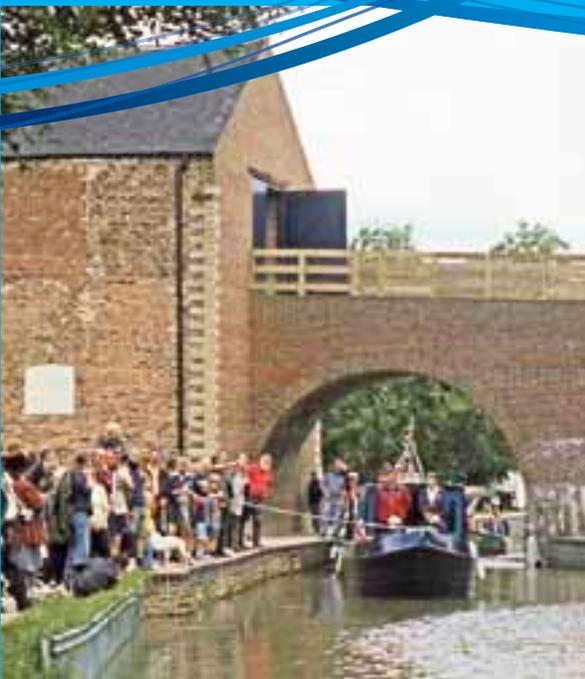


Ashby Canal Restoration

Snarestone to Measham

BUSINESS PLAN SUMMARY

May 2010





Moira Furnace before restoration (c1950)



Moira Furnace after restoration (May 2006)

The Ashby Canal Restoration Project

This project is to restore the Ashby Canal from its current terminus at Snarestone northwards for a distance of 4.5 km to a new canal wharf at Measham. The power to acquire the necessary land and to construct and maintain the canal was provided in October 2005 when the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs confirmed the Leicestershire County Council (Ashby de la Zouch Extension) Order made under the powers of the Transport and Works Act 1992. In making the Order the Secretary of State noted that **“the scheme is consistent with national, regional and local policies, would contribute significantly to regeneration objectives and would produce considerable economic, environmental and social benefits”**.

History

The Ashby Canal was completed in 1804 and connected Moira in north western Leicestershire to the Coventry Canal at Bedworth. It was used primarily to carry coal from the Ashby Wouds mines to markets in the Midlands and the South. The northern reaches of the canal were closed between 1944 and 1966 due to mining subsidence but in recent years the feasibility of restoration has been established and is strongly supported by local communities as a means of regeneration and development.

This project will follow on from the successful restoration (1999 – 2005) of over 2km of the Ashby Canal between Donisthorpe and Moira at ‘The Heart of the National Forest’. This award-winning length hosts the annual Moira Canal Festival, and in conjunction with the adjacent Moira Furnace Museum and Conkers (the National Forest Discovery Centre) is a popular regional leisure destination throughout the year.

Awards

Leicestershire County Council has received several awards for the length already restored at Moira:

- The Waterways Trust/ British Urban Regeneration Association Award for Tourism, 2002
- The Civic Trust Special Award for Partnership (jointly with Conkers), 2003
- The Inland Waterways Association “Waterways Companion” Award, 1999 and 2006
- The Waterways Trust/ British Urban Regeneration Association Award for Partnership, 2007
- The Waterways Trust/ British Urban Regeneration Association Award for Innovation, 2007

In addition the canal was a major element of the regeneration of the Ashby Wouds of Leicestershire that won the Royal Town Planning Institute’s Silver Jubilee Cup for Planning Achievement, 2001 and a Special Mention at the European Urban and Regional Planning Awards, 2004.

Aims

Measham is a vibrant community at the Heart of the National Forest. It is recovering from the social, economic and environmental impact of local colliery closures in the late 1980's and is now part of the regeneration of the National Forest area centred on woodland planting, leisure and tourism and development of the woodland economy. Restoration of the Ashby Canal from the current low-key

terminus at Snarestone to a high profile destination at Measham will provide the stimulus for leisure-led economic development and regeneration. It is an important part of the development of the National Forest and Heart of the National Forest Park and will help secure a sustainable future for communities and business in a landscape that will reflect the transformation of the area.

