

Hythe Bridge pocket park progress

Hythe Bridge pocket park improvement works are currently underway to make the gateway to the Oxford canal safer and more inviting.

This joint venture between British Waterways and the West End Partnership is due to be completed by Summer 2009.

Before work began the park was overgrown, dark and secluded. The area was also potentially hazardous; some of the trees were suffering from basal decay, which ultimately could have caused them to collapse.

Improvements include dredging the end of the canal; improving the bin storage; improving the street furniture (seats, barriers, etc); grass seeding; new planting along the frontage and the back wall (discouraging graffiti and illegal access whilst encouraging wildlife); replacing six major trees with more appropriate species in more suitable locations; and carrying out general maintenance such as replacing brickwork, re-pointing and repainting the bridge railings.

Councillor Bob Price, Leader of Oxford City Council, says: "These improvement works will make the Hythe Bridge pocket park a welcoming and attractive place in which to spend time, furthering the aims of the Oxford West End Renaissance."

James Clifton, Regeneration Manager, British Waterways South East, says: "The Oxford canal can be enjoyed by everyone, whether it's a leisurely stroll along the towpath, a route to work or a day's boating.

"Once the Hythe Bridge pocket park improvement works are complete, the canal will be much more visible from the road, encouraging people to use this glorious stretch of waterway."

Councillor Keith Mitchell, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, says: "By improving Oxford's gateway to the canal, people will be able to explore the area anew and will hopefully go on to discover the rest of Oxfordshire's picturesque waterways."

Delivery of the Hythe Bridge pocket park is one project in a series of initiatives to invest in the Oxford canal. An initial meeting of stakeholders was held in January with the aim of forming the Oxford City Canal Partnership. It is hoped that this group will play a key role in promoting the canal and instigating further improvements that will benefit everyone.

For more information about the Hythe Bridge pocket park improvement works, please visit the 'development sites' section of the Oxford West End website at: www.oxfordwestend.co.uk

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NOTE TO EDITORS

The **West End Renaissance** is an exciting long-term regeneration programme that is set to transform a currently under-used area of Oxford into a modern, vibrant and stylish city quarter. Shops, restaurants and offices will be located alongside new homes, public squares and educational and leisure facilities.

The **West End Partnership**, comprising and jointly funded by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), was established in 2005 as the driving force behind the West End Renaissance.

British Waterways cares for a 2,000-mile network of canals and navigable rivers throughout Britain, working to provide a sustainable future for the inland waterways and generate maximum benefit and enjoyment to all from this unique environmental and leisure resource.

British Waterways works with a broad range of public, private and voluntary sector partners to unlock the potential of the inland waterways and generate income for reinvestment in the waterways for the benefit of the millions who visit and care for the waterways every year.

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