



NASH MILLS
PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk Report Towpath Improvement Funding Request from HCC

July 2022

Clerk Recommendation

That NMPC consider a contribution -sum to be determined- from the CIL earmarked reserves (currently £21000) be a prudent use of council funds. CIL is a conditional spend but this project would fulfil all necessary criteria.

Background

NMPC have received a request from Herts County council for funding to enable them to complete works to improve the canal towpath at Red Lion Lane in the direction towards Kings Langley. A small section of this is within our parish but the section is widely used as a 'green route' for recreational purposes by our residents (known as Active Travel). Neighbouring parishes (Kings Langley and Abbots Langley) have also been approached for contributions.

Without contributions HCC may not be able to raise sufficient funding to cover the shortfall thus preventing them from obtaining the other (provisionally awarded) grant funding as this grant funding is awarded with tight deadlines and criteria.

Email Received

"Over the past few years, we have been seeking to improve active travel opportunities on the towpaths alongside the Grand Union Canal. A few years ago, we worked with Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) and others to upgrade the towpath surface with the original intention to improve the length right up to the Red Lion Lane crossing. This was the orange section marked as "completed" on page 3 of the attached document. The funding available then was not sufficient to complete the extent desired and for some years we have been submitting various funding bids to complete the "missing link" running from just to the south of the Hyde Lane Railway bridge to Red Lion Lane. Part of this area lies within TRDC with the balance in Dacorum Borough (DBC)

We have recently been notified that a sum of £100k has been provisionally allocated to this scheme and together with a potential £80k¹ from another source and a s106 contribution

¹ **Email received after report produced** We are still awaiting the finalised costings from the CRT so our current aspiration is to deliver Phase A in this financial year and to further pursue funding to complete Phase B & possibly C in the following financial year. This will improve the section in the most need of upgrading first. This would mean that we would be using the £100k funding already offered, some s106 funding that Dacorum hold and hopefully make up the shortfall from CIL neighbourhood contributions. We would not be using the 80k funding mentioned below as that is linked to Phase B

held by DBC would take us closer to the total sum required to complete the works. However, we are still likely to be short of the total sum required and I am contacting you as Clerk to the Nash Mills Parish Council to see if the Parish Council would consider assisting to plug the funding gap by using the CIL or other funding you control to enable this towpath to be used and enjoyed by those who currently struggle to use the towpath due to its current condition.

I attach the document produced by the Canal & River Trust that covers the proposed works and contains photographs of the challenges currently posed to those walking or cycling on the towpath. We are just looking at completing phase A & B to take us from Red Lion Lane to join with the previously upgraded section."

Nikki Bugden

Clerk to the Council 30th June 2022



Kings Langley Towpath Improvement Proposal 2021

Introduction

Hertfordshire County Council's Transport Plan 2018 – 2031 puts walking and cycling at the heart of new strategic and local developments across the country. There is clearly an ambition in Hertfordshire to increase cycling and walking and to make active travel an easier choice. Improvements to the towpath can help to make this a reality and can have a positive knock-on effect on air quality. By providing a network of safe, accessible, convenient, and pleasant route along our canal towpaths, the Canal & River Trust can help to address several issues across the county including:

- Rail station capacities and car parking access
- Congestion and delays on the approaches to towns
- Accommodating population growth whilst minimising pressure on the road and public transport network

Background

The required Works involve the towpath upgrade for the section from Red Lion Lane Bridge to Lock 70 for a total length of approximately 1.5 km, to be completed in 3 phases. When the proposed towpath sections have been completed, a high-quality towpath will stretch all the way from Apsley south to Croxley Green. This represents an excellent traffic-free route for walkers and cyclists, providing support to local business and wellbeing benefits to the local community.

Plans to create a better environment for walking and cycling at Kings Langley relate directly to the strategic direction outlined in Hertfordshire's Draft Local Transport Plan. Making relatively simple improvements to the canal environment can help the county to meet its objectives around encouraging more sustainable travel behaviour; accommodating growth in travel whilst enhancing features that attract people to the area; increase cycling mode share; and attracting a broader demographic to cycle. Canal & River Trust supports these ambitions and would be delighted to contribute to them through this proposal. These improvements will also have a positive impact on boaters – particularly those using the Nash Mills Winter mooring.

