

Alan Dunn and arts collective Re-Dock

Art for Places HMR Partnership Sefton

Canal&: Suggestions for a Future Canal was a project designed to animate the Leeds Liverpool Canal and the communities who live alongside it in South Sefton.

It established a strong and lasting engagement framework for local people, as well as a public manifestation for ideas that emerged.

Workshops and exhibitions were enjoyed by thousands of local people, all exploring

their own creativity and their visions for the canal in their midst. Almost 40 workshops were organised, using 132 days of artists' time.

An exhibition, Suggestions for a Future Canal, is touring neighbourhood spaces during 2009 in a bid to continue discussions locally. During summer 2009, a selection of 'suggestions' were being made reality, unbeknown to their originators.



Images produced were also being used to form the basis of an enormous eight billboard installation.

The project was part of Art for Places, Merseyside's Housing Market Renewal (HMR) arts partnership programme, as a key element in a year-long community engagement programme in Sefton.

Paul Kelly, HMR Public Realm Project Manager, said: "We wanted to engage with a wide range of community groups and stakeholders in creative discussions about a variety of issues - including the history and legacy of the canal, and its importance to the development of the neighbourhoods alongside it.

"We wanted to look at the human connection to the canal, on both a personal and community basis - taking into account plans to improve, upgrade and develop it. The canal could have many future uses as a key business,

leisure and symbolic asset for the Bootle and South Sefton area."

The HMR arts partnership is part of the Arts Council's north west regionwide programme and aims to share the vision, values and practicalities of using the arts to support sustainable regeneration across Housing Market Renewal areas and inspire others to use creativity as a regeneration tool.

In Merseyside, Art for Places is a partnership between Arts Council England, North West, NewHeartlands, Liverpool Biennial, local authorities and housing associations.

Participants said:

"No point in having a canal if you can't use it" - Aimee Langton, age 12

"Open a gym onto the canal - make it free for the young and the elderly" - Pat Vivienne



Re-Dock