

## Chairman's Update

January 2024

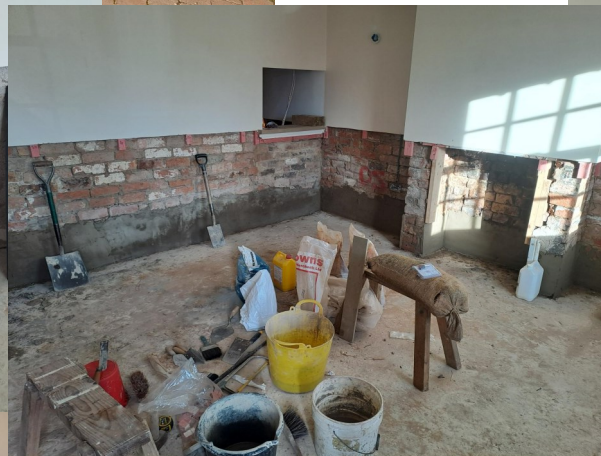
I know it is traditional after Christmas to try to shed the extra pounds by joining a gym. Perhaps we are fortunate that there's plenty of exercise available for free along the canal route. As you'll see below whilst we all had a break with our families over the Christmas dinner it was good to have a reason to get out in the fresh air—and possibly the pub to recover!

### Cottages

It's now been three months since the floods on 20th October. We still have one tenant in place, one who moved out and the other waiting to move back when we've fixed the flood damage. We've made good progress over the last month and we now have a core team working there with Brian Allen and

me joining Don and Tony, who never stopped finding jobs to do there.

We now have door barriers for all cottages, which should prevent the worst of any future flash flooding and the much improved filtration is in and working well. We're working on Cottages 2 and 3 to avoid further disturbance to the resident tenants, with the plan they'll swap with No 2 when finished so that we can then do Cottage 3. The in-



surer's have commissioned contractors to strip out the damaged plasterboard and take out the kitchens and radiators as you can see.

We have decided to take the advice of the flood restoration professional that is advising us and avoid

the drilling and drying out of the concrete slab. Instead we are progressing with tanking, injecting a new, higher damp proof course and waterproofing the external walls. This involves removing the screed floors, which have been the wettest part of the floor, so the concrete slab below is already drier than before. The screed will be replaced once the tanking is completed.





As you can see we have "relaid" the screed on the temporary car park by the cafe, which had been too muddy to use. Always good to recycle! Thanks to David's team for the "chain gang" activities in breaking it up and levelling it out.

Given that we want to focus on preventing recurrence rather than simply restoring the property, it makes sense for us to pursue a cash settlement and take control. So we are now looking to plan the sequence of works ourselves. I am convinced that



given our experience with the original build, this will be the most effective and quickest way to get back to being fully operational again. Whilst a final settlement is still being progressed we are already organising our contractors. The major step forward since original rebuild is that we have access to the Café manager's contacts (he is/was a joiner). We had a visit from a prospective plasterer and screeder and I reckon the quality of the cakes seem to have swung the deal. With these two and a plumber and electrician lined up and support from the volunteer

team we are hoping to have the first cottage back in operation by March.

## Draycott

We are making steady progress with the longer term flood management. The diversion of flows along the line seem to be working and preventing flows back up to Hopwell Road. We have also reduced the bunds along the canal line, which should all contribute to managing the increased water

flows. This is ahead of any plans in the summer to instal stop planks.

We've had a discussion with the County Council's Flood officer, who visited after Christmas. We had hoped that this would be a way to make progress, but it seems that they are, as always, looking at short term alleviation, clearing ditches and maintaining existing arrangements rather than look at ways to actively promote improvements.

We've asked our County Council Trustee to promote the case for using the canal as a flood protection measure and hope that this might lead to a more enlightened approach to flood protection for Breaston and Draycott. With this in mind our Engineering Group is reassessing levels to see the benefits and costs of a change to canal levels.





To help with the discussion we've been resurveying levels with David and Chris RFP doing the Gandalf impression with the hi tech Theodolite.

We're also pursuing the option to use the canal for water transfer and have received a deal of interest for this as it may make considerable savings for operational costs of water provision, and it could be done so much better with an open canal than a buried pipe. It's a long term conversation, but so far....

