

Press Release

Embargo: Immediate

B&MK COMMUNITY BOAT APPEAL

Please float our boat by 2012



An appeal for sponsorship has been launched across the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust membership (B&MK), community groups, schools, colleges and local businesses seeking support for the Trust's latest venture – the Bedford Community Boat – which we hope to get off the slipway and into the water by summer 2012.

"We know how powerful a boat like this can be in demonstrating the benefits of a river or canal environment, as well as enthusing people about our principal 'waterway for all' project – the creation of the missing 26k link between the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes and the Great Ouse at Bedford," Jane Wolfson, Trust chair, explained.

"The Ouse between Bedford and Kempston is a particularly beautiful, under-used stretch of river and we know that both Bedford Borough Council and the Environment Agency want to see it better used and appreciated. We want to support that objective by making people realise how much fulfilment and educational opportunity the riverside can offer," she said.

The Trust now wants its own boat to cruise throughout the summer in Bedford to build community support and involvement in its waterway campaign. The aim is to set up a trading company and launch a 60-foot, 50-seat broadbeam boat in time for the Bedford River Festival in 2012 and to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the original plan for the B&MK waterway.

It will cost £120,000 to get a new boat built, fitted out, train crew and get ready to cruise. There are grants the Trust can bid for but it needs to raise matching funding. So the initial target is £60,000 and the membership and local community are being asked to get on board with sponsorships.

Families and individuals can get on board with a sponsorship gift or a loan – bronze (£100 gift/£500 loan), silver (£250 gift/£1,000 loan), gold (£500 gift/£2,500 loan) or platinum (£1,000 gift/£5,000 loan). It is hoped that businesses will come forward with sponsorships of £500 or £1,000, whilst community groups and educational establishments are being asked to commit £250 each. As a thank-you to Founding Funders free trips and publicity will be provided.

Letters have been circulated asking for the promise of sponsorship by 22 April so that these commitments can be submitted to grant-giving organisations during the spring-summer – but it will never be too late to commit!

Individuals, groups and businesses who would like to help get the boat afloat can find all the details on our website www.b-mkwaterway.co.uk

ENDS



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MILTON KEYNES
WATERWAY

Notes to editors



B&MK Waterway Trust supporters at Bedford River Festival 2010 (© Keith Malone)



The river environment can be fun and educational (© The Angel Community Canal Boat Trust)



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