

# Exeter Ship Canal and Heritage Harbour Route Map

Greenwood Projects



A sustainable waterway and harbour-side for Exeter now and in the future, providing benefits for the community, boat users, businesses and visitors.



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***Exeter Quay - an increasingly popular destination, but with the potential for so much more, both within the city and along the canal.***

## What the Heritage Harbour Route Map is about

The purpose of the Route Map is to propose complementary aims and activities that can be endorsed by Exeter City Council, Exeter Harbour Board and Exeter Canal and Quay Trust as a route to regenerating Exeter Ship Canal and Basin and reviving their maritime heritage.

It builds on the opportunities of the waterway and its existing infrastructure and access to the sea; and particularly on the Heritage Harbour status granted to the canal and basin by the Maritime Heritage Trust and National Historic Ships UK in 2020.

### The Route Map's approach

The general aims of the Route Map are to:

- Set out interlocking projects, activities and improvements to take the canal and basin forward to achieve their potential as a leading heritage inland port and improve the level and range of activity centred on the canal and basin
- Enhance community and visitor appeal through supporting working maritime and heritage revival, including the docking and restoration of historic vessels, return of traditional maritime skills and crafts, and a wider range of activities and opportunities for all on and off the water
- Place maritime activity and Exeter's maritime heritage firmly on Exeter's programme of events and culture
- Put Exeter back on the wider maritime map through networking with boat owners, boat builders and maritime heritage groups
- Become an exemplar of the Heritage Harbour scheme.



*For centuries, the harbour provided the basis for much of Exeter's prosperity. Our vision is for it to be once more a major contributor to the city's economic success.*

- The Route Map is not intended to be a ‘shopping list’ but a tool for looking forward. It does not imply that contexts, needs of customers, and technical and environmental issues will not change—but it does indicate that the proposals have potential that should be explored.

It adopts a realistic and responsible approach. It does not recommend major at-risk capital investment but that at each stage evaluation and a satisfactory business case should feed into projects of varying sizes. Establishing priorities is therefore a critical first step towards implementing any part of the plan.

### **Slow burns and quick wins**

The Route Map’s approach is also to treat the waterway as a whole. It combines the long term with the short term to ensure that proposals complement each other and none exists in isolation.

This is achieved through a mixture of larger ‘slow-burn’ projects and smaller, highly visible ‘quick-wins’ that can bring appreciable results relatively quickly. It means there will always be something happening on or near the water.

All the projects are designed to continue to yield benefits over time.

The benefits of focusing on the added dimension the water brings to cities can be seen in other examples, notably Bristol, where projects to regenerate Underfall Yard (<http://underfallyard.co.uk>) as part of an overall maritime revival brought new life and vigour to what was a largely a redundant corner of the Floating Harbour.

The Exeter Heritage Harbour Route Map will lead to a sea-change in perceptions of, and connections with, the water for Exeter’s residents and visitors through the renewal of maritime life on the canal and basin. *Not just a Heritage Harbour—a Heritage Harbour for today and tomorrow.*



***Underfall Yard in Bristol shows how a working heritage facility can contribute to an economic revival. Traditional skills are allied with an intriguing tourist destination.***

## **How the Route Map came about**

The Route Map was commissioned by Exeter Canal and Quay Trust (ECQT) after the Friends of Exeter Ship Canal secured Exeter's nomination as a Heritage Harbour. The brief contained two strands which became woven together:

- Consideration of the practicality of hosting a traditional vessel in the harbour area;
- A framework for taking forward plans for maritime and heritage revival of the canal and basin and for commercial projects of varying sizes, paying attention to the best of other heritage harbour schemes.

After advertisement and tendering, Nicola Dyer of Greenwood Projects was appointed as consultant to produce the report.

The project was overseen by the Exeter Heritage Harbour Group (EHHG), an informal subgroup of ECQT encompassing views from within Exeter City Council, ECQT and the Friends of Exeter Ship Canal. Its members were Jon Bell and Roger Johnson, independent ECQT trustees; Anna Gilroy, ECQT Programme Co-ordinator; Cllr David Harvey, then City Council portfolio holder for waterways and an ECQT board member; John Monks, Friends of Exeter Ship Canal (who secured the Heritage Harbour nomination); and Grahame Forshaw, Harbour Master. Cllr Harvey chaired the group. Subsequently Cllr Ruth Williams succeeded Cllr Harvey as portfolio holder and Jon Bell took over as EHHG chair. Nicola Dyer submitted regular drafts and was in frequent contact with EHHG. The final draft was edited by John Monks.

## **Taking the Route Map forward**

Given its make-up, EHHG was able to take account of different perspectives. However it is not assumed that it represents the eventual mechanism for going forward. The body to take the Route Map forward needs to be able to channel ideas and activities as well as to review and measure progress and achievement. For this reason, agreement on EHHG or its successor to lead on promoting the Route Map will be fundamental to progressing it.

Such a body and its members will also have leading parts to play as 'heritage harbour champions' in developing the heritage harbour concept locally and contributing to shaping the national and emerging regional heritage harbour networks.

Whatever EHHG's make-up, the future of Exeter's waterways will always be concerted effort that includes the statutory and official bodies, users, communities and businesses who all have a stake in its success.

A further question relates to funding. In order to attract external funding, in particular towards higher-value projects (for example, from the National Lottery Heritage Fund), it is important to demonstrate that the applicant organisation cannot fund the works themselves. The advantages of creating in due course a specifically heritage harbour-focused organisation in terms of fundraising should also be considered.

### **The effect of covid-19**

The world has changed post-pandemic, and that applies across all aspects of life. The maritime world has seen rapid change and maritime heritage bodies of all types are looking to diversify, grow and change—as is the High Street, the tourism sector, businesses, and people in their private lives as

residents and citizens. If access to open spaces and water was important before 2020, it is even more so now as people place greater emphasis and value on outdoor and cultural pursuits as means to promote mental and physical health and well-being. Reviving Exeter's relationship to its waterway couldn't come at a more challenging or exciting time.

## What the Heritage Harbour designation means

The Heritage Harbour designation for Exeter Canal and Basin came as a result of conversations between the Friends of Exeter Ship Canal and the Maritime Heritage Trust (the late Brian Corbett). The Trust, together with National Historic Ships UK, originated the Heritage Harbour concept.

- **Maritime Heritage Trust** ([maritimeheritage.org.uk](http://maritimeheritage.org.uk)) is the only national membership body for maritime preservation, with its origins in The Maritime Trust created in 1969. It campaigns for a better deal for historic ships and to keep them working, and represents the UK on the European Maritime Heritage organisation.
- **National Historic Ships UK** ([nationalhistoricships.org.uk](http://nationalhistoricships.org.uk)) is a government funded, independent body that advises the UK governments and local authorities, funding organisations and the historic ships sector on all matters relating to historic vessels in the UK and their importance as part of our heritage. It also addresses support infrastructure for historic ships, their potential in the wider economic, social and community context, and maintains a watch list of vessels abroad with UK significance.

The booklets *Making the Canal Matter Again to Exeter* and *Exeter Harbour: A New Outlook for Exeter Canal Basin*, published in 2020 and 2021 by the Friends of Exeter Ship Canal ([friendsofexetershipcanal.co.uk](http://friendsofexetershipcanal.co.uk)), comprehensively outline the possibilities for the canal and basin as a working Heritage Harbour. They make the recommendation that ECQT and the City Council should work together towards promoting and achieving common objectives.

Brian Corbett of MHT gave an introductory talk in March 2022 to the Heritage Harbour Group on the aspirations of Heritage Harbours and what the designation entails in practical terms. This will be expanded at a later date to a wider presentation to a comprehensive breadth of stakeholders.

