

Green & Blue Futures – Steering Group Meeting

Date: 15-16 Nov 2012

Venue: The George Hotel, Lichfield

Notes from the Meeting

Attendees were;

Canal & River Trust (CRT)	UK	Chris Barnett
Canal & River Trust (CRT)	UK	Chris Bailey
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	UK	Keith Tompkins
Province of West Flanders	BE	Jasper Dugardeyn
Province of Hainaut	BE	Stephane Ramu
Province of Hainaut	BE	Julia Bailly
Province of Hainaut	BE	Frederic Della Libera
South Tipperary County Council	IR	Labhaoise McKenna
Reuissir en Sambre	FR	Thierry Herbet
Reuissir en Sambre	FR	Lucille Vanlerberghe
Waterway Trust Scotland	UK	Karen Moore
Keith Willis Associates	UK	Keith Willis
Neil Ravenscroft	UK	Brighton University
Lee Stapleton	UK	Brighton University
Trevor Roberts	UK	Canal Connections
Alan Bolton	UK	Canal Connections

Apologies received from British Waterways Scotland were sent – This absence was noted and BWS have confirmed they will be attending future meetings. Karen Moore from Waterways Trust Scotland reported on their behalf.

Chris Barnett (CBar) and Chris Bailey (CBai) updated the meeting on the absence of Glenn Millar – who is unfortunately still absent from work on sick leave. CBar and CBai will be responsible for managing the project until further notice.

Update on activities undertaken by partners in the last six months

Partners gave short presentations to the meeting about what activities they had undertaken in G&BF since the KO meeting in May and/or what they planned to do in the initial stages of the project. A brief summary of these are;

South Tipperary County Council (STCC)

Engaging Communities continues following initial work carried out in (Interreg 4c project) Waterways Forward

Everything links to the River Suir Action Plan

Work continuing to develop a ‘Greenway’ along the River linked to cycle routes and Arts alongside the waterway.

Seminar to take place to share this knowledge and help develop Youth training in traditional skills associated with the River and its surroundings/activities.

Hainaut

Stephane Ramu gave a powerpoint presentation explaining their work with 3 different social enterprises

Frederic Della Libera representing one of these 'Ferme Delsamme' described how this is working and the training, skills and social outcomes they expect to be delivered through their work.

Sambre

Are working toward intensive cultivation and greenhousing in their social enterprise – trying to develop a market for 'Spirulene'

Feasibility studies are taking/to take place to assess the viability of this and what other produce they can grow or cultivate in their enterprises. Can they also do this (production) using renewable energy?

They will make use of the River in the production infrastructure (as well as the land alongside it)

Scottish Canals

Partnerships are being formed (BWS / Scottish Canals, Falkirk Council and Volunteer bodies) to focus on the Helix site at Falkirk and setting up of social enterprises there.

The first awareness raising sessions had taken place in October.

CBar/CBa reminded everyone about the recent changes to partner names;

- British Waterways was now the *Canal & River Trust*
- British Waterways Scotland was now *Scottish Canals*
- The Waterways Trust Scotland was now *Scottish Waterways Trust*

Scottish Waterways Trust

KM talked about Canal College and how this was being structured and established to deliver canal based training and education through its courses. She described the emphasis placed on exploiting the interest and value placed on the waterways heritage – be it built, natural or cultural, the public consider it worthy of preservation. CC can provide an education to address these needs.

West Flanders

Jasper gave a presentation outlining the work being carried out by their organisation to establish social enterprises and the activities undertaken by workers in those enterprises – which are wide ranging from environmental e.g coppicing and the road crossings for toads(!) of the work repairing boats, buildings etc along and on the waterways..

The (Flanders) model differs from many as they aim primarily to provide employment per se rather than address some social issues affecting peoples employability. This was highlighted in subsequent discussions and repeated in the afternoon brainstorming session.

Canal Connections (currently observers)

Trevor Roberts explained the work that their Social Enterprise do, using the canal and their boat and volunteers to work with youths and unemployed people to increase their 'life skills' confidence and employability in future.

This was a different type of Enterprise to the ones other partners have seen before and a discussion was held to elicit more information about how it's set up and how the trainees benefit from this approach to their personal development.

CBar added that we as LP were looking at the possibilities of adding CC formally to the project given their evident expertise and the complementarity they could bring to the project.

Canal & River Trust (CRT)

Chris Bailey gave a presentation on the local CRT activities involving volunteers to deliver environmental improvements along the Caldon Canal in partnership with the Churnet Valley Living Landscape Partnership (CVLLP).

This was followed by a presentation by Keith Tompkins of the **Staffordshire Wildlife Trust** who are heading up the **CVLLP**. Keith explained the type of works being carried out, how they're working with CRT and what benefits the volunteers are getting from their involvement. The site visit the next day was a chance to see some of the work carried out and future sites for improvement.

Review of existing practices & trends in relation to the social economy in North West Europe

Lee Stapleton of **Brighton University** gave a presentation about the study we have commissioned to give us a benchmark and understanding of the current situation regarding social enterprises and their adoption / implementation across Europe. The report highlighted the diversity of types of structure and levels adoption (and the motivators for these) by country. This prompted discussion of the findings – and this was followed up in a brain-storming session (reported later) where partners discussed at length their understanding of the role and type of enterprises and economies operating in their countries.

Discussions took place about producing a matrix to place G&BF partner's activities in G&BF and social enterprises within a pan European context.

Finance and Administration issues

A lengthy session took place to review the 1st Claim and areas for improvement– The G&BF FLC Keith Willis set out his findings and explained his minimum requirements from partners claims – and how he expected partners FLC's to show a proper understanding of the issues and their roles. This has been a problem in other projects and he will insist on proper controls taking place and full reporting in their Checklists and control Statements. If work was sub-standard he has to reject the errant claim until rectified.

(A full summary of Keith's / Chris's report to the meeting is available if partners want to read it)

Communications

A discussion took place about progress with Branding, Website and promotion, Banners / Brochure. This had been fairly slow – but we had designs for the logo (provided by STCC) Partners decided on the preferred version and STCC were asked to commission production of the working version.

STCC produced a newsletter which we decided can be used as a template for G&BF. Labhaise is providing this which is a quick win that partners can use for initial publicity

Additional Session – Brainstorming

Stephane Ramu led the session looking at “The variety of social enterprises across the partnership – and North West Europe as a whole. A clear finding from this (and Brighton's presentation that morning) was that there is indeed a wide variety (say the West Flanders example providing employment opportunities of Hainaut/Canal Connections who provide social benefits that lead to increased employability)

Another finding was the varying definitions of the social economy and its role and current ranking by countries in contribution to addressing economic problems and unemployment.

Future Meetings

The next meeting was set for Tipperary (UK) in Oct 2013. STCC are to hold this in connection with a waterway related conference '**Green & Blue Futures - Developing the Social Economic Potential of Waterway Corridors**'

No dates beyond that were set.

Oct 2013	Ireland

Friday 16th November 2012

Partners visited Froghall, Staffordshire and later travelled to Cheddleton to see the sites where CRT/CVLLP volunteers are carrying out environmental improvements.

WE also met volunteers on site who guided us around the area and explained their work, involvement with the partnership and the value they think is being added in the area

After Lunch for project partners and volunteers from the CVLLP partners returned to Lichfield for travel home.

Site Visit

No formal site visit was held though partners were shown the Canal junction at Little Venice and saw the 'Business Boats' (floating offices) and wider regeneration around the Grand Union Canal in Paddington.

Next steps & agree actions from the meeting