parish Council	5	£ 1,000.00			
Friends of Bathampton Primary School	5	£ 254.00			
Paul Strasburger	5	£ 250.00			
Andrew Mercer	5	£ 1,000.00			
Medlock charitable trust	5	£ 500.00			
St John's Foundation	5	£ 500.00			
Orseis Trust	5	£ 500.00			
J Reilly Auction and prints	6	£ 447.98			
Total Receipts			£ 11,925.23		
Payments					
Pre-planning application					
Pre-planning application fee	7	-£ 684.00			
Arboricultural survey	8	-£ 570.00			
Bridge design and documentation (pre-planning)	9	-£ 3,000.00			
Pub Donation boxes	4	-£ 51.75			
Fringe Arts Bath - (marketing material and community engagement)	10	-£ 78.90			
Public consultation (marketing and presentation materials)	11	-£ 656.40			
Land Registry searches		-£ 15.00			
			-£ 5,056.05		
Planning application					
J Reilly Prints	6	-£ 324.33			
Bridge design and documentation (planning)	9	-£ 5,700.00			
Planning application fee	7	-£ 254.00			
			-£ 6,278.33		
Total Expenditure			-£ 11,334.38		
Surplus/Deficit balance c/fwd	12	£ 590.85			
Notes to the Accounts					
<i>Bathampton Conker Crossing is referred to in abbreviation as BCC below:</i>					
1 Bank account was set up in January 2018					
2 Mac McKillop donated £2000 and was our first donor for the project.					
3 We set up a fundraising page with "Golden Giving". All amounts are shown net of 2% bank and platform charges. Golden giving charges less than any other comparable platform is it is not-for-profit.					
4 Donation boxes were purchased and George and Bathampton Mill both displayed these from Jun 2018 through to Dec 2018.					
5 The trustees approached many organisations to request contributions to assist with planning costs.					
6 Jane Reilly donated an original painting of the site which was auctioned, along with some prints at an event on 27th November.					
As Bathampton Conker Crossing had almost reached their target the event was shared with Batheaston Village Hall. Profits and costs to the conker crossing are shown which went through the BCC bank account. £240 was contributed directly to the Batheaston Village Hall.					
7 Bathnes planning charges. The trustees and planning team worked to minimise these costs as far as possible.					
8 Charcombe Homes were able to secure probono and reduced rate contributions from planning experts including heritage consultancy and funded a planning consultant and ecology consultant for the project. As a result the only planning survey which BCC funded directly was the arboricultural survey.					
9 The bridge design was undertaken by Format Engineers at a reduced rate.					
10 The project was invited to form part of the Fringe Arts Bath #getoutofthecar exhibition at Milsom Place which formed an opportunity to raise awareness and fundraise					
11 As part of the planning process public consultation is essential to make sure that public views are taken into account in the design					
12 The trustees propose to retain the surplus in the bank account to fund communications and engagement with the local community during the council design, procurement and build phases. We will write to those individuals who have donated funds after the planning submission was made to confirm they are content for the funds to be used in this way.					

Minutes and actions taken at the meeting

Present at the meeting for the Conker Crossing were the three Trustees – Fiona Powell, Cheryl Cook and Terry Wagstaff.

Opening remarks and Chair's statement

Fiona opened her report by saying what good news it was that Planning Permission had been obtained that day. Chris Dance of LPC Trull had been chasing it on our behalf in the hope we could announce it at our AGM and it had indeed happened.

The Trustees also noted that the Cabinet member for Transport had written about the project in his Bath Chronicle Transport Vision piece the week before and had also spoken indirectly to parents about Council support for the scheme when visiting a local workplace. This was seen as very clear sign of the commitment to the project.

Fiona stepped through the Chair's report and the Trustees endorsed the content of the report, as well as the proposal within it to change the structure of the group to being a Community User Group. Fiona had sought the counsel of the Bathampton Parish Council Chair in the run up to the AGM in order that she, as a key stakeholder, was in agreement as to the next phase role of the Conker Crossing from a community perspective.

Treasurer's Update

Cheryl then stepped through the income and expenditure statement and the Trustees agreed to write to each of the donors who had contributed since Planning was submitted in reverse order to check that the small surplus of £590 could be left with us for any community communication or consultation costs as the project went forward in B&NES' hands. If not, we will return their funds to them.

Further Actions

The Trustees agreed that the next step for them was to understand from the Council (Highways) the timescales and activities for the next phase and provide an update to the community as soon as they could. Since the meeting, Fiona has spoken to PC Deputy Chair Lin King and agreed that the Trustees will visit a Parish Council meeting as soon as there is news to share.

END. 3rd March 2019