Heritage Harbour is not yet a statutory designation, nor were there many previous examples for reference. Exeter's was only the fourth nomination since the scheme was established – which was a recognition of Exeter's potential. MHT and Historic Ships UK are setting up a nationwide group to promote the development of heritage harbours.<sup>1</sup>

### Vision statement and key objectives of the Heritage Harbour scheme

Drawing on similar initiatives in Europe, we seek to recognise the value ageing ports and harbours still have today. Often located in urban areas, there is potential to breathe new life into existing historic buildings; moorings; maintenance facilities; and waste land. We think that a 'Heritage Harbour' should reflect the story of an area's maritime heritage; offer a safe haven for local and visiting historic vessels; and connect with the local community.

Details on the National Historic Ships UK website, <https://nationalhistoricships.org.uk>

A key feature of the Heritage Harbour ambition for Exeter is its commitment to the long-term evolution of a busy working harbourside for the city rather than a series of one-off promotions.

## **Exeter Heritage Harbour in context**

Supporters of maritime heritage and owners of historic and traditional vessels, who were contacted through National Historic Ships and Maritime Heritage Trust, have already shown considerable enthusiasm for the physical, cultural and operational advantages of Exeter Ship Canal and Basin.

The waterway benefits from

- accessible and secure sites for restorations and re-fits, and calm moorings
- recognition of the potential for bringing new life to the harbourside and maintaining the operational capacities of the canal
- generally well-cared for stock of historic waterside buildings, although predominantly in non-maritime use
- infrastructure such as locks and banks in generally good condition
- multiple committed stakeholders including users, businesses, water sports and residents, who care deeply for the future of the area and activity on the water.

But to secure the potential for the future and make the most of maritime revival, these advantages will have to be improved, diversified and promoted collectively.

The number and variety of stakeholders, and the various strategies and visions put forward officially and otherwise for the canal and basin, mean that the single most challenging aspect of the Route Map is to arrive at a direction that a) succeeds in meeting as many as possible of the key aspirations; and b) lays out a method for achieving this flexibly enough to be realistic and allow for sufficient review. So one of the immediate actions necessary is to establish commonly accepted aims in terms of the specific projects to underpin the Heritage Harbour.

The way of the Route Map is therefore to:

- Achieve agreement on a structure for ongoing monitoring and responsibility for promoting the Route Map's aims
- Identify projects, improvements, initiatives and activities that will establish and maintain a working and active heritage harbour
- Support delivery of short and long term projects, promotion and evaluation, including addressing funding and building partnerships as required
- Establish channels of communication and consultation with those with responsibility for the waterway and other stakeholders
- Suggest a timescale and overall strategy for achieving all these.

