

Pewsham Waterside Project

1. Introduction

The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust (<https://wbct.org.uk/>) is a registered charity. The charity's aim is:

"To protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks Canal, North Wilts Canal, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway linking the Kennet and Avon Canal near Melksham, the River Thames near Abingdon, and the Thames and Severn Canal near Cricklade."

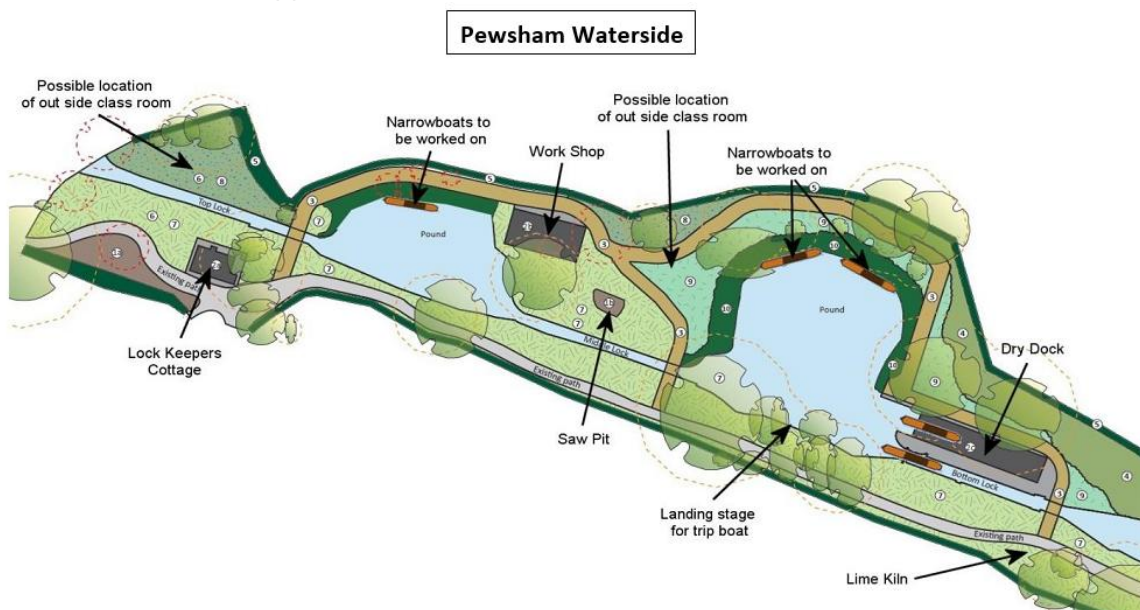
Derry Hill and Studley Parish Council has been approached by the Canal Trust, with a view to participating in a Steering Group providing oversight of the Pewsham Waterside Project.

2. Background

The Trust is in the course of finalising its 5 year business plan, which identifies four principal areas of activity:

- The Melksham Link, which will construct a new canal from the Kennet and Avon Canal around to the north of Melksham.
- The Pewsham Waterside Project, which includes the restoration of locks, a dry dock, canal side buildings and extensive environmental improvement works.
- The connection of the canal network in Wootton Bassett to that of Swindon, including the construction of a canal crossing under the M4.
- Working with organisations planning the construction of a new strategic reservoir that will supply water to London and the South East, with the objective of restoring the canal between Wantage and Jubilee junction on the Thames.

The Pewsham Waterside Project sits just within the boundary of Derry Hill and Studley Parish Council, and is accessible by public footpaths CALW80 and CALW83, as well as by footpaths from the direction of Chippenham.



Part of the project is the building of a new facility which could be used for a number of purposes. These include volunteer training, education, visitor facilities and community space. The structure of the building is complete but its fitting out depends on its future use.

In order to ensure that potential community benefits are identified and delivered the Trust has embarked on a process of engagement with Town and Parish Councils as well as the principal planning authorities along the line of the canal.

3. Proposal

The Trust is in the process of setting up a Steering Group for the Pewsham Waterside Project to provide oversight. It has invited the Council to nominate a member to sit on this Steering Group. The Trust expects that the Steering Group will also include representatives from Wiltshire Council and Chippenham Town Council, as well as from the Trust itself.

To formalise this arrangement, the Trust has put forward a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This is a non-legally binding undertaking between the two parties, setting out expectations. This MoU is included as Appendix A.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council supports the Pewsham Waterside Project by entering into the Memorandum of Understanding with the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust and by nominating a councillor to serve on the Steering Group.

Cllr John Barnes

Appendix A – Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust and Derry Hill and Studley Parish Council

1.0 Purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding:

- For the Council to support the priorities of the Trust as they apply to the restoration of the canal in the Derry Hill and Studley Parish
- To seek support and assistance from the Council in delivering specific projects related to the restoration of the canal.
- To ensure that the canal restoration project maximises economic, recreational and environmental benefits for the Derry Hill & Studley area.

2.0 The Wilts & Berks Canal Trust will:

- Provide the Council with a copy of its 2050 vision and 5-year business plan, specifically identifying Trust proposed projects in the Derry Hill and Studley area.
- Identify projected economic, recreational and environmental benefits arising from canal restoration projects.
- Provide the Council with a list of projects or activities planned each year.
- Maintain the canal, at least in its current condition.
- Facilitate an annual meeting between the Trust and the Council to discuss and agree any joint priorities and investment plans as they affect the restoration of the canal.
- Invite the Council to nominate a member to sit on the steering / management committee of the WBCT for work in the Derry Hill and Studley area.

3.0 The Council will:

- Take account of the Canal in the development of, and consultation on, any new Neighbourhood Plan.
- In responding to planning consultations received from Wiltshire Council, related to new development located in the vicinity of the Canal, draw attention to the benefits that the restoration of the canal will bring.
- Consider funding specific projects or activities as they relate to the delivery of the Council's own objectives.

4.0 Administration:

- The Chief Executive of the Trust and the Chairman of the Council will set the agenda for any partnership working and where they delegate responsibilities to officers or volunteers within these organisations the Chairman shall be kept informed of progress.

5.0 Status:

This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Parties from this MoU. The Parties enter into this MoU intending to honour their obligations.

Nothing in this MoU is intended to, or shall be deemed to, establish any partnership or joint venture between the Parties, constitute any of the Parties as the agent of the other Parties, nor authorise the Parties to make or enter into any commitments on behalf of the other Parties.

6.0 Termination:

- The Council or the Trust may terminate this Memorandum of Understanding by giving 12 months notice.
- Any projects which will not be completed within a 12-month termination period will be allowed to complete provide that such completion is achieved within the funding provided.

SIGNED for and on behalf of Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

Martin Holliss Chair of the Trustees

Dated:

SIGNED for and on behalf of Derry Hill and Studley Parish Council

Dated: