

Media statement from Graham Mabbutt, Chairman of the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust.



PATRON
Sir Samuel Whitbread KCV

Date: 26th. November 2011

"I was interested to read on the front page of The Times and Citizen Councillor Caroline Fensome's criticism of Bedford Borough Council's decision to loan the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust up to £40,000 towards the cost of the Bedford community boat which the Trust will be launching next spring. The Trust has raised over £90,000 in grants, donations and loans from its members and supporters to build the boat. The availability of the loan gives the Trust the ability to place an order for the boat now."

"The Bedford Waterspace Study, which was published jointly by Bedford Borough Council and the Environment Agency a year ago, recognises that the River Great Ouse has a high potential to attract more visitors and tourists into Bedford town centre and to regenerate the local economy and jobs. It specifically calls for community and trip boats to operate on the river. The Study was accepted with all-party support. The B&MK Trust has responded by offering to provide this service."

"The boat will operate partly on a commercial basis and partly on a community basis. It is envisaged that it will be part of an "Experience Bedford" day out for coach operators to bring visitors and tourists to the town centre, enjoying a trip on the beautiful river, a meal at a hotel or restaurant, time to visit town centre shops and to generate business for Bedford. The boat will also make trips up and down the river for the general population with tickets available in advance and on the day."

"When the boat is not operating commercially it will be available at subsidised rates for use by community groups, schools, as well as local residents for functions. As the boat will be run by fully trained volunteers the rates will be very affordable."

"The B&MK Waterway project to link the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes with the Great Ouse in Bedford is supported across all party lines and all three local authorities. The presence of the community boat on the river will add to the growing support the project has already received."

ENDS.

This statement may be used as a "Letter To The Editor" or used in an follow – up article.

It has only been issued to the Beds Times & Citizen, but will be published on the B&MK Waterway Trust Website in due course.



The
Waterways
Trust