The acquisition of land between Draycott and Breaston from Sustrans continues, but very slowly and the possibility of other purchases are still under review—as long as we can afford them. It's at times like this when we miss the Cottages revenue stream.

### Working Parties



Our working parties have continued, despite the weather varying between incessant rain and ice cold sunshine. As reported above the guys have been working at Draycott, but there have also been a few issues that have been dealt with.

We were asked by Sustrans to deal with some uprooted trees along the stretch currently being acquired. We've pointed out that if they'd moved faster it would have been our problem, but they seem happy enough to pay for our help.

Soon after this request, the Environment Agency spotted a leaning tree that they've asked us to deal with. I guess this is an indication that they are

monitoring watercourses carefully to prevent obstructions. It doesn't look like a major issue, but has been added to our list.

Further work has taken place at Borrowwash with attention to the wall, but given the recent weather the team has rebuilt the steps that lead from Borrowwash lock to the Ock Brook. At one stage there was a watercourse running down this path and it caused a lot of erosion.

The results of the high level of water were evident by the smelly and unsightly residue around the sewer by Borrowwash Lock. We've been advised to keep reporting this type of incident as STW might then look to deal with it—and you never know they may decide to relocate the sewer so it doesn't cut across the canal line there.





It also looks as though we'll be reinstating the notice board at Spondon as someone has decided to throw it into the canal. They obviously couldn't find a shopping trolley this time!

### Projects Update

At Draycott the consultants are working to provide surveys and design input. This is progressing well with a view to be ready to contract in April. Our ecologists have failed to provide the reports we need and so we are looking at alternatives to secure a licence. That said we've seen no sign of voles since autumn—although that's not a surprise in the winter. We have seen evidence of mink on the canal line, but fortunately they now seem to have moved on. We'll have to assess the situation in the new year.

We still await the quote from Severn Trent Water re Sandiacre in the new few weeks and Rogers Leask are nearing a report on the Arm. Discussions with Network Rail and Chellaston developers have not moved on since the last update, but that's mostly due to the Christmas wind down.



### Derby Riverboat

We now have a quote for works on the Riverboat pontoon. This broadly shows a requirement for the base at £65k and pontoon at over £75k. Whilst the Council is looking to find another £20k to finance the base, it looks like we'll need to raise the balance for the pontoon. However whilst numbers now seem to be available decisions are still awaited that will allow us to move on.

I'm please to report that we held a very constructive Trustees' meeting this month and had positive contributions from both the City Council Labour Councillors (Martin Rawson and Hardyal Dhindsa) appointed. They have offered to push the project forward and try to get decisions on the pontoon and the now urgent review of boat licensing. They will also try to get us more involved with the Our City, Our River flood defences work. I hope this leads to more progress.

Liz is now working on the boat trips for the new year. We are looking to renew training, undertake first aid training for many more volunteers and plan for the remaining maintenance and relocation of the boat to Causey Bridge. Unfortunately, there's now little hope the pontoon will be ready by then. We are planning to be in the water at Easter, which is early this year and starts on 29th March, but this is very much weather dependent and I don't think anyone can forecast that with any accuracy. If anyone wishes to get involved please let me know.

### Draycott Museum

Hot on the heels of his recognition at the AGM, our editor, Peter, is now putting together a presentation for the "museum" at the café. We plan to set up a screen with photos and spoken narrative on a number of topics that can be selected on the press of a button. The key to this will be a series of short anecdotes from previous occupants (or their families) and volunteers involved in the restoration. We will be calling on individuals to record their stories, so if you want to be involved please let Peter or me know.

### Members' Meetings

As reported last month we now have a number of speakers lined up for the future, so please pencil them into your diaries and support us as usual. Meetings will be at the Cottages in Hopwell Road, Draycott, DE72 3PE starting at 7.30pm.

January 23rd	The Life of James Brindley	by Cliff Lea
February 27th	The Friargate Line	by Keith Blood
March 26th	The Woodland Trust	by Gerald Price
April 23rd	The Ilkeston Tramway	by Stephen Flanders
May 28th	The Carlisle Ship Canal	by David Ramshaw

Thanks for your support.

Chris Madge