



## Press Release

**Embargo: Immediate**

### Destination "B&MK Waterway" Taking Shape

Superlatives flowed last night when scores of local councillors joined Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust members and Mid Bedfordshire MP Nadine Dorries to celebrate the scale of progress the project is making.

The reception at the Marston Vale Forest Centre was to mark:

- significant progress on the underpass near Stewartby which will carry the waterway beneath the A421 – and there were gasps as Trust chair Jane Wolfson unveiled a large-scale photograph of this engineering feat;
- the installation of a waterway interpretation board at the Forest Centre (three more are to be installed along the River Great Ouse in Bedford as the result of a £7k Lottery grant);
- the purchase of a parcel of land to ease the passage of the waterway from Stewartby to Kempston.

Jane Wolfson said this was evidence of what partnering and volunteering could achieve.

The Trust had been working for eight years to get this far and the first piece of the 26km waterway was in place, Jane explained. The waterway will create the missing link along 26km from the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes to the Great Ouse at Kempston.

"We are making all the pieces happen for the generations to come. More and more people are thinking about the possibilities of 'destination B&MK' and creating the kinds of facilities, communities, housing, jobs and green spaces for the future," she said.

Nadine Dorries said that during her election campaign she knew instinctively that the waterway was a good idea. "We must get freight and traffic off our roads", she said.

There had been scepticism about getting the waterway beneath the A421 but this had been achieved. "This is an amazing piece of engineering. It is an amazing job, fantastic. Well done to you all. We are all mad keen to see it happen. This shows how much support there is for this [waterway]".

Earlier, Tony Talbot, chief executive of Marston Vale Forest Centre, highlighted the extensive potential environmental benefits of the waterway to the locality.

Music was provided by Life and Times, an acoustic duo, who have recorded a song about the waterway.

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**B&MK**

BEDFORD &  
MILTON KEYNES  
WATERWAY

## Notes to editor



Progress on the underpass that will carry the Waterway beneath the new A421 near Stewartby Lake, as at 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009. Completion due in the Autumn.



Nadine Dorries, MP for Mid-Bedfordshire, Jane Wolfson, Chair of the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust and Tony Talbot, Chief Executive of The Forest of Marston Vale, leading the celebrations for the first piece construction for the Waterway in Bedfordshire.



Life and Times folk duo, performing their own composition "The B&MK" at the event, plus other folk tunes from their repertoire.



Hilary Chipping, Director of MKSM (Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area Development Agency), Tony Talbot, Chief Executive of The Forest of Marston Vale and Richard Sarraff, Executive Director of Renaissance Bedford.



A healthy turnout of over 70 local Councillors, Trust Members, Volunteers and VIPs at the Forest of Marston Vale to celebrate the first signs on the ground of the B&MK Waterway in Bedfordshire.

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