

Blisworth Parish Council Meeting
9th April 2018
Village Hall

Blisworth Canal Partnership

The newly formed BCP became active in November 2017 and our responsibilities are two-fold:

1. Adopt a section of the canal from the tunnel to Blisworth Arm
2. Organise and execute the Blisworth Festival which takes place each year in August

Who are we:

Chairman: Mike Holton

Secretary: Nick Hobday

Treasurer: Andrea Holton

Directors: Jack King; Colin Neal; Duncan Price; Jim McQueen

Adopt the canal

- Our first task was to officially take over the adoption from the previous directors which we did when we notified the Canal & River Trust (CRT) at the time of our appointment
- We then arranged risk assessment training with CRT for 3 Directors to ensure we were able to undertake activities to improve the canal side and spinney in January 2018
- Mike H met with the local Ecologist from CRT to discuss what could be achieved with the spinney and canal side
- Our approved paperwork came through in April 2018 so a plan for the area has been delayed but will include a focus on reducing the ivy; planting trees in the spinney; relocating a small number of trees where the ecologist has suggested; creating otter dens and create an environment to attract neuts
- The BCP donated £4000 to CRT last year which they have set aside for Blisworth improvements and an area that was popular at our meeting with the village in February was the towpath beyond Canal Bridge as well as the focus on the spinney and general upkeep of the canalside. We will work on allocating our spend across the year based on these areas
- The Leggers Hut has had a bit of a tidy and our plan is to repaint the wall below the mural and attempt to improve the damp proofing. We have produced some very simple house rules based on comfort and safety to and promoted the hut via Facebook for now to the villagers to encourage use which remains free of charge. We will discuss adding some outdoor furniture at our next meeting at a relatively low cost

Blisworth Festival

- Plans are underway with all local services now informed: police, fire, highways, council and East Midlands Ambulance Service
- The date has moved by 1 week to 18th and 19th August 2018 at the request of the farmer whose field we use for parking – he always struggles to be ready on the usual weekend and one year it cost him £1500 to dry his harvest. We discussed moving the date with all key stakeholders and checked the calendar for clashing events before making the final decision

- Road closures have been applied for and approved and the police have confirmed their attendance
- Last years stall-holders have been contacted to book their places and so far the boat spaces are all sold and around 20% of the festival field
- We have agreed to create zones this year one of which is that Blisworth House will be the 'artisan' area providing exposure to local craft and small businesses to promote their goods
- We are currently exploring options to ensure visitors see all of the attractions not just the festival field which is usually the first point of call due to its proximity to the car park including such ideas as a road train and interactive map as part of the brochure
- The brochure, which we sell at the festival for £1 has been co-ordinated and published by an external provider in the past who collated all advertising. This year we are successfully collating the advertising ourselves which means the publishing will be self funding and we will be raising money for the BCP at the same time.
- We held a public meeting on 16th February which proved to be successful with most attendees volunteering their services for our future activities
- The bank account has successfully transferred and all insurances are now in place including the festival itself