

Update on the Canal & River Trust's plans for remote-controlled bridge operation on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal (G&S)

I am keen to update you on the Trust's project to trial remote-controlled bridge operation on the G&S Canal, following initial trials in summer 2016. I'm pleased to say that the project is progressing and since the trials last year we've been busy resolving a number of technical issues, as well as crucially securing the safety accreditations that are required for us to deliver the project's aims in the long term.

While both of these aspects have taken time, they have now been achieved and we are in a position to continue to the next steps.

Unfortunately, we have recently been set back by damage caused to one of the laser units by a passing vessel but as soon as the laser is repaired and repositioned, the plan is to:

- Upgrade phone line connections to Sandfield and Fretherne
- Re-Test and re-commission the current installation at Sandfield bridge
- Carry out user trials to test app configuration
- Install additional boating information signage along the towpath
- Roll-out app to selected users
- Report to Canal & River Trust Executive on trials (end of the year)

Our ultimate aim remains to upgrade all bridges from manual to automated remote operation, whereby boaters can open the bridges via an app. A new Bridge Control station, to be initially located at Fretherne and manned by our staff, will open the bridges for anyone not using the app.

The trial of remote-controlled bridges is the first of its kind on the 2,000 miles of waterways the Trust cares for. Together with our partners from local councils and boater representatives we believe it will greatly improve the way people can use the canal, reduce the impact of bridge operation on road users and in the long term save the Trust important funds that can be redirected to other important works.

If you have any questions, please get in touch via enquiries.southwalessevern@canalrivertrust.org.uk

You could also visit our website here: <http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/gsbbridges>, for more background information and regular updates.

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