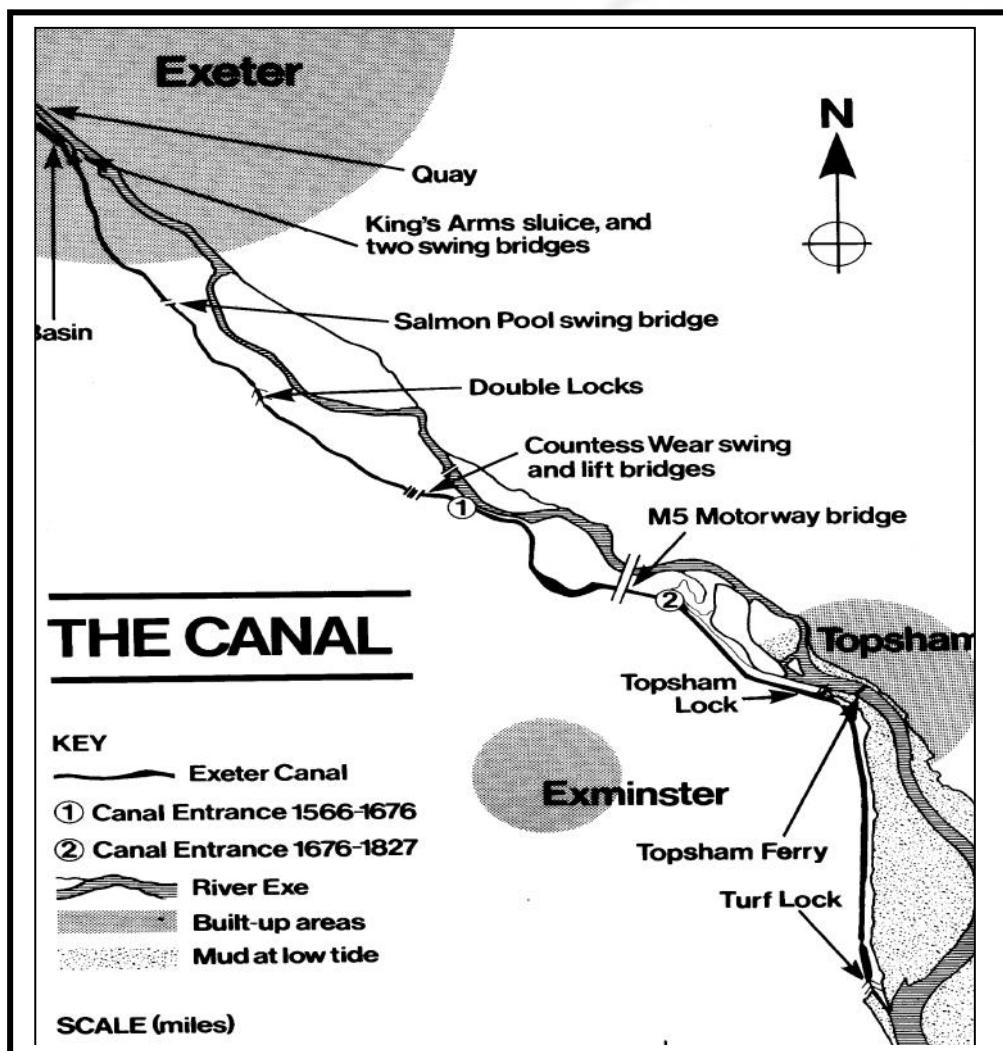
### **Smaller projects**

It is likely that smaller, short-term projects towards promoting and consolidating the Heritage Harbour will be more activities-based. They can often inform and strengthen the business case for larger schemes through acting as trials of larger-scale activity and are a good way also of trialling partnerships with external organisations with a view to building long-term relationships and outcomes.

Running smaller projects engages communities, users and stakeholders by bringing in their expertise, knowledge and acumen as advocates of the Heritage Harbour, as well as canvasses visitor feedback. Partnerships with special-interest maritime networks will contribute towards raising the profile of Exeter nationally as a Heritage Harbour and create working momentum (i.e., the 'provide it and they will come' approach).

### The Heritage Harbour area

The extent of the Heritage Harbour designation is not formal in the sense, for example, a conservation area is, i.e. there are no firm boundaries to what is and is not included. The canal & basin (named in the designation) make up the heart of the Heritage Harbour. However, given that the estuary and harbours of the River Exe as far as the sea off Exmouth combine with the canal and the quayside to make up the Port of Exeter, the designation is also to be understood in terms of this wider area.



Its geographical extent is considerable and the opportunities legion. Through focussing on the central City area, wider benefits will also be felt and the potential of the whole can be explored and opened up.

### Consultation and working with others

The Route Map is a 'direction of travel'. Progress entails the need for detailed consultation. Consultation and feedback are win-win processes in taking the Route Map forwards. They are the route to winning hearts and minds for initiatives and changes; and the way to learn from and harness others' knowledge and experience of the waterway.

The maritime sector is changing. By being involved in maritime networks, such as National Historic Ships' Shipshape Network, Exeter Heritage Harbour will not only become known as an active player but can also respond to opportunities that arise.

Investment of time and resource will be required at this end, highlighting the importance of willingness and commitment among users, stakeholders and volunteers to see the waterway thrive.

Inclusion of ECQT's Programme Co-ordinator as a member of the Exeter Heritage Harbour Group enabled a collaborative link with ECQT events. Assuming that the group continues to exist in some form beyond the production of this Route Map, continuing engagement with officers of the City Council and ECQT will ensure cross-referencing across departments and reduce the risks of missing key inputs.

Stakeholders and user groups are critical to the future also. They are an extremely broad group overall. The heritage harbour ambition is to include businesses, communities and amenity groups in those who are engaged and informed supporters of, and contributors to, the waterway's revival.

