

## **Project update: April 2005**

### **Planning**

Since the last Trust newsletter, we're delighted to say that Trust members and friends in the MK electorate successfully challenged the initially MK Council decision not to include the Waterway in emerging local plans. We worked hard with MKC and partners to provide further information that would allow the Council to make a more positive decision, and were delighted that on 15 March 2005, MKC became the first of the four local councils on the route to place the Waterway in their plans. The exact route through the Eastern Expansion Area is still under discussion, but hopefully it will be agreed and published by the summer. All MKC plans still have to go out to final consultation, but the Cabinet is absolutely firm in its resolve to include the B&MK in the future of the city. Well done our Council Partners – and the Trust team and supporters!

The next big planning issue is likely to be at the Bedford end, around what happens on the development site in Wootton. We're organising pressure to make sure that the Waterway not only features in plans but does so in the way that makes it most likely to get built – so please let us know if you can add your voice to this campaign. Contact Marilyn Leask for more information (01234 401922 [marilyn.least@ntlworld.com](mailto:marilyn.least@ntlworld.com))

### **Project management/the Partnership**

The Project Partnership is moving to a plan for the Waterway that will aim to build it over time as a series of linked waterspaces and paths, on an agreed line and to agreed standards of excellence – in fact, more like a restoration project that proceeds in small pieces, than a single major civil engineering construction project. We are still planning to start digging before 2010!

The Partnership is now 26-organisations strong and is working effectively as a team. It's set up a website for the project, [www.b-mkproject.net](http://www.b-mkproject.net) which will carry all the latest Partnership news. Do have a look and tell us what you think/how the site could be improved. Contact [jane@wolfson.it](mailto:jane@wolfson.it)

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Chairman: Cllr Ian Clifton | Secretary: Marilyn Leask

## Fundraising

The Partnership has adopted a fundraising strategy, as proposed by the Trust Fundraising Task Force. This will look at everything from lottery bids to individual sponsorships. More in our next newsletter – but if you can help in any way, Rodney Evans would be really pleased to hear from you. To quote a phrase, Every Little Helps! (You can reach Rodney on 01908 376 449 or [rodwen@scythia.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:rodwen@scythia.fsnet.co.uk).)

We've had a first excellent meeting with the Big Lottery, which will be publishing new grant schemes in June. One of these, the Transformational Grants Programme, will be making a small number of big awards, and we'll be working to get into shape to win one! There could be a TV vote next year on which projects should be supported – imagine seeing the B&MK taking the headlines and being voted The One!

## Practical projects

Meanwhile, we're also investigating practical projects – to get boats upriver to the Bedford junction and get people out and walking to that point, to build a demo site with the support of the Community Forest Centre in Marston Vale, and working with a range of our partners to create a 'permissive path' along as much of the route as possible, so that we can start signposting it and using it as a leisure space.

If doing something in the open air's more your thing, please give Rodney a ring and he'll match you with a project team.

## Spreading the word

Finally, our Talks Team is permanently out and about – the more local people we can speak to the better. They can bring the most up to date news to your group, so please let John & Sally Gunning know if you'd like a talk (01234 305925 or [oldgunns@ntlworld.com](mailto:oldgunns@ntlworld.com)).

Leigh's letter to you includes details of our two big publicity events in Milton Keynes this year – we really hope to see you there at one or both. Please let Don Allison know if you'd like to come [donanjill@dallison.fslife.co.uk](mailto:donanjill@dallison.fslife.co.uk) or 01908 601564.

Our summer newsletter will be out in July as usual, for members. As Leigh says, the more members we have the more power to our elbows ... and the sooner we get the B&MK in place. If you've not yet signed up for this year, please do so – and if you have, please recruit just one more member!

**Jane Wolfson**

B&MK Waterway Partnership Officer