

# Press Release

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## Walk This Way!

On the only sunny Sunday in July to date 70 people helped the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust hold their annual walk the route. Taking their lives in their own hands Bedford's locals put their best foot forward in support of this growing campaign to build the first canal in 200 years. Amongst them was local labour MP Patrick Hall and councillors Apu Bagchi and Judith Cunnibgham. All showing tremendous fortitude despite the huge quagmires and puddles that prevailed.

The route marched mimicked what will hopefully be the second stage of the canal build, starting at Kempston Church End and finishing at the Forest Centre, Martson Mortaine. With kind permission by local farmers, the walk managed to follow most of the intended canal route.

Whilst walking local councillors and MP's were able to see first hand what the plans are proposing. Their enthusiasm was much appreciated by the Trust and they did not waste the opportunity to glean as much information about the Trust's intentions for this sustainable local expansion. Patick Hall MP applauded the trust's vision for a green corridor "that would enhance and sustain a local community."

Our heartfelt thanks has to be extended to all those who responded to our advertising and came in support of this sponsored walk. Numbers were greatly increased on last year, reflecting the growing support and interest that the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust is now experiencing from all sectors of Bedford and Milton Keynes. All funds raised will be going towards the 'way marking' and planning costs for the second stage build.

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## Background details

Notes to editor...

The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust is a proposed linear Water Park, to be developed in conjunction with the Forest of Marston Vale and Milton Keynes Parks Trust. It will provide enormous benefit to the area in terms of stimulating the economy, providing people with attractive places to live and work, and improving the quality of the local environment.

The project has made significant progress over the last five years. Partners have invested some £200K in development studies, and nearly four times that amount has been contributed in pro-bono professional work and volunteer time. Last year the Trust became a charity and limited company.



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Bedford & Milton Keynes  
Waterway Trust

www.  
B-MKWaterway.co.uk

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Bedford Borough Council  
Bedford Group of Drainage Boards  
Bedford River Users Group  
Bedfordshire County Council  
British Marine Federation  
British Waterways  
Country Land & Business  
Association & NFU  
Countryside Agency  
Cranfield University  
East of England Tourist Board  
East of England  
Development Agency  
English Nature  
English Partnerships  
Environment Agency  
Forest of Marston Vale  
Great Ouse Boating Association  
Grand Union (South) Angling Club  
Inland Waterways Association  
Mid Bedfordshire District Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Milton Keynes Parks Trust  
Renaissance Bedford  
South East England  
Development Agency  
Sport England  
Sustrans  
The Ramblers Association  
The Waterways Trust  
The Wildlife Trust for Beds.  
Cams, Northants & Peterborough

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The project has a 20-year timescale. The Waterway will be built as opportunities become available on an agreed and secured route, and funding can be found through public, business, charitable and development sources. Plans exist to build first in Milton Keynes, then in Bedford and finally through Marston Vale.

The Waterway is now securely in the Milton Keynes Local Plan, is included in the draft East of England plan, is in the draft L D F's of Mid Beds and Bedford, and is actively supported by the county in terms of contributing, along with the forest, to economic development and the 'green corridor' in the Vale. The Milton Keynes Waterway Park has been short listed under the Big Lottery Living Landmarks fund and the Trust has been awarded a £250K development grant to undertake further studies that will support a full bid for £25m in 2007.