

Mutford Lock Maintenance Update
Report by Rivers Engineer

Summary: This report provides members with an update on the progress of maintenance work at Mutford Lock and proposed revisions to the operating agreement.

In September 2015 members supported expenditure from the Mutford Lock reserve fund for maintenance work along with an increase in the annual budget. This was agreed by the Broads Authority and since then contractors have been appointed and are in the process of completing the essential tasks.

The report in September 2015 also noted that the current operator of the Lock had requested an increase in the cost of operation. Suffolk County Council also has an agreement with the same operator for the operation of the lifting bridges. The lifting bridges are operated for the purpose of navigation through the lock; therefore in the interest of transparency and efficiency a new common agreement has been drafted. This new agreement document will be the basis for negotiation with the current operator.

1 Background

- 1.1 In September 2015 reports to Navigation Committee and to Broads Authority outlined a schedule of maintenance and repair works required at Mutford Lock. This included immediate repairs required as well as changes to regular servicing and maintenance.
- 1.2 Costs associated with the required immediate works were estimated to a total of £55,863 and it was noted that, in addition to this, a further £31,219 had already been spent on repairs to one set of gates and a damaged sill. It was agreed that a total of £87,082 would be transferred from the Mutford Lock reserve fund into the 2015/16 Mutford Lock budget to cover these costs.
- 1.3 Costs associated with improvements to regular maintenance were estimated to require the annual Mutford Lock budget to be increased by £6,000. This would allow for electrical and hydraulic maintenance, improved mechanical maintenance and underwater maintenance.
- 1.4 It was agreed that the annual contribution to the Mutford Lock reserve fund would remain the same at £27,000. This would continue to build the reserve

fund for future repairs, which are likely at some stage to include significant structural repairs.

- 1.5 To better establish the cost of likely future structural work it was agreed that a consultant would be appointed in 2016/17 to look at options and costs for de-watering the lock.
- 1.6 Members were also informed that Sentinel Leisure Trust who currently operate the lock on behalf of the Authority has requested a significant increase in the cost of operation.

2 Progress of Repair Work

- 2.1 During the winter works have been taking place at the Lock. The table below shows the schedule of tasks as previously reported with current status and actual costs.

Item	Estimate	Status	Actual
Penstock repairs Replace two penstock sluices	£ 13,817.12	Completed	£16,095.23
Hydraulic control adjustments Modify gate hydraulics to allow control of operating speed.	£ 5,981.00	Ordered for delivery March	£ 5,981.00
Spare parts Purchase spares for hydraulic and electrical for the gate control system	£ 1,265.00	Received	£ 1,296.80
Debris removal Removal of silt and debris still remnant from surge	£ 6,400.00	Ordered for delivery Feb – March	TBC
Gate re-balancing Install buoyancy tanks to balance gates	£ 15,200.00	Omitted	
Gate mechanism repairs Replace grease pipes, rollers, racks, covers etc.	£ 8,200.00	Ordered for delivery Feb – March	£18,335.30
Paving repairs Breakout and replace settled concrete paving	£ 3,000.00	Quotes received	
Gauge boards Install new large gauge boards on both sides of lock	£ 2,000.00	Received to be installed March	£ 405.00
Other Notices to Mariners Hydraulic valve replacement		Completed	£ 858.86
Total of proposed work	£ 55,863.12		£42,972.19
Emergency work completed spring 2015		Completed	£31,218.94
Total reserves expenditure 2015/16	£ 87,082.06		£74,191.13

- 2.2 Of the £87,082 agreed for expenditure from the reserve account, £74,191 has been completed or has been ordered with delivery programmed for February or March. Much of this work has had to be undertaken with lock closures. The next closure is taking place in the week commencing 15 February. During this week significant mechanical repairs and debris removal work is programmed.
- 2.3 Changes to the proposed schedule of works include the omission of the gate re-balancing and increase to mechanical maintenance. Following the repair work to one of the gates earlier in the year, there was concern with the balance of the gates causing misalignment. However since the initial repairs the gates have continued to operate well, so the decision has been made not to make any further alteration at this stage and use some of that budget allocation to undertake a greater extent of mechanical repairs.

3 Revised Annual Budget Requirement

- 3.1 The following table shows the breakdown of the revised annual budget as proposed and agreed in September 2015 for 2016/17.

Item	Value
Current Lock operation fees	£ 6,957.00
Mechanical maintenance	£ 2,000.00
Hydraulic and electrical maintenance	£ 1,935.00
Debris & Mussel removal and annual check	£ 5,000.00
Maintenance consumables & minor repairs	£ 2,108.00
Total	£ 18,000.00

- 3.2 This revised annual budget allow for an improved level of maintenance including servicing of the hydraulic system, and more proactive mechanical and underwater maintenance
- 3.3 The regular servicing and maintenance requirements have been discussed with a number of contractors and suitable quotes have been received.
- 3.4 In 2016/17 it is proposed that LEC Marine (Klyne) provide the electrical and hydraulic maintenance and Prior Diesels provide the mechanical maintenance. Both contractors are familiar with the lock and operating systems and can provide a good service within the limits of this budget.
- 3.5 For the underwater maintenance rates have been received from a number of diving contractors familiar with the Lock. The diving work is expected to include debris and mussel removal, inspections and occasional replacement of anodes. The choice of diving contractor will be subject to proposed methods, confirmation of costs and availability when the work is required.

4 Operating Agreement and Costs

- 4.1 Operation of the lock and the lifting bridges was originally provided by Waveney District Council. The bridges are Suffolk County Council assets and the lock will be Broads Authority asset on completion of the Harbour Revision Order. Therefore although both bridge and lock operation are undertaken hand in hand for the purpose of navigation separate operating agreements and fees were negotiated.
- 4.2 The operation of the lock and the bridges is now undertaken by Sentinel Enterprises Ltd. which is a trading subsidiary of Sentinel Leisure Trust who now operates facilities on behalf of Waveney District Council.
- 4.3 Members should note that as previously reported Sentinel Leisure Trust has requested a significant increase in the cost of the lock operation. The Trust has requested an increase from £6,957 to £20,000 per annum.
- 4.4 The Authority relies on a competent and reliable operator for the lock. However any negotiation on the cost must clearly provide good value to the Authority as well as a fair deal for the operator. In the interest of clarity and transparency therefore officers from the Broads Authority and Suffolk County Council met and a new common agreement covering the whole operation has been drafted.
- 4.5 The new agreement will be the basis of negotiation on the operating fee with all parties aware of the whole operating cost and how this is proportioned to each aspect of the operation. If negotiations are not satisfactory, then this common agreement would allow Suffolk County Council and the Broads Authority to consider other possible operators.
- 4.6 Members will be updated on progress of the negotiations and therefore any potential effects on the agreed annual budget for Mutford Lock.
- 4.7 The transit fee has been increased for 2016/17 to £13, and it is proposed that on conclusion of the operating contract negotiations further consideration is given to the future charging strategy for the Lock in advance of setting the fees for 2017/18.

Background papers: None

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Broads Plan Objectives: None

Appendices: None