

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **B&MK Waterway to launch Community Boat on the Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes in 2020**

Following six very successful seasons with the John Bunyan Boat on the River Great Ouse at Bedford, Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway volunteers are planning to run a small passenger boat on the Grand Union Canal, based at the new Campbell Wharf Marina in the centre of Milton Keynes.

The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust acts as an advocate for a new Waterway Park between Bedford and Milton Keynes. It argues that the waterway parks will act as a catalyst for positive change, bringing environmental, social, health and economic benefits to the area as a whole. The Trust's community boat on the river in Bedford ([www.johnbunyanboat.org](http://www.johnbunyanboat.org)) has been hugely successful for six seasons now, raising awareness about and funds for the new Waterway Park.

Graham Mabbutt, Interim Chairman of the Enterprise Board (BMKWEL) that runs the John Bunyan Boat cruises on behalf of the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust said:

*"With the dig of the first metres of the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park at Campbell Wharf this spring, the opening of the new marina, and the launch of the Campbell Wharf development, there's a new opportunity to open up the Grand Union canal at the heart of Milton Keynes for everyone, through a Community Boat project."*

The trading arm of the Trust, BMKWEL, now plans to repeat that success in Milton Keynes, with a boat designed for the very different waters of the Grand Union. The boat will be a 12-seater, full-accessible, hybrid narrowboat that will work well for all sorts of trips throughout the year: short rides in summer, one-way taxi for walkers, Santa Specials in December, and of course our ever-popular catered charter trips for families, community and business groups, and 'public specials' – afternoon cream teas on board, bubbles 'n' bites, fish & chip suppers, etc. We hope to launch in April 2020.

BMKWEL is delighted to be working in partnership at Campbell Wharf with Crest Nicholson, who have a commitment to community-building in their new developments, and with the Parks Trust, who are keen to ensure that residents and visitors alike can see and use as much of the Milton Keynes' wonderful parkland as possible.

We are holding two public meetings this summer to test support for the Community Boat project, to uncover issues or concerns, and to start to build a new group of local volunteers who are capable of taking this project forward on a short timescale. Please come and find out more, tell us your views, and offer us some help if you can!

WINNER



**The first meeting is on Monday 22 July at 7-9pm at the Parks Trust HQ\* and is open to anyone interested. RSVP: [jane.wolfson@mkcommunityboat.org](mailto:jane.wolfson@mkcommunityboat.org)**

\*The Pavilion, 1300 Silbury Blvd, Milton Keynes MK9 4AD, UK

For queries, or to tell us that you can't come to the meeting but would like to be kept informed, please contact us at [jane.wolfson@mkcommunityboat.org](mailto:jane.wolfson@mkcommunityboat.org)

#### **NOTES TO EDITOR:**

The 50-passenger John Bunyan Boat was launched at Priory Marina, Bedford on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2013, and since that date has carried over 40,000 passengers. It currently runs over 160 cruises a season: a mixture of public cruises, special cruises such as Jazz, Afternoon Tea & Lunch cruises, Fish & Chip Suppers, and charter cruises for celebrations, family parties, wedding cruises, local organisations, local companies, schools and youth groups.

The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust was established in 1995 to promote a new 16 mile Waterway Park connecting the Grand Union Canal in Milton Keynes to the Great Ouse in Bedford. The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Its role is one of advocacy for the Waterway Park. Having successfully established an alignment, now protected by policy in three Local Plans, the Trust is currently working with partners to establish a strong business case for the project as part of the infrastructure being planned in Oxford to Cambridge Arc. The Trust works with a range of partners to ensure opportunities to integrate the Waterway into development and deliver local benefits are maximized. <https://www.bmkwaterway.org.uk/>