

Barnes Pool Watercourse Restoration Project

Notes of the Working Group Meeting

5th January 2018 at 2.00pm

Present: Philip Tilbury, Ros Rivaz, George Fussey, Bob Austen and Peter Eaton.

Apologies: Derek Bishop and Luke Demerum (Thames21).

We generally discussed what we had found out in the last 8 months since we last met. The delay was due mainly because of waiting for RBWM to investigate the drains in South Meadow Lane so we could find out exactly where and what condition the culvert is in. Volker Highways, the Borough contractor, investigated the drains at the end of November and they kindly allowed PE to go along and inspect the manholes and take photos while they were doing the work.

Four manholes were inspected and it appears that the gullies in South Meadow Lane go straight into the top of the culvert meaning that the culvert runs along the south side of SML. The manholes showed considerable silting similar to those at the Brocas boundary and there was also some debris in them presumably dropped in them when the kerbing was carried out a few years ago. It is also possible that when the gullies were knocked into the top of the culvert the bricks were knocked through into the culvert.

Just prior to this work we (RR, DB & PE) met with Sue Fox RBWM Highways and Volker representatives to discuss what we were hoping to do and what we had so far found out to date. We (DB & PE) met again after the inspection to discuss the findings. It is probable that RBWM is only interested in ensuring the road drainage is working, which in most cases is although a couple of gullies need work which will be done. It is quite probable that as generally the road surface only to certain depth is the Council's responsibility that the culvert will be the College's responsibility as land owner. Sue Fox said that although the Borough were not likely to carry out any work as part of general maintenance that would help us she would on a personal level like to keep in touch and may be able to help with presentations.

Following our Group meeting in March '17 we (RR, DB & PE) dug the silt out of one of the manholes to gain information on the culvert. The culvert, which is circular in shape, at the second manhole appears in relative good order with little root penetration even though there are large trees nearby. The silt, although there was no running water, got considerably wetter as we went down and within the silt were a large amount of small shells.

Also during the summer PE went to the College archives and found out a lot of information on the drainage system as proposed by John Roe in the mid-1800s which our waterway was part of. Basically although the waterway existed and had become the drainage for the College it was only cleared by flood water. As part of the proposals Barnes pool was used a cistern with the sluice gate holding the water back until released to flush the down stream culvert. Part of his proposals also was a flood relief plan providing embankments around Eton and a new channel on the Windsor side from Clewer to below Home Park. It can only be assumed at this stage that cost prohibited it being built.

In the autumn RR contacted Luke Demerum of Thames21 after a recommendation from John Lovell from the Eton Wick Waterways Group. Luke is involved in Eton Wick on the Roundmoor Ditch project. We (RR & PE) met with Luke and heard what Thames21 was about. Luke said he would like to join the Group and was due to introduce himself and Thames21 to the Group today but unfortunately was ill, but briefly they are *'the voice for London's waterways, working with communities to improve rivers and canals for people and wildlife.'* When Luke did visit in the autumn he walked the route of the waterway with PE.

Just prior to Christmas we had an offer from Roger Lines, Premier Basements and an Eton resident to help with the work required when we start which was very much appreciated. We went on to discuss how to take the project forward and along with finding out what Roger would be willing to do we would approach

local company Grundons who are likely to have vast experience in drain clearing etc. (PT will follow this up). We also believe it is time we started to develop a plan for the waterway in South Meadow and downstream to Barnes Pool and to further this it was agreed we would walk the waterway during our next meeting

Next meeting: Tuesday 6th February at 2.00pm meeting at the junction of Meadow Lane and South Meadow Lane to walk the waterway.