

The Grantham Canal Society South Kesteven District Council- Scrutiny Committee 13th January 2026

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This presentation

- ▶ To provide an update and insight into the work of the Grantham Canal Society (GCS)
- ▶ Describe our short-term plans and longer-term ambitions
- ▶ To propose / discuss how GCS could take a more focussed and active role in the management and development of the canal east of the A1

Exec Summary

- ▶ Our (GCS) long term / ultimate ambition is to restore the canal as a navigable waterway - several significant milestones have been achieved.
- ▶ The canal is a 'green-blue corridor' enjoyed along it's 33mile length by over 20000 visitors during 2025, including special interest groups for example fishing, walking, riding, artists etc
- ▶ GCS has been the catalyst and driving force since the 60s to improve and nurture this asset through regular maintenance and completion of restoration projects.
- ▶ There are significant infrastructure challenges at both ends with support from key agencies and stakeholders, their support demonstrated by the A46 bridge.
- ▶ We want to continue and develop the relationship with SKDC to re-invigorate the 'Grantham-end' initially through taking on the management and delivery of maintenance of this section, whilst exploring other ideas to improve it

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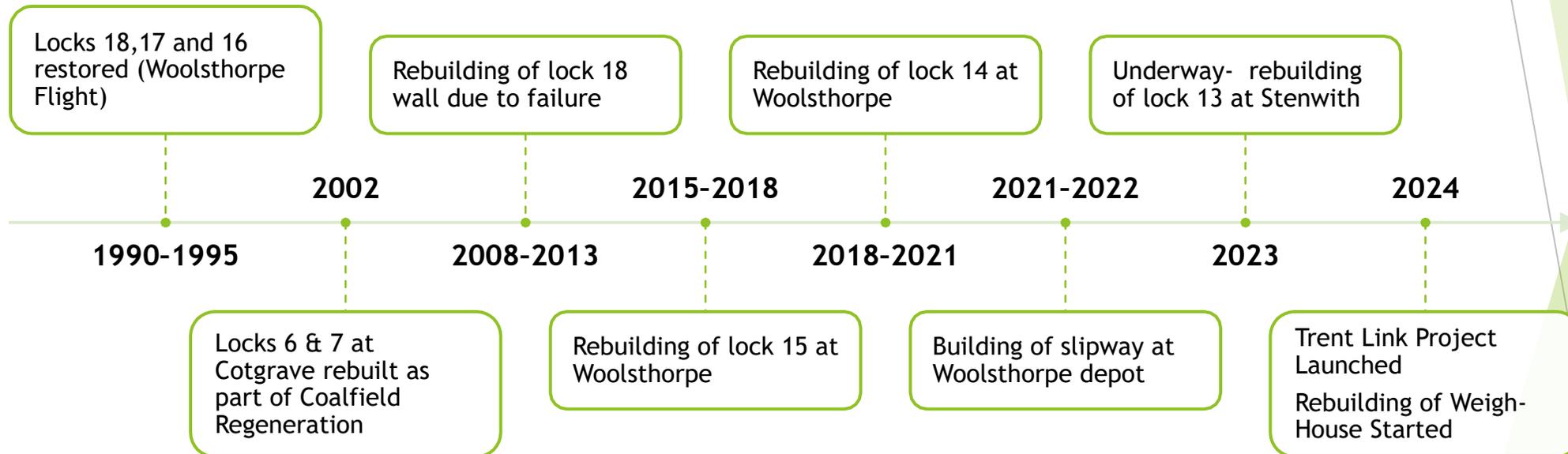
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- ▶ A charity for over 50 years, 1000 members from a wide range of backgrounds - giving over 20,000 volunteer hours in 2025.
- ▶ Goal - Restoration and Maintenance of the canal
- ▶ CRT approved contractor
 - £856k worth of volunteer labour utilised in restoration of locks 15 & 14
- ▶ We attend numerous educational and promotional events throughout the year - generating local interest in the canal.
- ▶ Strong links
 - FOCCP (Friends of Cotgrave Country park)
 - Grantham Canal Waterway Restoration Group (GCWRG) (Hickling and Kinoulton)
 - WEBCAN (Lady Bay / West Bridgford)
- ▶ SKDC approved contractor
- ▶ Active in building stakeholder engagement for the big infrastructure challenges e.g. A1 overbridge and Trent Connection

Much has been done...

