

Report Statement

Report Purpose:

To update the Planning Committee on the Canal Bridge 36 Report

Author:

Town Clerk

Update

The full report will be received over the next couple of weeks from the Canal and River Trust, however we have received the following summary:

Bridge Name: Smyths Bridge

Bridge No: 36

Summary: The survey for assessment was undertaken on 25th January 2022 in order to ascertain the current condition and load bearing capacity of this disused accommodation bridge. The survey was funded by Macclesfield Town Council to help inform discussions regarding the feasibility of re-opening the track over the bridge, establishing a pedestrian link between a residential development to the north-west and a school to the south and creating new formal access points on the canal towpath.

The bridge is an elliptical, sandstone arch with abutments, wingwalls and parapets constructed of similar materials. It was designated as a grade two listed structure (statutory ref 1291187) on 24th October 1994. Despite being disused for many years the bridge remains in overall good condition with only minor open jointing, vegetation growth and seepage through the arch barrel. There is no formal track over the bridge and metal fencing extends between the parapets at midspan to prevent unauthorised access. The 'deck' is covered in moderate vegetation growth with several well-established small trees present to the southern end. In addition, there are 4No. vertical metal sections set into the south approach to the rear of the abutment, presumably to prevent vehicular access. It is not known when these sections were installed however they may be of historic interest so it is recommended that the Trust's local Heritage Advisor be included in future discussions.

The recent assessment was undertaken using the modified MEXE method in accordance with CS 454 – The Assessment of Bridges and Highway Structures and rated the bridge at 18 tonnes mgw. Please be

advised that the Trust's load bearing obligations were established when British Waterways Board (BWB) came into being in the 1960's and for accommodation bridges, such as Bridge 36 this is considered to be the equivalent of 3T mgw. This will remain the Trust obligation despite the current assessment.

Based on the load bearing assessment, the bridge is considered suitable for re-opening to pedestrian traffic, however this will be subject to negotiation with the Trust's regional team to determine any works necessary and a formal estates agreement.