The Key objectives are:

- Advance and accelerate continuing economic regeneration of the area and contribute to rural diversification and social inclusion through opportunities for employment, leisure, recreation, learning and skills.
- Provide a green gateway to the National Forest and develop and link the recreational tourism facilities.
- Improve the environmental quality of the area.
- Provide a recreational, cultural and social resource for the local community.
- Connect Measham, and ultimately Moira, to the national waterways network.

Moira Canal Festival





Boatbuilding at Measham

Impact

The project will give rise to the following impacts:

- The attraction of 150,000 visitors per annum into the area boosting spending within the local economy by some £3m+.
- The stimulation of £8.35m of inward investment from the private sector to develop 7,300 square metres of mixed-use residential, retail and business units.
- The creation of around 180 temporary jobs and over 70 permanent jobs.
- Reclamation of derelict and under-used land to create a recreational and wildlife corridor acting as a green infrastructure link and gateway to the National Forest. It will leave a valuable and sustainable legacy for future generations.
- The strengthening of the local community through the restoration of heritage and cultural pride.
- Improved health by enabling access to a safe and accessible walking and cycling route and by providing employment for the local community that has suffered from high levels of unemployment and associated ill health.
- A more environmentally and culturally educated and aware community through provision of a valuable educational resource with a wide range of learning opportunities.

“Above all the canal will enable Measham and the surrounding area to secure a vibrant, confident and sustainable future that will bring lasting improvements to the quality of life of the whole community.”



Proposed High Street Aqueduct, Measham

Community involvement, Control and Partnerships

The project has been initiated and is strongly supported by the local community in recognition of the benefits that restoration will bring. It utilises local community strengths by encouraging participation through voluntary activity and will be continued, sustained and made to work by the local community. The sophistication and commitment of the community is reflected in the work of the Measham Development Trust, Measham and District Community Development Trust, Measham Millennium Green Trust and Measham Parish Council all of which have helped progress and sustain regeneration of the village.



Volunteers at work

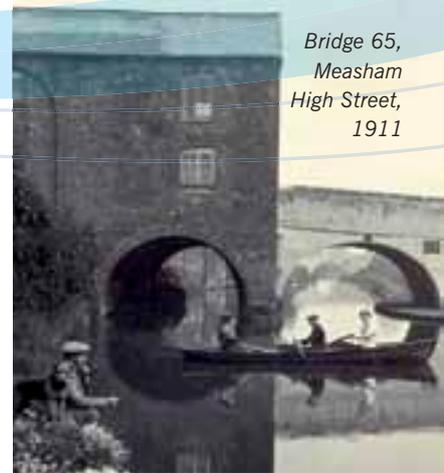


Construction of the lock at Shortheath Road, Moira

Strategy

The scheme has been identified as a top priority for restoration by the Government's advisor on waterway priorities, the Inland Waterways Advisory Council. It has also been given top priority by British Waterways in recognition of its status as one of the schemes that will "... deliver the greatest benefits to the network and have the greatest chance of funding." It is a key component of the Heart of the National Forest Foundation's vision and action plan for the improvement of the Heart of the National Forest Park.





Innovation

The Ashby Canal restoration is an innovative scheme providing a creative approach to progressing tourism-led regeneration. The proposal to re-water the Canal stems from the local community and has been enthusiastically adopted by a broad coalition of interests as a realistic opportunity to bring about positive change.

The re-watering of the canal will be perceived by the residents of the area as a new development, and as an innovation in itself. The waterside development at Measham Wharf will transfer the predominantly urban concept of waterside regeneration to a more rural leisure based setting.

The Ashby Canal project is a demonstration of how a recreational development can provide a catalyst for wider economic, social and environmental regeneration.

In terms of construction the project will be innovative because it will utilise the bed of the adjacent derelict railway through Measham, as the original route is no longer available, and it will cross the High Street by a 60m span aqueduct. The aqueduct will retain the open aspect of the High Street and will have a predominantly stainless steel appearance/finish.