Since closure of the canal in 1936 and subsequent formation of GCS in 1969 several significant steps to restoration have been completed and underway...



► Overall restoration as a navigable waterway is the goal whilst preserving and improving what we have

Strategic aims

To maintain the existing canal and its immediate environment



To exploit and develop opportunities to make the canal a dynamic resource



To restore the canal from Nottingham to Grantham as a navigable waterway linked to the National Waterway network

There are significant challenges...



Lost Forever

- The Grantham Wharf -Once the thriving end of the canal in Grantham



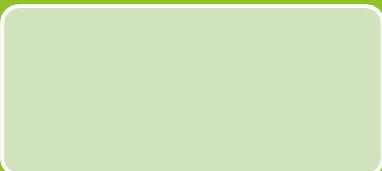
Locks de-gated

- For safety lock gates have been removed and replaced by concrete weirs - 11 of the 18 locks are now in need of restoration



Culverts

- 30 / 67 bridges were removed and replaced by culverts



Dry Section

- Porous geology, subsidence and degradation of the clay puddling lining the canal (a reaction with gypsum) in the Kinouton to Cotgrave area

... and reasons to believe...



Harby

The Harby road bridge is future proof - the deck is constructed so that it could be lifted and made navigable more simply than a full rebuild



Bridge infrastructure - The building of a bridge in 1993 (funded by the Derelict Land Grant at Casthorpe) enables navigation from Woolsthorpe to the A1



The recent dualling of the A46 (Newark to Widmerpool) included a full bridge spanning the canal at Cotgrave

- The Highways Agency and others are more receptive to maintaining heritage than in the past

The Trent Connection and the A1

Critical infrastructure that will unlock full restoration

The Trent Link

- ▶ National Highways support established to fund feasibility study to get canal under A52 Gamston Lings Bar
- ▶ Rushcliffe Borough Council - letter of support to include in the Borough Plan 2027
- ▶ Nottinghamshire County Council - letter of support with further engineering detail to secure protected route

The A1 at Grantham

- ▶ January 2025 Consultation with JBA Consulting of Peterborough on future for the canal east of the A1.

The Canal is an important asset to the Region

Whilst restoration as a navigable waterway linked to the network is a goal, realistically this will be some years before it's a reality - the 33-mile canal corridor already adds value to the region

- ▶ Woolsthorpe to Denton (5 miles of navigable canal) - with regular trip boat excursions, canoes, Kayaks etc
- ▶ Hickling Basin (and old Wharf café) a much-visited attraction (cyclists, walkers etc) well supported local residents' group GCWRG (Hickling and Kinoulton)
- ▶ Cotgrave Country Park a very busy area well utilised by walkers, cyclists, anglers and horse riders, some 3 miles of it in water (albeit shallow)
- ▶ Lady Bay and Gamston section of canal 2.3 miles of canal well used by cyclists, walkers and anglers - well supported Lady Bay Residents group
- ▶ Covid 19 2020/21 increased use of the canal as leisure venue, hugely increased towpath use and support for GCS
- ▶ With the increase in extreme weather events - canals can be a component of flood management systems

- ▶ The canal corridor holds more opportunities that benefit the region

Some of our ideas for the development of the canal

- ▶ Hickling - to make this popular area an active hub on and around the water
- ▶ Further dredging and silt removal to enable regular boat trips beyond Denton as far as the A1
- ▶ Fishing - Grantham Anglers want to form a partnership with GCS
- ▶ Increase activity on the water eg day boats for leisure, canoes, kayaks etc
- ▶ Accentuate and educate the local history and ecology e.g. signage / tours / info boards etc - encourage wider interest
- ▶ Wildlife habitat - vegetation management, nest boxes etc
- ▶ Links with the 'Duck at Woolsthorpe' - already exploiting the synergy with a local business i.e. 'Cruise & Dine'

The parts of the canal 'in water' are predominantly in the SKDC region...

GCS and SKDC - a strong relationship



2014 SKDC fundamentally involved with the GCHI submission for rebuilding of locks 15 and 14. Richard Wyles assisted the Grantham Canal Partnership with Stage 1 of the National Lottery bid.



