

**LANCASTER CANAL REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP (LCRP) - Executive  
Representation on Outside Body: Cllrs Doug Rathbone & Chris Hogg  
2021/22 Annual Report to Council**

The Partnership has had a year of activity in which the 2 SLDC raps have actively participated in enabling a new Chair to be appointed, towpath trail progressed and strategy updated.

The Sport England funded section of the Towpath Trail has been completed and brought 2km of the path between Stainton and Crooklands up to a multiuser standard. The NLHF funded programme has attracted some 40 new volunteers, many now committed to continue volunteering on the canal.

People from local communities have taken part in organised activities including creating an oral history archive, helping design & produce content for a series of stone and steel constructed interpretation panels, features and waymarkers to be installed shortly, numerous walks delivered by expert volunteers, regular work parties maintaining the canal environment.

The consultants appointed to undertake a route feasibility study for the entire Lancaster Canal Towpath Trail have reported & this will be considered in detail. The report considers partner's ambitions and strategic connectivity of walking and cycling routes between the towpath trail and the wider network of routes in the area.

A new chairperson has been recruited - Prof. Christopher May - to drive forward LCRP's ambitions.

An Executive Development Day was held to review the strategic direction for the partnership, resulting in priorities to be actioned following a review of governance arrangements. This was attended by the 2 SLDC reps and a Cabinet member, Cllr Jones. Morecambe Bay Partnership was re-contracted to provide project management support to the Partnership.

**Work to do and positioning questions for SLDC's legacy with LCRP**

Review of governance arrangements underway, to include options for a new structure. Priorities to develop a strong identity and vision.

Business engagement work has begun – initially engaging with Lancaster BID team and Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce on an event targeting businesses along the canal corridor. Kendal/South Lakes and Preston areas to follow if successful. Also creating a hospitality business sub-group with Board representation.

Proposals being drawn up for actioning the existing SLDC grant – including an extension of the current interpretation and waymarking project, new seating, a new Lancaster Canal Towpath Trail website, route guides and marketing materials.

Working closely with CCC Cycling and Walking Team to plan joint initiatives for infrastructure improvements, specifically towpath surfacing and interlinking route options, maximizing grant efficiency and attracting new funding.

Attempting re-engagement of landowners in the Kendal south area to attempt to find solutions to current towpath surface problems.

Cllr Doug Rathbone  
May 2022