

**Hello Folks and a Happy New Year to you all for 2022 from
Manchester & Stockport Canal Society**

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Well, a New Year and new hopes.

You will remember, last July we were eagerly awaiting two events:

- our meeting with the Mayor of Greater Manchester to put our case to him in support of re-developing the canal.
- Progress on the consultations for the Fallowfield Loop

Our long, anticipated meeting with Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, and Executive members of MCC took place in July 2021.

Peter, David and I – with the support of our consultant Patrick Moss and Andrew Gwynne MP for Denton and Reddish met with the Mayor approached the meeting armed with all the facts and figures we felt would support our case.

Patrick prepared a PowerPoint presentation extolling the virtues of canal restoration and the re-birth of our inland waterways as assets to our environment and leisure.

We expected to meet a mayor, with so much on his plate at present - with the pandemic and keeping the conurbation's infrastructure moving - would need all the information presented to him to make any sense of our purpose.

Not a bit of it! Mr. Burnham was extremely well informed of our purpose and understood full well the benefits of what we were aiming to achieve.

No prompting to see the advantages was required and the meeting culminated with Mr. Burnham requesting Cllr. Rawlins, Executive Member for the Environment appoint a senior officer to progress the matter with a view to setting up a stakeholder working party of interested departments and external organisations.

Meanwhile the second consultation on the Fallowfield Loop took place and the first proposals to improve the route from a walking & cycling perspective were published. These proposals can be viewed on

https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200024/consultations_and_surveys/8185/fallowfield_loop_and_yellow_brick_road_consultation_second_stage/2

MSCS were invited to at least two meetings held with the Initiative project team and their consultants and our views and preferences to enable the development of the canal at a later date were noted.

In fact, the amount of work on the canal section of the route is mainly of a “cosmetic” and superficial nature and will not compromise our plans to any great degree.

Then, in December, after some prompting the senior officer requested by the GM Mayor was identified and a meeting arranged.

The meeting took place at the beginning of January 2022, attended by a Council policy officer and other neighbourhood officers from adjoining districts.

MSCS came away with a request to prepare a brief for the project to present to Cllr. Rawlins and the Council in general – Patrick and I with Peter & David’s help are putting this together as I write.

This might seem like a retrograde step, having received the enthusiastic support for many years from the more senior figures in Authority, but this is the way local democracy works.

At least we now have our feet on the first rung of the **“formal ladder of Approval”** something we have not achieved before.

If we get that approval, I repeat my pleas for you to come forward and offer your services in whatever capacity you can – we will need

- people to raise fund raising from, grant funding and match funding opportunities
- planning specialists, at both strategic and project level, who can set up and maintain a dialogue with the several associated City Council Departments - Planning, Estates, Transport & Communities etc.
- ecologists to liaise with the City Council to make the case that the canal will create an overall nett biodiversity gain for the corridor
- engineers, draftsmen, CAD operators to prepare plans, drawing & specifications enabling the canal to be safely constructed in a relatively confined area whilst keeping the walking & cycling corridor open
- design and planning of a marina at Debdale reservoir, co-ordinating with United Utilities to gain their approvals and permissions for the work

and last, but not least:

- donations of money to pay for those skills and services we are unable to provide ourselves.

Many forms of grant funding carry a proviso that money given must be matched by funds raised by the Society applying for help – this “match funding” often takes the form of “monetary benefits in kind” for volunteer effort put in by that Society.

So even if you are “cash poor” but “time rich” your energy and enthusiasm could contribute significantly to raising the money we need,

Note:

We are aware it is now some time since an AGM was held and we have considered a “Zoom” virtual meeting, but we realise not all our members may have access to this facility.

When circumstances allow an AGM will be held at the earliest opportunity.

Roger Bravey - Chairman (RBravey@aol.com)