Project scope

The plan comprises of 3 phases:

- **Phase A:** Towpath Upgrade for Dacorum Council between Red Lion Bridge and the District border
- **Phase B:** Towpath Upgrade for Three Rivers Council between the District Border and the extent of previous improvement works
- **Phase C:** Towpath Upgrade for Dacorum Council between Water Lane Bridge and Kings Langley Lock

Phase A and B requires the split of costs between the councils for bidding purposes, ideally looking to combine phase A and B in one project to achieve cost savings from mobilisation and other relevant costs.

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The cost estimation report is based on previous towpath upgrade projects in Kings Langley area and other projects in areas nearby. For final costs, we will need to carry out a detailed site study with a contractor.

The cost estimation includes:

- wide tarmac on largely existing base
- timber edging boards
- widening of towpath in some areas to between 1.8 – 2m
- contractor fees
- Wayfinding
- Habitat Mitigation
- Contingency

Associated costs should be considered:

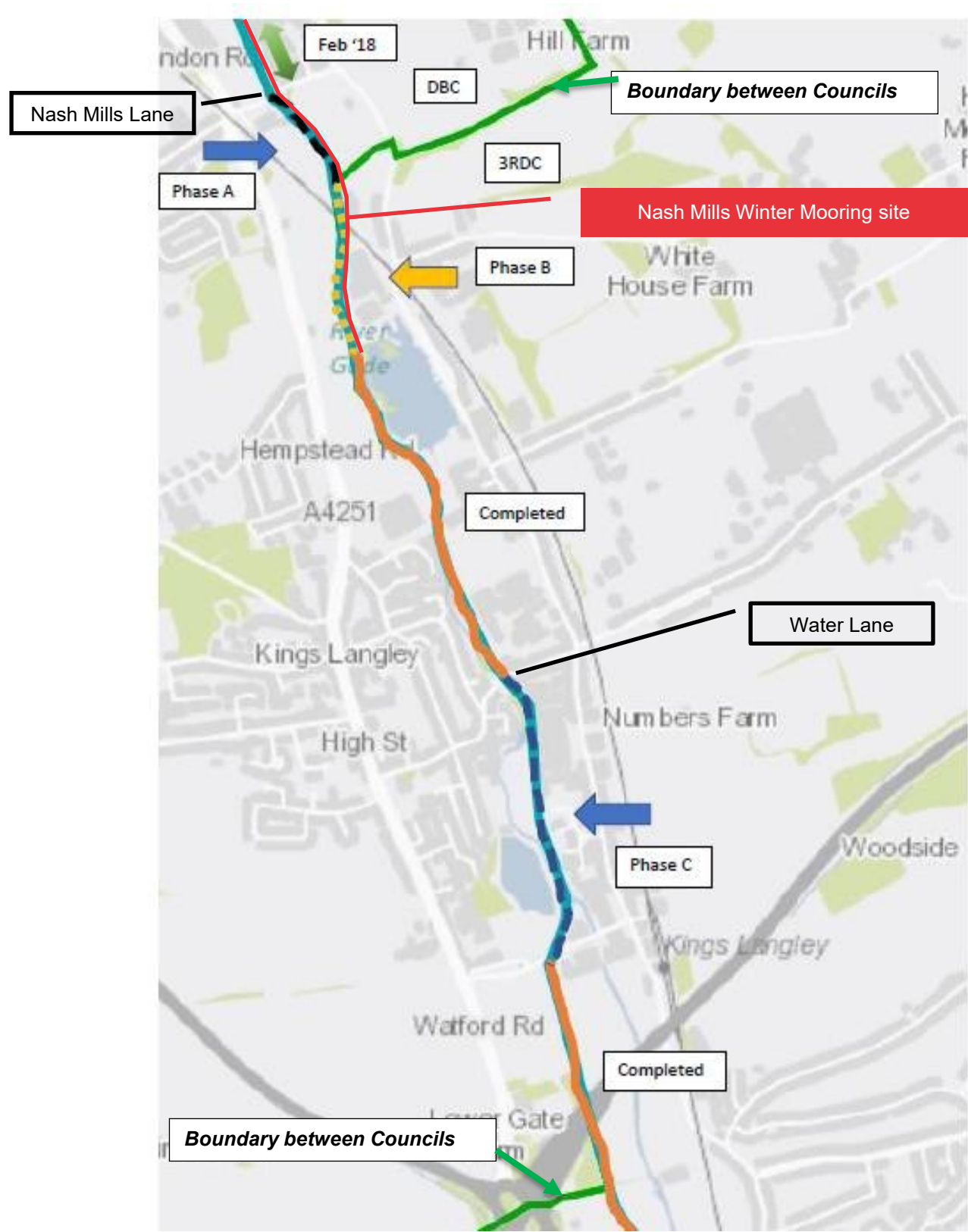
- Sky network is present under the towpath. Any digging may have to be carried manually which will increase the labour associated costs.
- The project involves the collaboration of 2 councils involved.
Benefits for completing the required works at the same time by both councils; savings on mobilisations costs, better price from the contractor, minimal disruption, public engagement.

