



## Press Release

28<sup>th</sup> January 2018

### **Lapal Canal Trust working with SENSE, the Charity for Disabled People.**

The Lapal Canal Trust is focused on restoring the Dudley No 2 Canal from Selly Oak to California in Bartley Green where it is planned to build a marina with new homes. The project will be a significant regeneration opportunity creating employment and becoming a tourist attraction.

**SENSE** is a national disability charity that supports people with complex communication needs to be understood, connected and valued. The new SENSE Touch Base Pears building sits next to the junction where the restored Dudley No2 Canal meets the Worcester & Birmingham Canal and a new 'winding hole' is planned in the centre of Selly Oak for boats to turn.

The Lapal Canal Trust is superbly supported by the local community and organisations. The Lapal Trust has a wonderful opportunity to work together with SENSE to give disabled people and their carers a new experience of a boat trip to Birmingham's Brindley place, a chance to visit the Symphony Hall, the Library and other attractions in central Birmingham. Thanks must be given to **Jon Fearn**, SENSE Activities Instructor and Development Co-ordinator, for all the arrangements.

Jon wrote "For the deafblind adults we support, the boat is proving itself to be a warm, safe & cosy environment. which travels at a gentle pace whilst retaining an excitement about it that everyone is responding to. It is a unique experience and a wonderful activity for those we work with us at Sense."

So once a month **Narrow Boat 'Ivy'** from Gas Street basin does the two-hour trip from Selly Oak to Birmingham and back. It is a beautiful stretch of canal even in winter with a 'Squirrel' wood burning stove keeping the boat warm inside. A cup of tea and biscuits is provided on the way there and a packed lunch for the return journey to Selly Oak.

Both organisations are keen to work with the local community who help to support our objectives. Recently the Lapal Canal Trust held our AGM in the magnificent new SENSE building. Also, we are grateful for funding advice from **Mankit Yau**, Head of Capital Appeal at SENSE with years of successful experience. The SENSE car park entrance at Selly Wharf is only some 15 metres from the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, which should help disabled people to have access to a narrowboat.

**Gill Morbey** CEO of SENSE commented “It’s a great experience and we were very pleased to support the Lapal Canal Trust and arrange for SENSE members to have a boat trip to Birmingham Convention Centre and return to the new SENSE Touch Base Pears building in Selly Oak”

Lapal Canal Trust Chair **Terry Stanton** commented “Good to see the marvellous work done by SENSE carers. The care and patience shown is exceptional. We look forward to continuing to work with SENSE.”

When the new narrowboat turning area is opened as part of the Battery Site development it’s expected that there will be regular trip boats linking Selly Oak to Birmingham City Centre. It is 3 miles by canal and is a very pleasant and relaxed journey taking only 55 minutes. It will be a popular tourist attraction and an interesting journey for commuters.

### November trip



*Getting ready to board*



*Lunch Time*



*Just arrived*



*Helen having a go at steering*



## December Trip.



*Time for tea and biscuits*



*Brindley Place*



*Getting ready to board*



*View from the library*





## January Trip



*Beautiful canal even in winter*



*Arrival in Brindley Place*



*Making Tea*

*Battery Development and canal link*

*Sense Building by the canal*

Please follow progress on our web site [www.lapal.org](http://www.lapal.org) and [www.facebook.com/lapalcanaltrust](https://www.facebook.com/lapalcanaltrust)

For queries and higher resolution version of the photos please contact  
Hugh Humphreys, [nbhugh@gmail.com](mailto:nbhugh@gmail.com)