All this underlines why efficient communications and promotion are essential, both generally to keep the whole stakeholder network and the public informed, but also, in more depth, as specific projects are put forward. The scale of consultation may be extensive or limited to a narrower field. There are particular activities in the Route Map that will require very specific engagement with a stakeholder community. They include sail cargo to bring goods by water to Exeter, which requires the participation of local businesses in order to be successful.

## **The Route Map in detail**

The Route Map's aim is to bring about a busy, vibrant and well-promoted waterway and harbourside for Exeter that looks to the future, is an environmentally sustainable contribution to net zero, and will deliver an improved asset full of benefit and interest for all.

Maritime heritage is part of Exeter.

The Route Map will be useful as long as it is seen as a live document that sets a general direction. It is to be consulted, reviewed and adapted as opportunities evolve, partnerships grow, and different challenges arise.

It is not restricted to the possibilities it outlines. As such, the Route Map marks the start of maritime tradition returning to Exeter and a working renewal of its waterway heritage.

### **How the proposals are set out**

The Route Map sets out, for each proposal, a project description and an indication of timescale and priority. It includes projects for the short (0-3 years), medium (3-10 years), and long (10–20 years) terms. Every project will take into account evaluation of previous activity, as well as new opportunities, emerging partnerships and changed circumstances.

Rather than dividing projects into short, medium, and long-term, the timescale of each is considered within the whole lifetime of the Route Map (i.e., 0–20 years).

There is a suggestion for a paid Co-ordinator role to be included in the first short-term period of the Route Map if this resource is fundable and could support progress. The creation or otherwise of the

role will be a decision at the start of the Route Map. Progress is not dependent on appointing paid staff but the inclusion or otherwise of the role will determine the level of voluntary resources required.

	Project/Activity	Description	Timescale
1	Heritage Harbour Group	<p>Establish a framework for taking the Route Map forwards, reviewing progress and updating the programme.</p> <p>Establish a dedicated body (either the existing Heritage Harbour Group or another) to undertake this. This is fundamental to the timetable and resource with which the Route Map can be progressed.</p> <p>Establish channels of communication with Exeter City Council, the Harbour Board and Harbour Master, ECQT and other stakeholders, users and communities.</p> <p>Consider a fixed-term co-ordinator post to develop initial ideas and sources of funding.</p> <p>Consider how volunteer resources could be used in support of the Route Map and Heritage Harbour objectives.</p>	Immediate; ongoing
2	Communications	<p>Prepare a communication plan to win 'hearts and minds' and keep all interested parties engaged and informed about the Route Map's projects and progress.</p> <p>Use all available media as well as an ongoing email 'postbox' to gather ideas.</p> <p>Integrate communications with releases from other stakeholders.</p>	Immediate; ongoing
3	Networking plan	<p>Prepare a networking plan to ensure that the Route Map and the aims of the Heritage Harbour are introduced, explained and represented in a co-ordinated way.</p> <p>Use networks to maintain and create contacts and partnerships within Exeter and outside.</p>	Immediate ongoing

		<p>Use networking to increase the reputation of Exeter as a proactive maritime destination and place to visit.</p>	
4	Promotion	<p>Consider and consult on how the Heritage Harbour and its attractions for all can be publicized and promoted locally, regionally and nationally.</p> <p>Set up a framework for co-ordinating and reviewing comprehensive and targeted promotion of the canal and basin and boatyard and maritime facilities.</p> <p>Investigate the case for reduced fees to attract traditionally built and heritage vessels.</p> <p>Investigate and consult on the resource and funding implications of a dedicated website to underpin promotion with up-to-date information and timetables for using and visiting the canal and basin, heritage harbour attractions, visiting historic boats, convoys and other events.</p> <p>Promote Exeter through taking a leading role in developing the heritage harbour concept at all levels.</p>	Immediate ongoing
5	Bring forward proposals for returning waterside buildings to waterway-related use	<p>Liaise with ECQT over the potential for a review of lettings policy to encourage maritime activities and businesses.</p> <p>This includes flexibility for spaces for maritime pop-up and short-term uses.</p>	Immediate ongoing
6	Historic vessel restoration at the East Quay of the basin	<p>Aim to consolidate quickly a highly visual, spirit-of-place element of traditional boatbuilding/restoration at the basin.</p> <p>Develop detailed proposals for restoration to be carried out on an historic vessel on the East Quay of the basin in 2023-2024.</p> <p>Establish, and consult on, a plan to implement the proposals.</p>	2023 – 2024 Ongoing thereafter