Materials

The suggested specification for the towpath upgrades is tar spray and chip with a minimum width of 1.8m. We are happy to consider other materials but the agreed design must:

- Be hard-wearing and long-lasting
- Fit in with the character of the canal environment
- Drain water effectively
- Promote civilised cyclist speeds
- Be suitable for all weathers
- Represent value for money

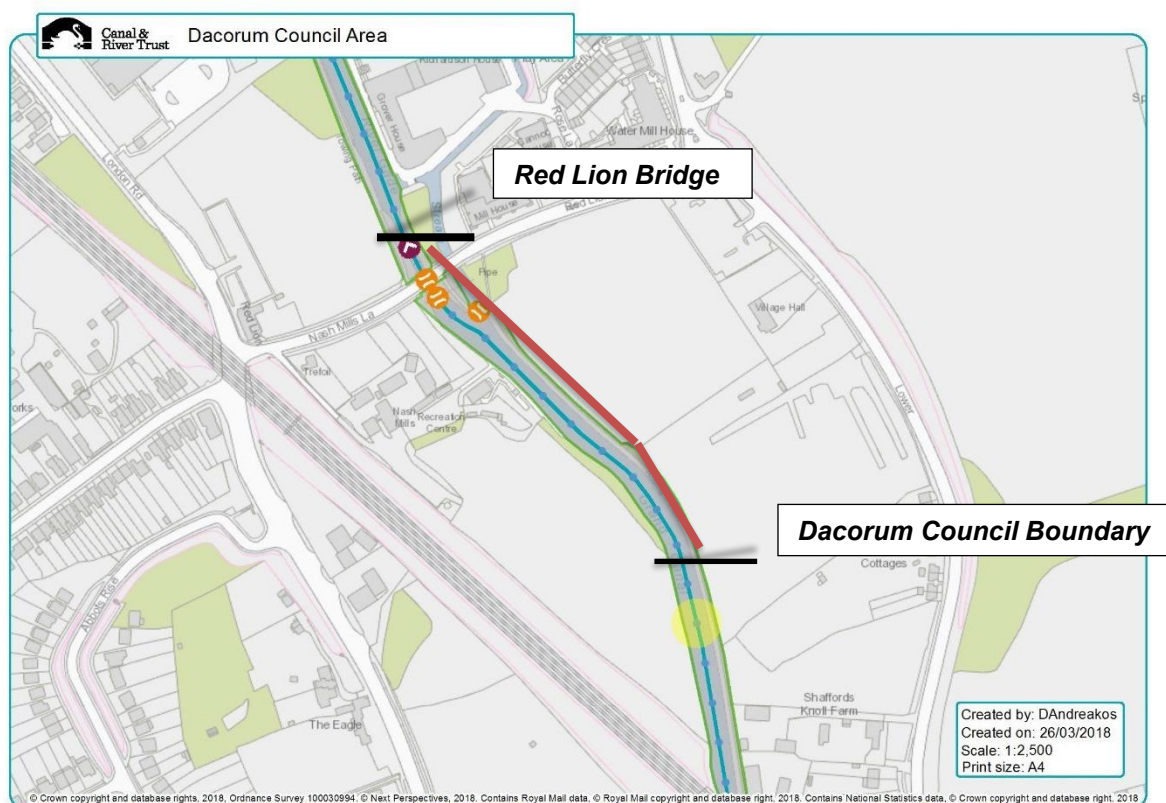
Map of completed and proposed works



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PHASE A

Dacorum Council: from Bridge 155, Red Lion Bridge (GU-178-004) to council boundary GU-178-P0550