2024 Shared Prosperity Funding bid of £30k awarded to GCS to fund purchase of equipment for silt clearance.



2024 Submission for Approved Contractor status with SKDC.



2024 GCS undertook vegetation clearance works along the canal at Swingbridge Road, Trent Road and Earlesfield Lane on behalf of SKDC.



2026 Commissioned for further maintenance work at Swingbridge Road, Trent Road and Earlsfield Lane - start January

GCS and SKDC working together ...



Maintenance

We have a team leader in place to focus on the Grantham area

Ad hoc clearance work done and more is planned

Periodic removal of shopping trolleys

Formal role in supporting SKDC to maintain the towpaths and watercourse?



Development

Improve the tow path and culverts

Plans to dredge to the A1

Heritage reconnect with the local area

A forum to develop and deliver more ideas?

GCS - SKDC Vegetation Clearance



Discussion



QUESTIONS



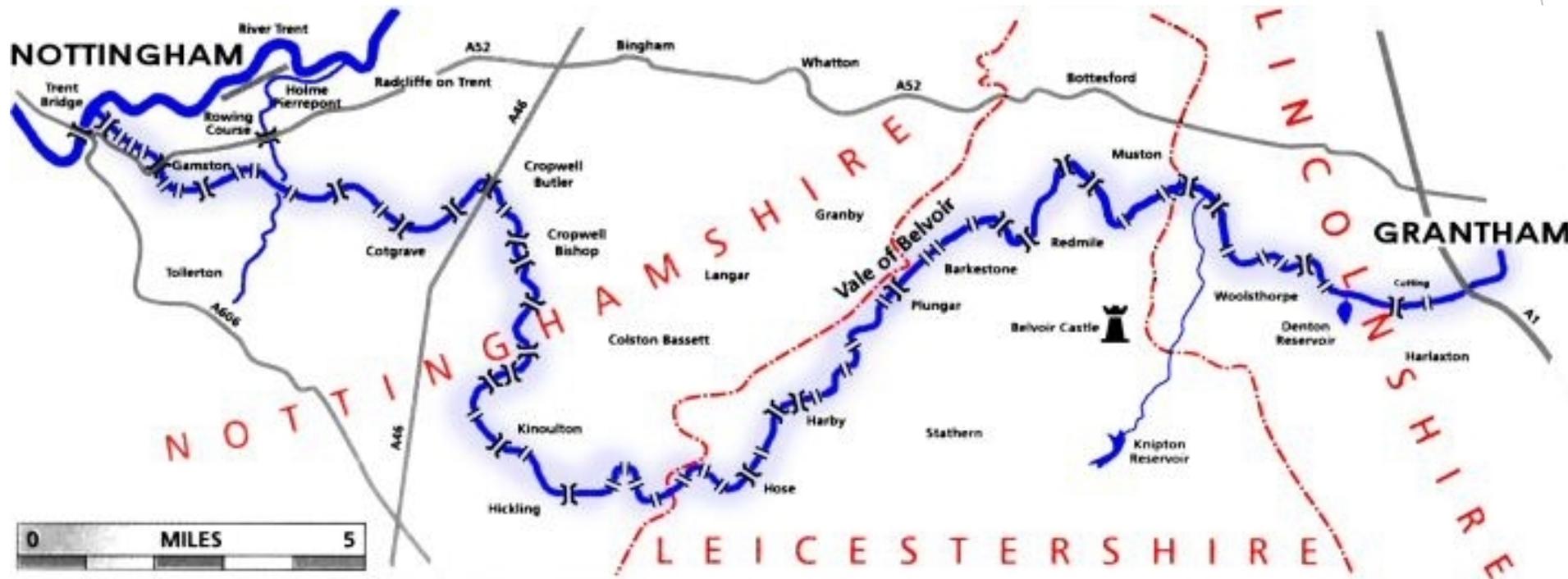
NEXT STEPS

Supporting Information

Grantham Canal, East of A1



33 miles of the Grantham Canal completed between 1793 and 1797



James Green of Wollaton supervised the construction from Nottingham to the Leicestershire border and William King the rest.

Proposed new route to the Trent at Gamston



Casthorpe Road Bridge 64, May 1994

GRANTHAM CANAL
CASTHORPE BRIDGE NO 64





New (2025) silt removal
fleet - helped by SKDC
funding



The
Grantham Canal
Society

CHARITY No: 507337

Restoring the Nottingham to Grantham Canal