

# Lapal trust launches £2m appeal to restore historic canal

LAPAL Canal Trust has launched a campaign to raise £2 million for canal restoration in Birmingham's Selly Oak.

With the opening of the new Sainsbury's store in Selly Oak, the way is now open to start work on converting the greenway which safeguards the canal route into a canal; and to start on the restoration of the Dudley No.2 Canal from Selly Oak to Barnes Hill (California).

The greenway passes underneath Sainsbury's goods delivery yard and provides a clear route to Harborne Lane Bridge.

An agreement with the developer includes the provision of sheet metal piling of both the canal route and the winding hole needed for boats to turn and enter the canal. The Landsec/Sainsbury's partnership will also provide £500,000 as a contribution to completing the canal.

The trust will be responsible for removing the soil from the canal and winding hole, arranging for the services under the towpath to be moved, building a swing bridge to replace the towpath at the junction and making the canal route waterproof.

The £2 million the trust plans to raise will enable the canal to be completed across the Sainsbury's site and extend to the end of Selly Oak Park.

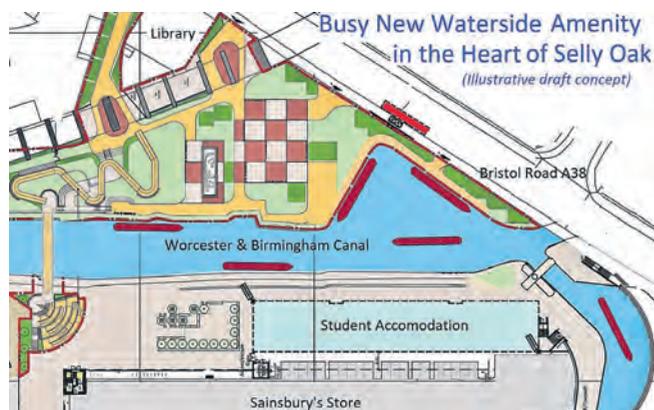
Dr Andrew Hardie, chairman of the Lapal Canal Trust, said: "We are grateful for the help received from Sainsbury's, Landsec and Birmingham City Council, and in partnership with the local community we look forward to the canal link being restored."

## Protect wildlife

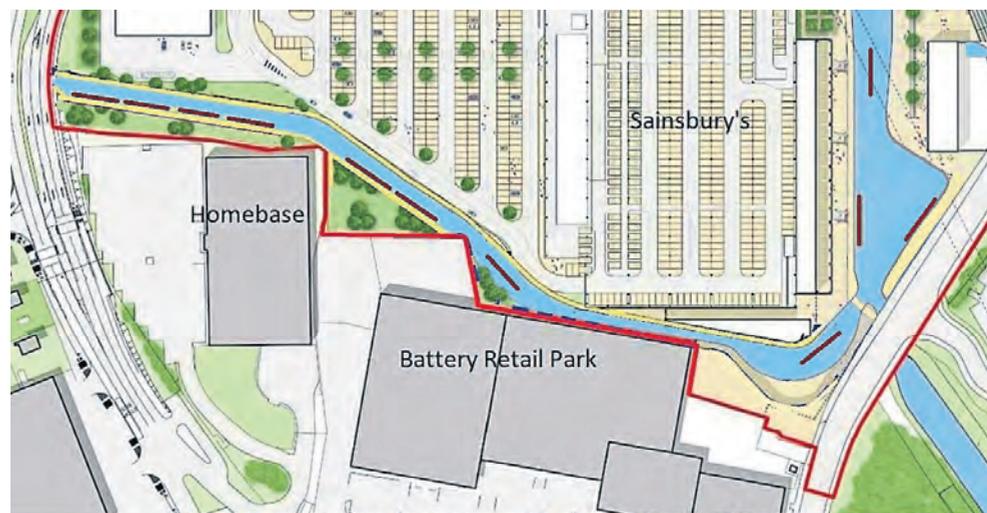
"The restored waterway will greatly benefit the environment and help to protect the wildlife thriving by the canal."

He continued: "In the early 1800s Selly Oak industry was developed around the canal junction and we feel it is important to protect and restore this important heritage link with the past; the canal is also an important boost to leisure activities to benefit the well-being of the community. The new water feature will greatly enhance the centre of Selly Oak."

"We plan a vigorous publicity campaign with individuals and companies to make everyone aware, and we have started approaching the 65 charities identified as potential donors."