Towpath width: 2m Approximate Length: 280m

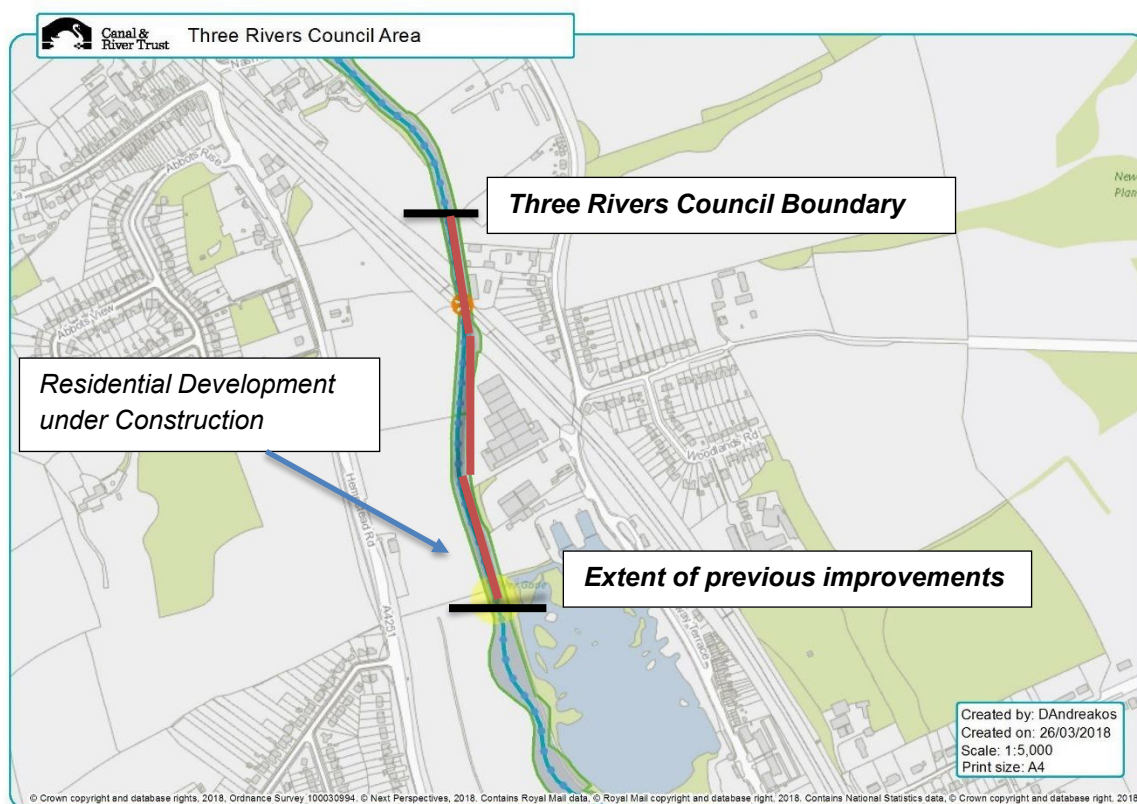
Existing condition

	
<p>GU-178-P0650 Uneven, muddy towpath</p>	<p>GU-178-P0475 Uneven, muddy towpath</p>
	
<p>GU-178-P0450 Uneven, muddy towpath</p>	<p>GU-178-P0325 Uneven, muddy towpath</p>

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PHASE B

Three Rivers Council boundary (GU-178-P0550) to extent of previous improvements (GU-179-P0050)



Towpath width: 2m Approximate Length: 480m

Consider liaising with the residential developer in the area for potential community project and funding.

