

River Avon Navigation – written response

Old Town Business Association (OTBA), which represents 110 member businesses, met to discuss the merits of the proposal to open the Avon to navigation from Stratford upon Avon to Warwick on 6th April 2004.

The Association recognises that this is a long term project and will not bring immediate benefits to the Old Town area of Leamington Spa for some years. OTBA have been active in the regeneration efforts in Old Town and want to see continuing regeneration activity after the Government grant funding for the area finishes in 2006.

OTBA is primarily concerned that its members benefit from investment in the waterways that run through Old Town.

The view of those present was:-

- OTBA support the continued regeneration of Leamington Old Town and in particular efforts to encourage increased usage of the Grand Union Canal through Leamington Spa, and for boaters using the canal to stop and visit the historic Old Town
- OTBA would like to see improvements made to the canal that encourage boats to moor up and stop overnight, whether or not the Avon is opened up to navigation as proposed.
- A canal marina development alongside the Grand Union canal in the Clemens Street area is still one of our aspirations. With the forthcoming re-development of the Court Street area, a simultaneous marina development would lift the area and make good commercial sense in our view.
- OTBA does support the principle of opening up the River Avon on the proviso that the new junction with the Grand Union Canal is situated in Warwick so that boats coming off the Avon are taken down the Grand Union through the historic Old Town.
If good mooring facilities are available in the Clemens Street area it should bring more visitors and tourists to the Old Town area, supporting current efforts to reverse the decline of this important area of Leamington.
- OTBA would recommend that an independent environmental impact study is carried out if the proposals are to be taken further forward. OTBA would want review its support in the light of that study's findings
- OTBA does not support the link with the Grand Union at the River Leam at Radford Semele which would bypass Leamington Old Town.

OTBA does not seek to make a presentation to the Committee in June but would like to be kept informed of future developments and any further consultation exercises