An illustration of how a busy new waterside amenity in the heart of Selly Oak might look.



Canal restored across the Battery Site

A plan showing the canal restored across the Battery site.



The plan for the restored canal in Selly Oak Park.

"We are all proud of our Birmingham canals and we want to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute."

The restoration of the canal has broad support, including local community groups, councillors, MPs and MEPs.

Andy Street, mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority, said: "I am hugely welcoming of the restoration project, it would be a brilliant addition to Birmingham."

Saqib Bhatti, the newly elected president of the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, said: "Since the chamber was established in 1813, it has always been supportive of the development of canals in Birmingham: first for commerce, and now as a major tourist attraction. Walkers and cyclists will gain a new city centre access route away from busy roads."

The Lapal Canal Trust was established in 1990, when its founding members had the ambitious vision of restoring a historic, but derelict, section of the Dudley No.2 Canal.

This group of inland water, heritage and environmental enthusiasts grasped the potential for using modern engineering methods and materials to reclaim the 5.5-mile lost Lapal Link.

## Historic endeavour

Lord Dudley's building of the Dudley No.1 Canal in 1775 was a historic endeavour that created an important waterway between Stourbridge and Birmingham. It led to the creation of the Dudley No.2 Canal in 1798, so that a new southern route to supply goods and coal to London could be opened up - the first Birmingham bypass!

The objective is to restore the 1.5-mile route from the Worcester Birmingham Canal to California, split into five stages. A feasibility study partly funded by the Heritage Lottery



Hard-working supporters of the Lapal Canal Trust are set to continue their restoration work. PHOTOS SUPPLIED

Fund has been completed by specialist canal consultants Moss Naylor Young.

The trust is seeking funding for the first two stages, which will result in half a mile of restored canal. This requires the completion of the 0.2-mile section through the Battery site and the 0.3-mile stage along the north side of Selly Oak Park.

Completion should make it easier to raise the funding needed for the next three stages.

The restoration scheme promises to transform and celebrate the historic landscape in Selly Oak, as well as introducing additional boating opportunities for canal tourism. It will provide a new recreational route for walkers,

joggers, cyclists and anglers, as part of a wider network of canals and leisure paths; preserve the area's heritage for future generations to understand and enjoy; provide an opportunity for the community to be engaged; develop educational initiatives with local schools; enhance employment opportunities in the immediate area; promote the learning of construction skills; create a haven for wildlife in an urban setting and encourage the establishment of new cafes and canalside restaurants.

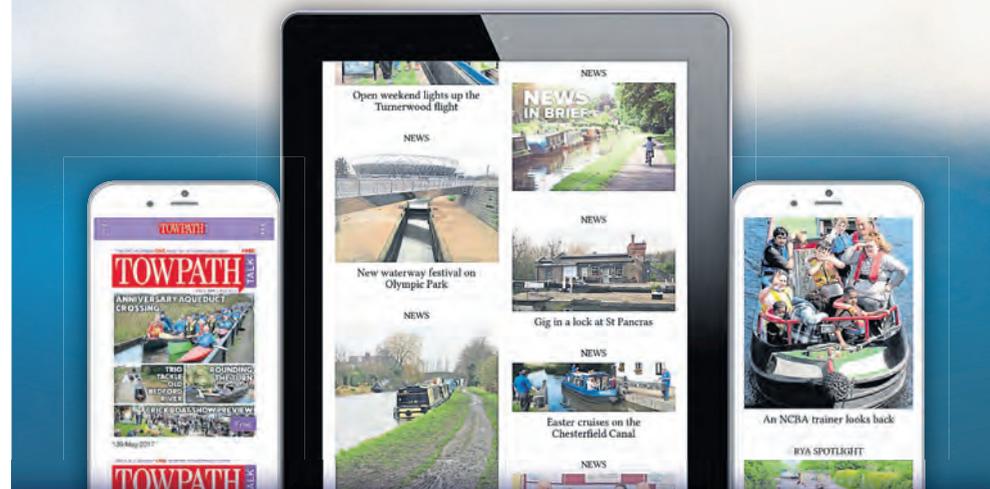
Follow the progress of the project on [www.lapal.org](http://www.lapal.org) and [www.facebook.com/lapalcanaltrust](https://www.facebook.com/lapalcanaltrust)

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