

Sankey Canal to lose its Water supply

SCARS has recently been informed by Halton Council that Fiddlers Ferry Power Station will discontinue its regular supply of water to the Sankey Canal.



This will mean that the section of canal between Bewsey Lock in Warrington and Spike Island in Widnes will gradually dry up unless a new source of supply is found soon.

Fiddlers Ferry Power Station has been feeding water into the canal since its restoration way back in the 1980's. This was done as a goodwill gesture at no expense to either Warrington or Halton Councils.

Members of SCARS Committee are very saddened at this situation but see it as an opportunity to survey the necessary work to be done to restore the canal by being able to pinpoint areas of that need special treatment, such as wall repairs, weed and rubbish clearance and desilting.

At present Warrington and Halton Councils are making a combined effort to reinstate the original source of supply from Sankey Brook. This will mean a considerable amount of civil engineering and expense to reconnect the brook and canal at Dallam in Warrington and of course this is not going to happen immediately. In the meantime other short term options are being looked at; this will undoubtedly mean that if we experience a dry summer the canal is likely to dry up completely.

Halton and Warrington Councils along with the Sankey Canal Restoration Society are committed to restoring the canal between Spike Island and Fiddlers Ferry in the not too distant future with the aim of restoring the whole of the canal to full navigation in the long term.

Halton Council are at present planning to install a new swing bridge to replace the now expired wooden bridge at Spike Island. The new bridge will be of steel and will be located in the same position as the original railway swing bridge that existed there from the early years of the canals existence from 1833.



They also plan to reinstate the slipway into the river so that boats can be launched into the canal or river.

The full length of the Sankey Canal now has the combined backing of the Sankey Canal Partnership which is made up of the three local authorities through which it passes: Halton, St.Helens and Warrington plus the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and The Sankey Canal Restoration Society (SCARS).

Many visitors to Spike Island will be saddened to see the canal dry up later in the year but rest assured things are happening and maybe it will not be too long before the water supply is restored and things return to normal again.

Colin Greenall
Chairman, Sankey Canal Restoration Society