

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM: CO-OPTED MEMBERS OF BASINGSTOKE CANAL JMC

After the initial period all will be co-opted for a period of 4 years and are eligible for re-appointment.

<b>Full Name of Organisation</b>	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC)	
<b>Name of individual</b>	Councillor Representative: Cllr Mark Ruffell – Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Environment. Officer Representative: Paul Johnston – Natural Environment Team Leader	
<b>Expression of Interest (Max 500 words)</b>	<p>BDBC is applying to become a non-voting member of the Basingstoke Canal JMC in order to help raise the profile of the canal which whilst not currently navigable along the stretch within the borough, is a key historical feature and green infrastructure asset that supports council priorities.</p> <p>The Basingstoke Canal extends from the eastern boundary of the borough with its original terminus close to Basingstoke Town Centre. Since closing, parts of the canal have been lost to development, however there are a number of sections that are still visible and whilst in varying conditions, are nevertheless important to local history. These sections also provide habitats for flora and fauna and in cases form part of a well-used access network for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.</p> <p>The canal also provides an important focus for volunteers, with the Basingstoke Canal Society actively involved in management and aspirations to reinstate sections.</p> <p>The council has a number of key priorities that relate to the canal, the most significant being 'to improve residents quality of life'. This is partly articulated through an adopted Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy that seeks to protect and enhance the network of green spaces throughout the borough for the benefit of residents and wildlife.</p> <p>The Basingstoke Canal relates to a number of aims and objectives in the GI Strategy that may help to deliver physical schemes including improved access, interpretation, habitat protection and enhancement along with aspirations to re-open and re-water sections of it. Partnership working will be a key element of this and the council will continue to support the work of the BCS with appropriate projects.</p> <p>It is anticipated that membership of the JMC will help to raise the profile of the canal and help to deliver projects that will not only reflect key council priorities but also benefit the canal itself. Membership will allow better partnership working with others in the JMC, more efficient development of projects and potentially provide better support to any funding bids. The higher profile is also hoped to assist in volunteer engagement. As a non-voting member of the JMC, the council will also be able to provide appropriate support to others in the group.</p> <p>The council's commitment to the canal is evidenced by the fact that this application is supported by the Cabinet Member for Planning Infrastructure and Natural Environment.</p>	
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