Note: The waterway wall under the railway bridge, that was previously noted in version 1 of this report, has been reconstructed by CRT. The towpath has been reinstated at a good condition as shown in the photos below.

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Existing condition



GU-179-P0050
Uneven, muddy towpath



GU-178-P0925
Uneven, muddy towpath



GU-178-P0825
Uneven, muddy towpath

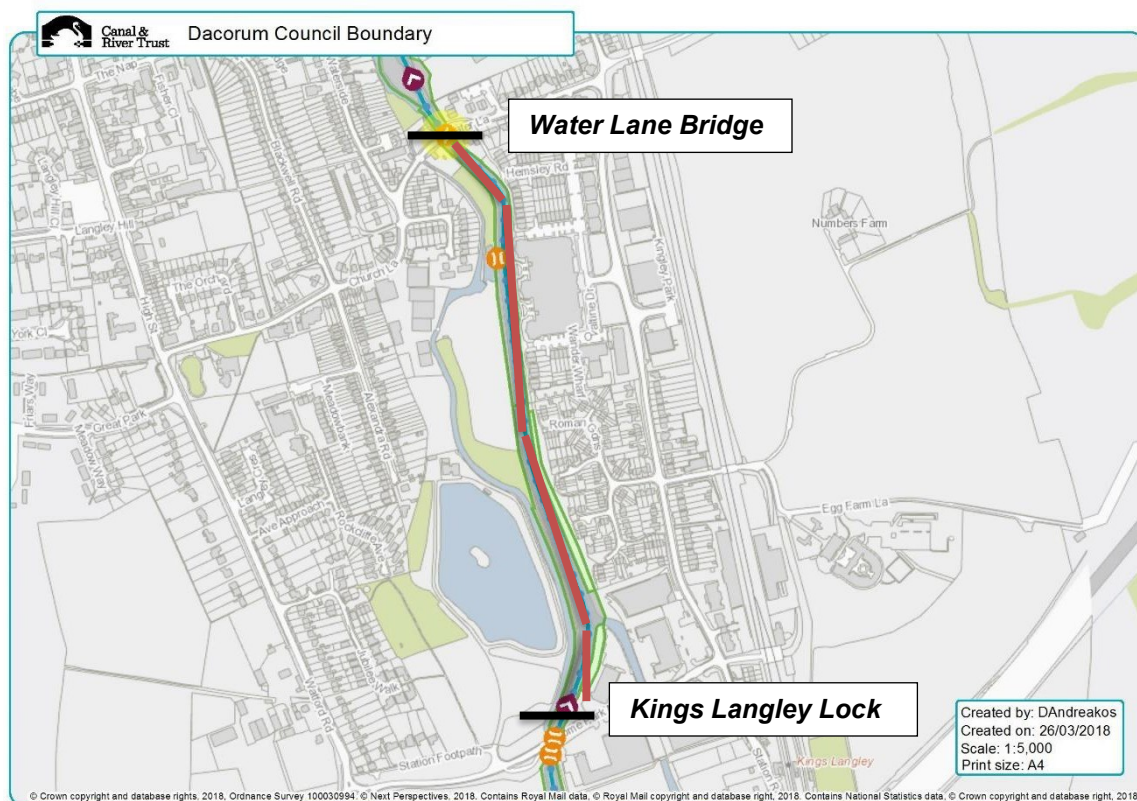


GU-178-007 – Railway Bridge Towpath Wall recently reconstructed. Grass verge to be reinstated

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PHASE C

Dacorum Council: from Bridge 158, Water Lane (GU-180-002) to Lock 70 (GU-180-007)



The following section is to be considered for towpath upgrade in the future: Towpath width: 1.8 - 2m
Approximate Length: 760m

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GU-180-P0775
Narrow towpath



GU-180-P0675
Narrow towpath



GU-180-P0550
Narrow towpath



GU-180-P0400
Narrow towpath

Grand Union towpath - Kings Langley Towpath Tarmac Upgrade



GU-180-003
Narrow, muddy towpath



GU-180-P0125
Uneven, muddy towpath



Access Point GU-180-017 Broken handrail



Access Point GU-180-017 Broken handrail

Grand Union towpath - Kings Langley Towpath Tarmac Upgrade

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