

Ashby Canal Potential Transfer - Further background

1. Since 1994, LCC has led on the restoration of the Ashby Canal, which was closed in 1966 due to mining subsidence. The last significant section (500m) was restored in 2014/15 from Snarestone, to the new Bridge 62. This cost £1.1m and was funded from a section 106 contribution from the Minorca open cast mine.
2. LCC has taken entry on all the necessary land and has completed the purchase of the line of the canal from Snarestone to Measham, using powers granted by the Transport and Works Act Order, on all but 2 small parcels of land. It is expected that these will be concluded shortly, so should not affect the transfer timetable proposed.
3. The restoration has, to date, been substantially funded from third party sources. With limited capital remaining or further sources of funding, LCC has limited capacity to invest in the project but has come under increasing pressure from stakeholders to do more.
4. As an alternative option to transfer, LCC began drafting a licence to allow the Ashby Canal Trust (ACT) to build the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct, as the next phase of canal restoration. However, stakeholders wanted to progress the whole scheme and so (in the context of limited resources) LCC gave them the option of either pursuing the construction of the aqueduct or transferring responsibility for restoring a much longer section of the canal instead and they chose the latter.
5. It was later acknowledged that the Ashby Canal Association (ACA) might be a more appropriate organisation than the ACT to transfer to, as they are longer established (as a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee since 1966), have more substantial funding and membership support (around 500 members currently)
6. It is considered that the ACA, as a charity with the sole purpose of restoring and promoting the canal, might be better placed than the Council to secure funding for the canal's restoration. They successfully completed a £10,000 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project to explore and engage local people with the archaeology of Ilott Wharf, on the route of the canal, which LCC permitted them to do under a licence. They have also raised over £100,000 in donations to restore the Gilwiskaw Aqueduct.

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