Progress so far

The making of the Transport and Works Act Order for the Ashby Canal restoration (the first and so far the only Order for a canal scheme) confirmed its value and potential for jobs and quality of life and provided the means of implementation. Since then a great deal has been achieved; the necessary site investigations and studies have been carried out, planning requirements have been met, land acquisition has been secured and development proposals have been prepared. The first phase of construction, the Snarestone connection and the first of three nature reserves, has been completed along with site clearance and preparatory work to Illot Wharf.

Next steps

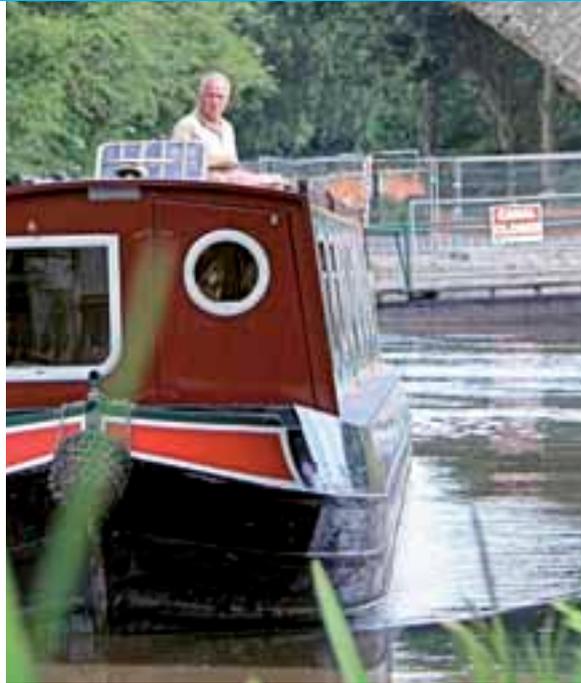
The next phase of restoration will be to extend the canal northwards from Snarestone to Illot Wharf. Restoration will then be carried out in further phases to Measham Wharf. Ultimately it is proposed to extend the canal northwards from Measham to connect to the restored canal at Donisthorpe.



