

Greetings to you All,

It seems like an eternity since I had occasion to write to you with something meaningful to say.

Lockdown put paid to our monthly litter-picks, (and just about everything else).

However, as we now emerge from isolation, things are beginning to move again on several fronts. You will all be aware that the aversion to public transport has led to an explosion in the use of public spaces to exercise, walk & cycle.

Initiatives, such as the Government led encouragement "to get on your bike" have been launched, this time for the sake of your health, and not your employment prospects!

No doubt many of you have observed the number of cycle "friendly" routes springing up in your areas. Many seem to spring up without much public debate.

One scheme, however, that did receive a proper hearing was the Fallowfield Loop Consultation.

The consultation received thousands of responses and, whilst focussed on walking and cycling along the Fallowfield Loop, it included the line of the Stockport Canal along the "Yellow Brick Road", from the Ashton Canal to Debdale reservoir - **Phase 1 of our restoration plan.**

The initial consultation, carried out last July, attracted extensive comment supporting the restoration of the canal. Thank you all who contributed in support of the Society and its aims.

A further consultation is now underway (until Friday 30th July) seeking your further views on the proposals being put forward.

SEE :

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

Please respond to this consultation AGAIN, pointing out the importance the restoration of the canal would have to the leisure use of this corridor for all and the gain to biodiversity water would bring to the route.

The consultation again focusses on walking & cycling, but we must use this opportunity to make the argument that there are other leisure pursuits people enjoy. The canal and its environs will fill several of these niches.

This consultation has coincided with a further Society report, very kindly financed by one of our founding members, Peter Scott.

The report is being prepared for the Society by consultants Moss, Naylor, Young on how we proceed with the restoration phase of our project, its publication is currently "on hold" pending an important meeting we have arranged with the Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham & Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council - the meeting has very kindly been arranged for us at the request of Mr. Andrew Gwynne, MP for Denton & Reddish.

The Society see the Walking & Cycling consultation as a golden opportunity to widen the argument in favour of greener spaces and corridors in Manchester for the benefit of all..

However, funding for the restoration of the canal will not come from the Mayor's Cycling & Walking Fund. We will have to raise this ourselves.

What we can do is use the Mayor's Initiative to "piggy-back" our own restoration initiative and "surf" on the wave of interest in traffic free leisure activities and transport generated by the pandemic.

Presuming that our discussions with the Mayor and the City Leader are fruitful, we shall have to move swiftly to gain the most benefit from this surge in interest. Hopefully, over the next months we shall be looking for skilled volunteers to lead, assist and carry out the following functions:

- people experienced in fund raising from commerce and the large corporate providers of these finances, grant funding and match funding opportunities
- planning specialists, both strategic and in detail, 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's to argue the case that the canal will create a 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

This is just "scratching the surface" of the tasks and skills we will need to address.

Take a look at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/restoration> to see what can be achieved and what is being done elsewhere to restore our waterways.

I have already taken immediate action, with the help of Peter Scott, David Sumner & Patrick Moss to get in touch with both the Initiative project team, set up to implement the consultation's recommendations to try ensure any improvements made to the Yellow Brick Road are in both our interests and that the future restoration of the Canal is assured.

This project will take some years to realise - the greater the endeavour of our members and volunteers, the sooner we will reach a successful conclusion.

**Contact your Chairman : Roger Bravey
at RBravey@aol.com
to register your interest to help
along with a brief background of the
experience you can bring.**