		<p>Other aims and outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attraction of long-term residencies of traditional boats overwintering or working out of the basin;</li> <li>- building partnerships with owners, funders and marine-related businesses, employers and training providers;</li> <li>- recognition of the potential for education, training and work opportunities;</li> <li>- connect with people through events and trips and visits on board.</li> </ul>	
7	Prepare a small project relating to the historic crane on the basin's East Quay	<p>Develop a detailed and funded restoration/conservation project for the historic crane on the basin's East Quay which will also see it part of an ongoing programme of interpretation and community heritage engagement.</p> <p>Involve schools and other groups in developing the project.</p> <p>Progress will be dependent on a viability study to establish if relocation is desirable/ feasible.</p>	Short to medium term
8	Attract boat building to the canal and basin, especially projects by newly established boat builders	<p>Identify and investigate possibilities for making spaces, including workshops, available on favourable short-term and longer lets for emerging boat builders, especially boat building academy graduates, and for one-off projects.</p> <p>Include community engagement and craft and skills demonstrations in return.</p> <p>Consult and liaise with established boat builders and boat building academies and with further education providers.</p>	Immediate, medium and long term project
9	Firmly position the Heritage Harbour and Exeter's maritime revival on the cultural map of Exeter	<p>Consolidate the message that a working maritime heritage is part of Exeter.</p> <p>In liaison with other programmes and organisations, co-ordinate regular and frequent small-scale and complimentary events—walks, shanty singing, demonstrations of maritime crafts, visiting vessels, children's activities—to tie in with existing attractions such as Heritage Open Days.</p> <p>Contribute maritime themed talks, displays and events to others' programmes, such as at the Custom House and in association with</p>	Ongoing programme

		<p>schools, clubs, interest groups and local theatrical companies.</p>	
10	Celebrate the harbour and canal with larger festivals on and off the water	<p>In addition to the small-scale activities above, consult on an annual or bi-annual Canal and Harbour Festival, Cavalcade or Carnival to become a major city and regional attraction.</p> <p>Investigate resource and funding implications.</p>	When resources allow
11	Bring in visiting historic and traditionally built vessels	<p>Attract historic and beautifully crafted traditional vessels to berth, re-fit or undergo restoration. Research whereabouts of suitable vessels needing a harbour and initiate discussions with vessel owners in liaison with the Harbour Master.</p> <p>Consult on the case for increasing the attractiveness through reductions in fees, accompanied by targeted, competitive marketing.</p> <p>Encourage engagement with the public and specialised interest groups during a vessel's stay.</p> <p>Build long-term relationships and partnerships with vessel owners and with maritime heritage organisations, e.g. Shipshape.</p> <p>The aim is to build momentum and promote Exeter as an exciting 'new' maritime destination.</p>	Immediate ongoing
12	Host conferences	<p>In conjunction with National Historic Ships UK, host a South West regional conference and networking event.</p>	Occasionally
13	Feasibility studies of canalside sites for marine activities	<p>Identify sites adjoining the canal suitable for operational uses such as boat yards, slipways, craneage, boat building, lay-up and re-fit, managed short and long term berths, and 'green' holiday/visitor moorings, and explore their feasibility and business potential</p> <p>In consultation and liaison with principal stakeholders, undertake feasibility appraisals and develop business cases.</p> <p>Explore funding to carry out such appraisals.</p>	Ongoing

