

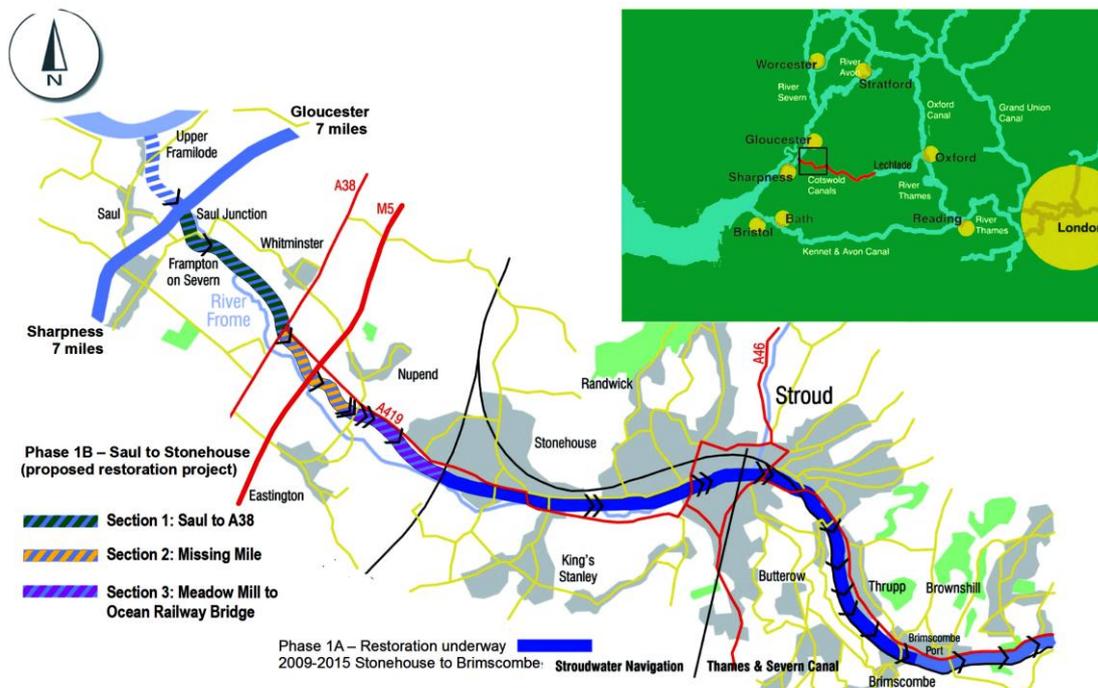


RESTORING THE STROUDWATER NAVIGATION FROM SAUL JUNCTION TO STONEHOUSE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION May – July 2015

This leaflet summarises this exciting heritage restoration project at a key stage in the preparation of our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund: please tell us what you think about the project by filling in our questionnaire, so that we can fully understand your opinions and wishes.

Val Kirby, Convener of the Saul Junction to Stonehouse Project
For the Cotswold Canals Partnership



INTRODUCTION



The Stroudwater Navigation looking east towards Dock Lock

Restoring the Stroudwater Navigation is an important step in the Cotswold Canals Partnership's aim of restoring the canals between the rivers Severn and Thames. Once open to Saul Junction, 10 miles of the Cotswold canals will be linked to 2,500 miles of navigable inland waterways.

The restoration will support wildlife conservation and local quality of life. Our project will help improve prosperity for local people and communities, and it will provide a secure future for a major heritage asset.

The Cotswold Canals Trust, as lead partner for the bid, is working closely with other organisations, including the Canal & River Trust and Stroud District Council. A volunteer team of more than 50 is preparing the bid.

COSTS AND TIMING

The total value of the project is likely to be £20 million. We are preparing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for £15 million. The remaining £5 million will come from fund raising, practical support from partners and the value of the volunteers' time contribution.

Funding is needed primarily to build the engineering structures. But it will also provide 4 miles (6 km) of restored canal, a new towpath, natural environment improvements, a full interpretation plan (including making a unique archive available to everyone) and training volunteers in a wide variety of skills.

We will submit our bid to the HLF in November this year. They will announce their decision in April 2016. The plan is that the restored section of canal will open in 2020.

A PROJECT THAT WILL BENEFIT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

The HLF expects their funded projects to benefit individual people and communities, as well as restoring and enhancing key heritage assets. We show how we are going to do this under six headings.