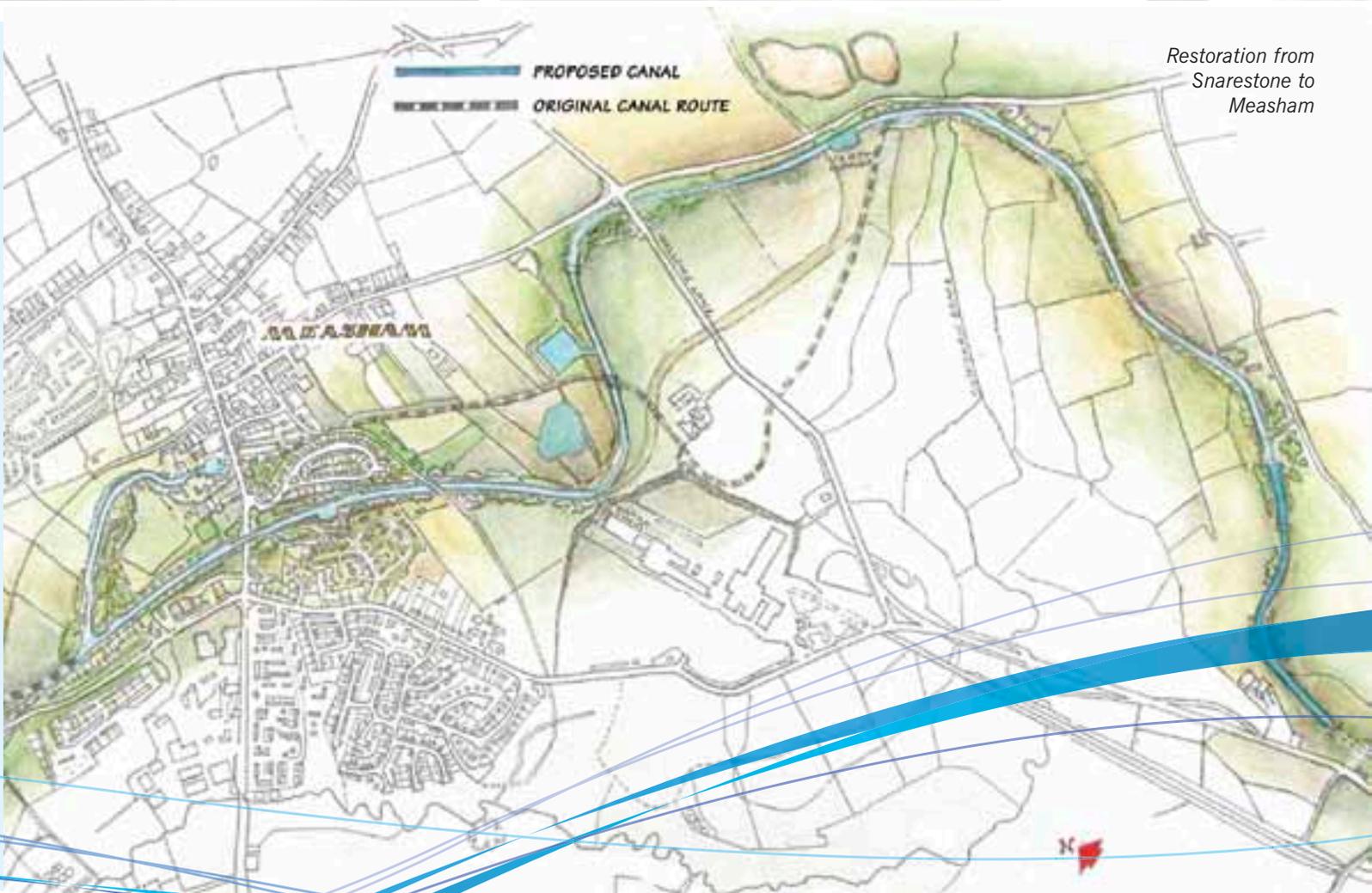
Site investigation work at Measham



Construction work at Snarestone



The Canal at Moira Furnace before and after restoration



Restoration from Snarestone to Measham

Finance

The project is estimated to cost £14.3million including canal construction, land acquisition and fees as set out below.

Project Works and Costings (2010)

Canal construction (including compensatory habitat)	£12,000,000
Land acquisition	£1,000,000
Fees @10 % (Engineering and Landscape Design, Admin.)	£1,200,000
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TOTAL	£14,200,000

To date Snarestone to Measham restoration funding has been provided by East Midlands Development Agency (emda), the National Forest Company, Leicestershire County Council, the Ashby Canal Association, Measham Development Trust and the Ashby Canal Trust. This funding has enabled an ongoing £2million programme of work to be carried out following the confirmation of the Transport and Works Act Order in October 2005. The work programme includes site investigations, surveys and design and development works, land acquisition and construction of the connection to the existing canal at Snarestone.

Indicative running costs and income for the restored canal are set out below. It is likely that the level of costs could be less than the level of income by some £15,000 per annum, allowing the accumulation of a contingency fund for future maintenance/development. Once restoration has been completed it is envisaged that the canal is likely to be passed to British Waterways to manage as part of the national network.

Indicative Running Costs

Feature	Cost per annum (£)
Dredging	None for 20 years
Maintenance (bank and towing path)	10,000
Pumping Station	5,000
Operational Management	10,000
TOTAL	25,000

Indicative Income

Source	Income per annum (£)
Licences (private and hire boats)	None
Private moorings	30,000
Boatyard/drydock/slipway etc.	6,000
Angling	2,000
Measham Wharf (temporary mooring etc.)	2,000
TOTAL	40,000

