

Record of Meeting and Action Points

Crinan Quarterly Meeting

2026, Q2

Hosted online via Microsoft Teams

Meeting date 16/04/2026

Time 1730-1900

Scottish Canals Attendees

- Richard Millar (RM) - part
- Sam Shaw (SS)
- James Tunncliffe (JT)
- Johan Bornman (JB)

1. Welcome & Opening Remarks

- SS opened the meeting.
- Introductions made to Scottish Canals staff.

2. Review of Previous Action Points

1. SC to issue general agenda prior to future meetings. (Done)
2. SC to include action points with each meeting note. (Done)
3. SC to assess fencing at towpath with contractor.
4. SC to meet LB on 16 January to discuss towpath and other issues. (Done)
5. SC to circulate agreed towpath solution to attendees. (Done)
6. SC to update on canal reopening timeline once embankment investigations conclude. (Done)
7. SC to improve communication regularity and brevity across email and Facebook, with links back to the appropriate website page. (Done)
8. SC to communicate timeline once this has been confirmed pending the investigations into the embankment leak above Lock 14. (Done)
9. DM slides uploaded to website.
10. SC to investigate Bellanoch water supply and freezing issues. (under investigation over the summer; SC will address where possible in advance of next winter).
11. SC to arrange opportunity for Jeremy Birnie to meet and explain water management. (JB offered meeting).
12. Julia Johnstone (Scottish Canals' Senior Environmental Scientist) has provided the following response on water security vs. nesting birds.
 1. Scottish Canals must maintain navigation while meeting biodiversity duties under Scottish law.
 2. Loch Clachaig and Cam Loch support protected black and red-throated divers, triggering strict restrictions on water drawdown.

3. Schedule 1 protection makes disturbance of nesting birds, eggs, or young a criminal offence.
 4. NatureScot monitors nesting and only permits drawdown once chicks have fledged or nesting attempts have ended.
 5. Scottish Canals commissions independent surveys to confirm no nesting before seeking consent.
 6. Water is drawn from unrestricted reservoirs first; limited drawdown from Loch Clachaig is possible via nesting rafts.
An additional nesting raft for Cam Loch is being considered to increase operational flexibility.
 7. Water levels are monitored throughout the season to manage supply while protecting wildlife.
 8. **Summary:** it is a decision-making piece based on the legal protection of the birds nesting on our reservoirs, that would be taken with discussion between SC and NatureScot
13. SC to publish dates for community defibrillator training. (Done, no responses to initial call out)

3. Engineering Works Update

Summary provided during the meeting of completed works at:

- Embankment 16.
- Bellanoch embankment.
- Dredging.
- Crinan Basin landscape works.

4. Property & Site Updates

- Distillery planning applications:
 - Gleaner site (Distillery) has been submitted and is under consideration.
 - Canal House, Unit 12: planning has been submitted. SC representation submitted highlighting benefits of the wider masterplan.
- Bridge House, Ardrishaig – All Enquiries boards are being installed shortly. Expressions of Interest form to capture proposed uses; review period 4–6 months.
- Ardrishaig Workshop: Ongoing work to determine future use. Once determined, we will inform stakeholders at the quarterly meeting prior to any planning application being submitted.

5. Operations

- Replacement Crinan Bin Store will be installed; timeframe TBC.
- Dummy Lock: ton bag removal and installation of new fencing to replace Heras panels.
- Waverley will be visiting 17th May Crinan & July 19th Ardrishaig; information is on the SC website.
- Water level in basin to be raised shortly, this has been communicated to boaters.
- Opening date is 1st May, opening draft (2.3m / 2.5m by arrangement)
- Operations have recruited 10 local casuals.
- Property Maintenance Technician role has been advertised on Job Train.
- Two Operative positions are on Job Train.

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7. Upcoming works

- Balance beam replacements are planned at Lock 10 & Lock 6; timing TBC.
- SC will scope potential re-use of balance beams for seating at Lock 10.
- Rewatering commenced the week following the community meeting; approx. 300mm of water per day.
- The canal reopened 1st May for both boating and towpath use.
- Lock 14 step-free access and widening of Dummy lock path work has commenced; planned completion w/c 18th May (TBC).
- Power bollards will be installed on the Dummy lock island.
- Scottish Canals will be hosting James Cook University, Australia, to produce a Climate Vulnerability Index study on the Crinan Canal. We will be asking for community input in upcoming workshops to be held later in the summer.
- Walk Wheel Cycle Trust are keen to produce a study on the extensive barrier removal carried out at Crinan Basin.

8. Open Forum & Community Feedback

Resident and business input on canal developments.

9. Action Points

1. Community member suggested a notice on the herb garden asking that people don't allow their dogs near the herb garden.
2. SC to review camper signage at Lock 10.
3. SC to investigate the issue of vehicles blocking the bollard area at Lock 15 and consider emergency access.
4. SC to remove broken bench from Lock 10 area.
5. SC to relocate some benches and put them back to where they were, notably the one at Linnet cottage.

10. Closing Remarks & Next Meeting Date

- Scottish Canals website is the most up to date source of information.
- Announcement of next quarterly meeting will be via email.