1 - THE CANAL'S HERITAGE IS RESTORED AND REPLACED

The 4 miles of restored canal will include:

- Several new bridges including re-instating the canal under the railway bridge at The Ocean near the Stonehouse Court Hotel, 2 bridges at the A38 roundabout and a new fixed bridge to replace Walk Bridge at Whitminster
- Running the canal in an existing channel under the M5
- 6 heritage locks repaired and 2 new locks (built by volunteers)
- The 'missing mile' of replacement canal, dug by volunteers
- Much dredging of the original route, new multi-use towpath, plus moorings, landing stages and other visitor facilities



M5 bridge over River Frome:
the canal will run in a new channel very close to the river

2 – THE CANAL IS MANAGED SUSTAINABLY

We are committed to ensuring that the restored canal is well maintained and have a fully costed 25-year operational and maintenance plan. The Stroud Valleys Canal Company (SVCC), assisted by the Cotswold Canals Trust, will manage the Stroudwater Navigation.

SVCC's income will come from a variety of boating and non-boating- related sources. There will be opportunities for the local community and volunteer organisations to be involved in maintaining and operating the canal. Local people will be able to set up new businesses and expand existing ones. Once connected to the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, both Stroud and Stonehouse will become canal towns once more.

3 – THE CANAL’S HERITAGE IS KNOWN AND INTERPRETED

The Stroudwater Navigation’s heritage includes the canal itself (one of the oldest in England), its traditional structures, its archives and all kinds of stories and physical relics, which our project will bring to life. The Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation is the oldest continuously surviving canal company in the world. Its unique archive will be made accessible to all through an ambitious digitisation project.

We aim to reach people of all ages and abilities. We will make material available for education and training programmes throughout the Stroud Valleys and beyond. We want our interpretation activities to promote people’s sense of place, belonging and wellbeing.

Our heritage interpretation plan will support the project’s aim of increasing biodiversity by increasing awareness, which will encourage people to care for the natural environment along the Navigation’s corridor.



Dressing up in 19th century clothes helps to bring the past back to life

4 – PEOPLE GET INVOLVED, KNOW MORE, DO MORE

Volunteers will make a vital and enormous contribution to this project. Volunteering is not only self-fulfilling, as it will reduce the cost of this ambitious project. Our volunteers will have opportunities to gain new skills and qualifications, both practical and professional. We very much want to inspire a new generation of volunteers to join us. So we have a particular commitment to welcome and care for young people.

The restored canal will run through several local communities. We will encourage local people to enjoy the canal for their leisure pursuits. We hope some communities will become involved in the long-term management of their canal. This will help people’s health and wellbeing, sense of achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Local companies who encourage their staff to volunteer will benefit too, from the enhanced skills and quality of experience of their employees.



Hundreds of volunteers make a huge contribution to restoration

5 – THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT BENEFITS

Restoring Phase 1B will create a 4-mile, wildlife-friendly corridor along the canal and River Frome, linking the Severn Vale to the Stroud Valleys and the Cotswolds AONB. There will be a net gain in biodiversity. Bats, eels, kingfishers, otters and other wildlife will all benefit.

Volunteers will help conserve the natural environment both during and after the completion of Phase 1B. Students of all ages will benefit from activities involving the canal and its wildlife resources.

Flood prone areas will benefit from the use of rural sustainable drainage solutions wherever these are feasible.

We will explore using sustainable construction materials and methods, taking into account the whole life of materials. This will benefit the wider economy as well as the environment.



Improving wildlife habitats is a key priority

6 – LOCAL PROSPERITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE WILL IMPROVE

Local hospitality businesses will have more customers; there will be opportunities for new canoe and bike hire businesses, cafés and rest areas; new orchards may lead to cider and perry making.

Local people and visitors will be able to take part in new land and water-based activities. Visitors will benefit because the canal is so close to the M5, the A38 and the A419. Access for boaters and parking for all visitors will improve.

Walkers of all abilities, cyclists and runners will enjoy safe, enjoyable travel along the towpath. Links with other rights of way will increase options for leisure and commuting use.

Quality of life for local people will be enhanced as recreation opportunities improve and as wildlife habitats such as wetland, grassland and woodland, develop and diversify.

Students of all ages will have opportunities to study wildlife, and learn traditional skills, such as growing and weaving with willow.



Canals aren't just for big boats!



This is a rare opportunity for a locality to restore an important heritage asset, for everyone's benefit. We encourage you to support this project in any way you can, from giving us your opinions to offering your skills. Please fill in the questionnaire and let us know what would make the Stroudwater Navigation better for you.