

Closure of the Trust.

For a number of years now support for our canal restoration project has dwindled, and we have not had new members join for a good while. It is felt that in the current financial climate – especially now with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic – a project that was estimated to cost between £127 million and £235 million at 2006 prices is unlikely to find favour for some years to come, although keeping the possibility open we still see as a sensible way forward.

However, it was a great disappointment to the Trust that despite our best efforts, the Inspector's decision in 2019 following the public inquiry into the Barnsley local plan, supported BMBC's view that a firm line for the restoration of the canals in the borough should not be included in the local plan. The Trust considers this to be a very short-sighted view showing no thought for the future of tourism and economic progress within the borough. It is also at variance with the position of Wakefield MDC to the north, which has adopted our consultant's restoration line across its area and both protected that line and spent funds doing so. If Barnsley MBC had supported a line, then we think that there might have been a possibility of getting Rotherham MBC to revise their current stance on restoration of the Dearne and Dove Canal. Without that support, the prospect of a through restoration appears to be very unlikely.

It is therefore with great regret that the Trust's Council of Management (COM) has decided to wind up the Trust and cease operations. The COM considers that our remaining cash assets should be transferred to an active canal restoration project where they can be put to good, practical use. The Chesterfield Canal Trust (CTT) is thought to be an appropriate choice. We are making arrangements with the CTT to help retain the core content of the current BDDCT website as an information resource for a number of years into the future and we will ensure that a suitable home is found for all the Trust's archives and records.

We thank you for your support and interest through the years. All the necessary decisions about the formal winding-up will be discussed at this year's delayed AGM – which will be organised as soon as it is allowed.

28th April 2020.