

## **HS2 route announcement - Chesterfield Canal line is safe**

The Government has announced that the route for Phase 2b of HS2 will be the eastern (M1) route.

This means that the blight that had settled on the restoration route of the canal through Renishaw, Spinkhill and Killamarsh since January 2013 has officially been lifted.

4½ years of campaigning by the Chesterfield Canal Trust has finally paid off. The Trust is very grateful to all its allies in this campaign. These include all the local authorities along the route, local and national politicians, the Canal & River Trust and lots of wildlife, heritage, waterways and other organisations.

Most of all, the Trust wishes to thank the hundreds, possibly thousands, of supporters who have responded to the two route consultations. The support that we have had both locally and nationally has been quite astonishing. There can be no doubt that this has been noted in Whitehall.

The Trust will now be redoubling its fund-raising efforts to help push forward with restoration. Its current *Place in History* campaign has raised nearly £40,000 this year for the work of its volunteers at Staveley. To donate, go to the Chesterfield Canal Trust website.

Robin Stonebridge, Chair of the Trust, said:

“The Secretary of State’s statement confirming the route for HS2 through North Derbyshire comes 4½ years after the initial route announcement in January 2013.

“The decision removes blight from the route originally announced to run from Staveley Puddlebank northwards as far as Killamarsh, and so those communities can breathe a sigh of relief that their homes and jobs will not be lost. As with any alternative however, others will feel the impact of this enormous project, with Norwood and Wales being canalside communities hit by the new route.

“In his statement yesterday, the Secretary of State was at pains to say that he wishes to see the individuals, businesses and communities affected by the route of HS2 treated with fairness, compassion and respect.

“This year marks the 41st anniversary of the founding of the Canal Society, the predecessor of the Canal Trust. In those 41 years, hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours and tens of thousands of pounds have been willingly given to support the restoration of this canal. Now a decision has been made, I hope that fairness, compassion and respect for those 41 years of effort will characterise the Secretary of State’s, and HS2 Ltd’s, willingness to support the speedy restoration of the Chesterfield Canal so that it can take its place as a much loved feature that can offer recreation, support well-being and can act as an engine for the local and regional economy.

“The Canal Trust and its partners now have a number of tasks:

- To negotiate with HS2 Ltd. to ensure that the line linking the new route of HS2 with the depot in Staveley enables, rather than hinders, further canal restoration;

- To negotiate with HS2 Ltd. to ensure that the new M1 line of the route does not obstruct the Cuckoo Way long-distance footpath and restoration route for the canal at Norwood;
- To rebuild our engineering and fund-winning capacity so that we can now make rapid progress on restoration long before the railway opens for business in 2033;
- To ensure that the unique Norwood complex of Georgian lock flights and tunnel is used wherever possible and effectively interpreted in order to enable Norwood to be recognised as the national heritage asset it most surely is;
- To build support for advanced mitigation to offset the delay and uncertainty caused to the canal restoration programme. The announcement yesterday came 4½ years after initial publication of a route; the Bill for this phase of the railway will not be introduced to Parliament until 2019 and may not receive assent until 2022, with construction being completed in 2033. We cannot be expected to wait 10, 15 or 20 years for mitigation.”