



Press Release

8th of March 2022

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, starts the work on the restoration of the Dudley No 2 Canal in Selly Oak.

We were delighted when Andy Street kindly agreed to start our project to build a new turning area to enable boats to enter the restored Dudley No 2 Canal. Andy, who has supported the project for many years was welcomed by Dr Andrew Hardie, Chair of the Lapal Canal Trust, who recently signed a £300,000 contract with Land & Water, to build the first Selly Oak section of the Dudley No 2 Canal. This is the start of a 3 month project, despite the rain we were delighted with the excellent turn out of helpers including John Hudson, Chair of our Advisory Board, Barry Toon, Chair of the Community Partnership for Selly Oak and Mike Palmer, Chair of the Inland Waterways Recovery Group whose



volunteers help to repair our canal walls and are scheduled to return in August to build a disabled compatible turn-over path in Selly Oak Park.

The new water feature section completes the development of Whitehouse Wharf and forms part of the Selly Oak Shopping Centre owned by M & G Real Estate, and provided as a public amenity. The area includes a bridge linking the new shops to Selly Oak town centre, the remains of a lime kiln and a new



public square. The large water area is designed to enable boats to turn and enter and exit the soon to be restored Dudley No 2 Canal. It will be an attractive calming water feature in the heart of Selly Oak, to be enjoyed by all canal users - including canoeists, paddle boaters and anglers. It is large enough to be a convenient destination for trip boats to and from central Birmingham. A very pleasant 55 minutes journey along the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, taking in a beautiful green corridor not yet seen by many residents.

The two leaseholders Sainsbury's and M & G Real Estate have generously surrendered their leases in favour of the Canal & River Trust who own the Freehold. Thanks also to Canal & River Trust for their technical evaluation and the permit to proceed. With the area forming part of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, Canal & River Trust have kindly agreed to maintain the new water space.

The work is only possible because of the generous support of the 50 charities, companies, and individuals and who have helped to fund the project. The larger funders are Veolia, Garfield Weston, Headley Trust, Landsec, Unite Students, the Cadbury Family Trusts, Jabbs and Rowland Trust. The complex legal arrangements were managed by Gowlings WLG who have supported our project over many years.

The Lapal Canal Trust is now focused on raising the further funds required to complete the restoration to Harborne Lane Bridge, which must be completed by 2025.



Andy Street Mayor of the West Midlands:

"Congratulations to the Trust on the progress made. This is a hugely important project for Selly Oak and the wider region, and I endorse it wholeheartedly. Our canals provide a safe and enjoyable way for residents to exercise, commute and connect with nature. We are all grateful for their restoration work, and I look forward to attending the grand opening in June."



Richard Parry Canal & River Trust Chief Executive:

"The Midlands canals form the heart of the UK's waterways network and have gone from playing a vital role in the Industrial Revolution to the vibrant spaces enjoyed by both boaters and waterside communities today. The Canal & River Trust is committed to preserving this important heritage and is pleased to work with the Lapal Canal Trust in taking care of this valuable new water space."

The project is supported by the Community Partnership for Selly Oak and forms part of CP4SO ambitious plans to preserve the many attractive old buildings in Selly Oak.

Note to Editors

For queries and higher resolution version of the pictures please contact John Lines, Press and Publicity officer at the Lapal Canal Trust.

Email: john.lines@birmingham.gov.uk Tel: 07766 923390

The Lapal Canal Trust was formed in 1990 it is a registered charity (no 1013845) and a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee, registered in England (no 2721675)



Additional Information. See our web site for more information www.lapal.org .

- 1. Historical background** The Dudley No 2 Canal was built to carry coal from Dudley to London. Work started in 1794 and the route was opened in 1798. The through route was closed in 1917 by a collapse of the Lapal tunnel, but remained open both sides until the late 1950s. The Industrial town of Selly Oak grew around the canal junction now being restored. The area being constructed used to have two wharves (Whitehouse's Wharf) and was more recently affectionately called Goodman's Yard.



Photos taken in the 1930s



