

Background to moorings at Brimscombe Port

Stroud Valleys Canal Company (SVCC) is a company limited by guarantee and was established in 2009 to own by a combination of leasehold and freehold the canals that extend from close to Saul Junction up to and including Brimscombe Port. Our fundamental objective is to sustain this waterway in terms of restoration and ongoing maintenance. We are a not-for-profit organisation run by eleven Directors who are unremunerated.

Historically, the port was established around a very large basin that could accommodate some 100 boats and enable them to manoeuvre and handle cargo on its way to and from the Thames. As well as accommodating boats, the basin had another vital role. Every time a lock is operated a large volume of water passes down the waterway. In fact, just three lock operations release around a million litres. Gone are the days when the boat traffic was heavy but when the canal is restored there will be a fair number of movements. A steady supply of water will be required and a large storage area will be necessary. In other words, we will need a basin albeit this can be smaller than in the canal's heyday.

The Brimscombe Port development scheme is very much built around the basin and aims to provide a lot more than just housing. It is intended to be an inspiring space that will truly enrich the lives of both residents and visitors. Clearly, an important element will be the presence of boats and associated activities. In the short term the basin will be landlocked. However, by 2024 the canal below Stroud Brewery will be connected to the national network and plans will be in place to connect this to the basin. In anticipation of this, there are plenty of owners who will happily rent moorings within the basin and use their boats with short stays for maintenance etc. but NOT as residences. There will be a lot of demand for moorings generally and these will be in a prime location. In canal terms such moorings are 'permanent' in that the boat can stay there as desired and without time restrictions. A second category is 'visitor moorings' and plainly these will not be required until connection. However, the third category is 'residential'. This means what it says and can only be established with planning consent. In general our canal will not have these but Brimscombe Port is an exception. As part of the overall planning strategy there will be seven residential moorings and these will widen allowance for differing lifestyles.

In order to have boats in the basin before network connection these will have to be craned in. The new road connection will be carefully designed to accept boats up to 20 metres in length arriving from the Stroud direction only. Allowance will be made for manoeuvring as well as for a mobile crane. There will be an area large enough to accommodate the boat on its trailer and the mobile crane side by side and next to the water. Clearly, cranaage activities will not be carried out very often and the rest of the time the open space will be available for other purposes. Perhaps an outdoor performance area, art exhibition, craft market or just overflow parking for a specific event. It should be noted that there is very little additional project expenditure required since the boat owner will pay for crane hire and no other special equipment will be needed.

John Twydell
Chair SVCC

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