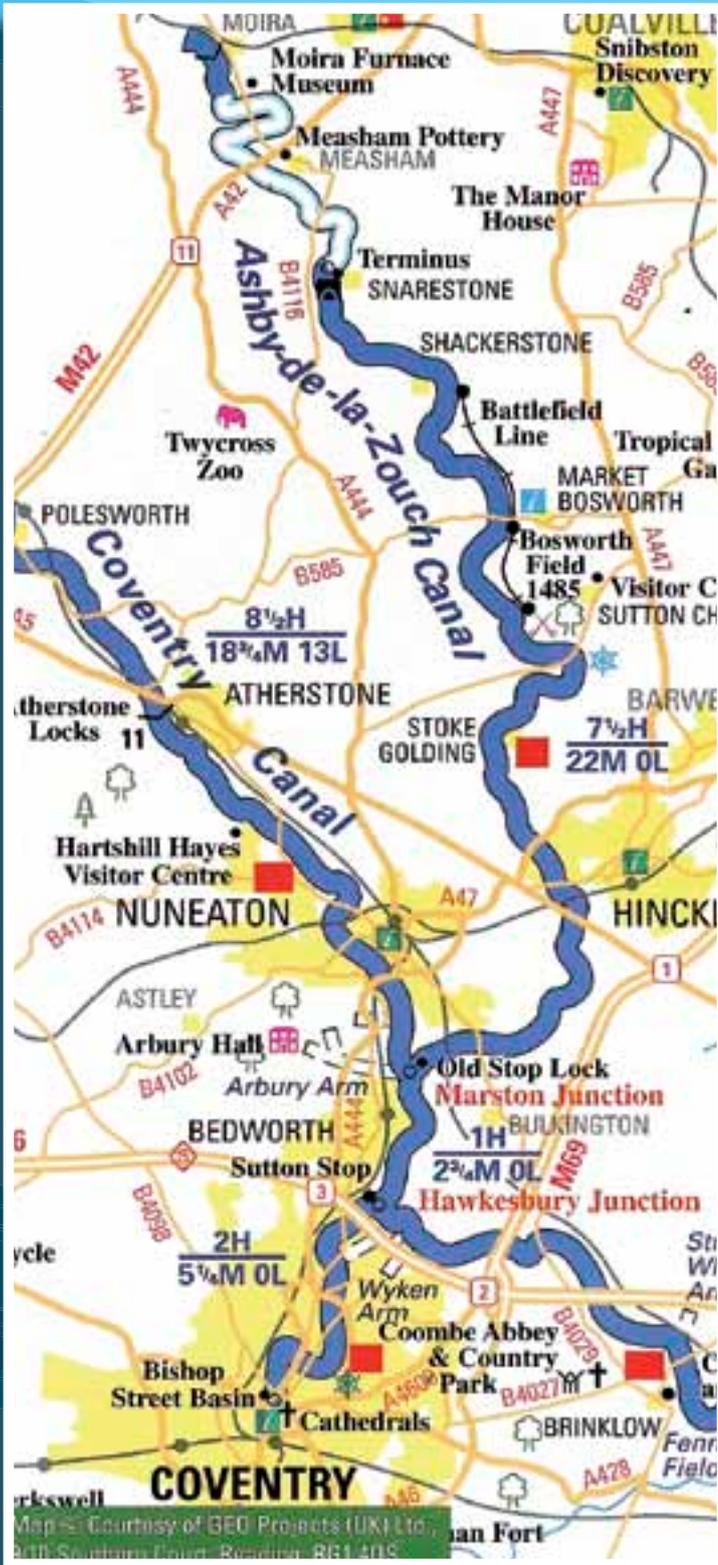
Conclusions

The restoration of the Ashby Canal to Measham will secure a vibrant, confident and sustainable future that will bring lasting improvements to the quality of life of the local community and wider economic and tourism benefits for the region and the National Forest.

The key features of the project are:

- fundamental community involvement
- improved quality of life
- high employment generation
- widespread environmental impact
- excellent sustainability
- strong and committed local partnerships
- exceptional added value

“The overall theme linking the elements is one of renewal: It will bring the disused back into use, create real and lasting opportunities for change and restore pride and confidence to the local community.”



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Further details available on the web:
www.leics.gov.uk



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