

## **Record of Meeting and Action Points**

### **Crinan Quarterly Meeting**

**2026, Q1**

#### **Hosted online via Microsoft Teams**

Meeting date 15/01/2026

Time 1730–1900

#### **Scottish Canals Attendees**

- Laurie Piper (LP)
- Donna Mallan (DM)
- Sam Shaw (SS)
- Amy Needham (AN)
- James Tunnicliffe (JT)
- Eve Burrows (EB)
- Anthony Lister (AL)

#### **1. Welcome & Opening Remarks**

- LP opened the meeting.
- Introductions made to new Scottish Canals staff.
- Suggestion from community member accepted that Scottish Canals would issue a general agenda in advance of future meetings.

#### **Action Points**

- SC to issue general agenda prior to future meetings.
- SC to include action points with each meeting note.

#### **2. Engineering Works Update**

##### **Lock 14**

- JT outlined emergency engineering works currently underway at the embankment above Lock 14 to address leakage through the embankment.
- Access restrictions along the towpath are in place due to public safety risks.
- Question raised about the effectiveness of the towpath fencing as it is being ignored by members of the public.
- Scottish Canals will review the fencing with McNaughton's (the contractor carrying out works at Lock 14) and communicate the agreed solution to the public.
- Query raised about lack of visible work over the last week; this is due to ongoing ecological investigations that have identified potential otter activity.
- Donna Mallan will meet Libby Butler on 16/01/25 to review fencing on site.

### **Bellanoch Sink Hole**

- JT provided an update on the sink hole.
- The ERT (Electrical Resistivity Tomography) investigation has identified areas to be addressed.
- Contractor costs have been received, and works are intended to commence shortly.

### **Spot Dredging**

- Dredging between Locks 4 & 5 will be completed by SC staff over the coming months.
- There is acknowledgement of high spots on both the west and east reaches of the canal. Due to the need to keep levels in the west low to prevent further deterioration of embankment 16, the level is not sufficient for floating plant to carry out dredging. For that reason, spot dredging works this winter will focus on the east reach between locks 4-5.

### **Canal Reopening Timeline**

- Aim remains to reopen navigation at the beginning of April.
- SC acknowledges this may extend depending on investigations into the embankment at Lock 14.
- Further clarity on the programme is expected after January investigations.
- Query raised about re-watering the canal given reservoir restrictions; reassurance provided that re-watering impact has been considered.
- Update to follow once investigations into the embankment have been undertaken and remedial work is agreed.

### **Action Points**

- SC to assess fencing at towpath with contractor.
- SC to meet LB on 16 January to discuss towpath and other issues.
- SC to circulate agreed towpath solution to attendees.
- SC to update on canal reopening timeline once embankment investigations conclude.

## **3. Communications**

- A review of Scottish Canals' communications: all information regarding the current works can be found at: <https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/about-us/maintaining-and-developing-the-canal/our-projects/crinan-canal-winter-works-programme-2025-2026>

- SC acknowledges that the website can be difficult to navigate, and internal work is underway to improve clarity and accessibility.
- Discussion around the most effective channels: notifications by email and through the existing Facebook pages. Scottish Canals advised that the most descriptive and up to date information will always be found on the website.
- SC committed to continue communication frequency and clarity.

#### **Action Points**

- SC to improve communication regularity and brevity across email and Facebook, with links back to the appropriate website page.

#### **4. Placemaking**

- SS provided update on the upcoming accessibility improvements.
  - New walkway across the dummy lock.
  - New path connection from walkway to the towpath alongside dummy lock.
  - Step-free access across Lock 14 lower gates.
  - New steps to bus stop.
  - Ramp removal alongside Boatique.
  - Establishment of herb garden in planter at end of car park.
- Works have been delayed due to the discovery of the leak at the embankment above Lock 14.
- The works are being funded by third party partners: Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) and Argyll & Bute Council.
- Works aim to be completed by end of March, however there may be some ongoing works around Lock 14 into April pending the completion of emergency engineering works to the embankment.
- Query raised as to why works cannot be deferred to next winter; this is subject to third party funding requirements and the desire to minimise impact over winter 26/27.

#### **Action Points**

- SC to communicate timeline once this has been confirmed pending the investigations into the embankment leak above Lock 14.

## 5. Operations

DM provided a full update on operational activity:

- Improvements made to steps in Ardrishaig were acknowledged positively.
- New benches have been installed at the war memorial and will be installed around Ardrishaig basin before summer.
- SC have clarified that repainting of Ardrishaig lighthouse is a capital cost. Quotes are currently being sought.
- Mini-Kelpies – It was understood by DM that SC were to return to Falkirk council, but we may have an opportunity to retain in Ardrishaig; SC are investigating costs for repositioning on the hill next to the war memorial.
- Bellanoch water supply issues: freezing pipes due to lack of trace heating; non-freezing tap available, LP had assigned this to Anothny Lister Maintenance Team.
- Nesting birds affecting water supply issues are a concern; will this prevent future re-watering? Nesting birds always an issue and in normal years we account for this. This limits our water supply to the CAM and Clachaig reservoirs. The CAM is our largest supply, with both together minus rainfall they provide 11 weeks of water. The main issue and difference this year is the defect on the Gleann which the CAM and Clachaig must past through to get to the canal. This is difficult because we can't raise the level of the Gleann past a parameter set by the engineers because it may compromise the dam face of the Gleann.
- Defibrillators installed at Ardrishaig Basin and Crinan Sea lock Training will be organised by Scottish Canals for the community. Defibrillators are locked to prevent vandalism. Users must dial 999 to access and request the code to open the cabinet and to request ambulance attendance.

## Action Points

- DM slides be uploaded to website, they can be found at: [www.scottishcanals.co.uk/business-governance/meeting-consultations/customer-forums-surgeries/crinan-canal-user-groups](http://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/business-governance/meeting-consultations/customer-forums-surgeries/crinan-canal-user-groups)
- SC to investigate Bellanoch water supply and freezing issues.
- SC to arrange opportunity for Jeremy Birnie to meet and explain water management.
- Julia Johnstone (Scottish Canals' Senior Environmental Scientist) to provide response on water security vs. nesting birds. Update will be provided at next meeting.
- SC to publish dates for community defibrillator training.

## 7. Closing Remarks & Next Meeting Date

- Scottish Canals website is the most up to date source of information.
- Dates of quarterly meetings are published on the Scottish Canals website.