14	A canal management, information and community hub at the basin	<p>Undertake a feasibility assessment for a welcoming, accessible Harbour and Canal Centre and hub at the basin to replace the present canal office for management and information for visitors.</p> <p>Facilities such as toilets, showers and waste disposal from boats should be integral to the scheme.</p> <p>Flexible space for community-inclusive activities such as a studio/gallery and meeting room should be included.</p> <p>Services available at the Canal Centre should be supported by a dedicated canal website (see Promotion above).</p>	Begin as soon as practical
15	Establish the contributions the waterway can make to net zero	<p>Consider and consult on a viability study to establish the place of the canal and harbour in a net zero future that will bring sustainable benefits to people's well-being and Exeter's economy.</p> <p>Investigate funding for the study or studies.</p> <p>Encourage schemes for: more boats to be electrically powered; adequate numbers of charging points; conversion of organic port waste to bio fuel; zero emission freight carriage, e.g., through sail cargo schemes; berths for 'green' holiday moorings; and promotion of electrically powered water transport, taxis and pleasure boat trips.</p>	Ongoing
16	Ongoing evaluation and periodic review	Build in ongoing evaluation and carry out reviews of progress at least every six months to maintain the momentum of the Route Map.	Ongoing
17	Topsham Lock mini-hub	<p>Develop as soon as circumstances allow a proposal for a canal mini-hub at Topsham Lock, centred on a sound plan for Topsham Lock Cottage that combines operational use by the Harbour Master's staff, involvement of volunteers, and a base for the council-run Topsham Ferry service.</p> <p>Investigate funding for the secure conservation of Topsham Lock Cottage.</p>	As soon as practical

		<p>Features of the mini-hub would include heritage and environmental interpretation; educational and bird watching visits by boat; carbon zero holiday moorings; berthing on the east bank of the canal.</p> <p>Investigate and consult on the viability and advantages of restoring Topsham Lock. This to include the possibility of large-scale funding, and the involvement of organised canal restoration volunteers, such as through the Inland Waterways Association (IWA).</p>	
18	Prepare for increased headroom beneath the bridges over the canal at Bridge Road (A379).	<p>Maintain all possible pressure to secure increased headroom beneath the moveable bridges over the canal on the A379 that will allow more boats to navigate the canal and reach the heritage harbour without the bridges needing to be opened.</p> <p>Monitor and liaise over the progress of Devon County Council's funding application to the Department for Transport to replace the bridges.</p> <p>Promote the safety and environmental benefits of the scheme to pedestrians, cyclists and traffic.</p> <p>Draw up and consult on ways to prepare in advance for the outcomes of this 'game-changer' for canal navigation (see also Waterborne Freight, No. 23 below).</p> <p>Ensure no new fixed bridges are built over the canal (see No. 21 below).</p>	Immediate ongoing
19	Bridges and locks to be electrically operated	<p>Consider and consult on the feasibility and advantages of upgrading existing bridges and locks from manually to electrically operated to aid navigation and boater-operation.</p> <p>The costs involved would make this a long-term project better achieved a step at a time. Initial consideration of the desirability will be beneficial, especially if new bridges are planned across the canal.</p>	Ongoing
20	Slipways	Investigate new slipways that would be beneficial for attracting new traffic to the canal and basin.	Immediate start then ongoing

		<p>Slipways for access in and out of the canal for vessels of all sizes are generally inadequate or non-existent. The current basin slipway is not fit for purpose.</p> <p>Make an immediate start on an audit of slipways and access points on the canal to identify requirements, potential locations and the business case. Consult fully with users and stakeholders. Develop proposals including options for funding and construction carried out by volunteers, e.g., through the IWA.</p> <p>A facility such as a patent cradle slipway could draw vessels and skills to the area. This would be a major investment for which clear need and project viability would have to be demonstrated.</p>	
21	Cranage	<p>Cranage in and out of the water is essential to bring vessels to the harbour for re-fit, restoration and lay-up. It is also essential for removal of unsafe vessels or in emergencies, e.g., a boat sinking.</p> <p>Make an immediate start on an audit of current and potential cranage sites in order to assess requirements and develop proposals and timescale.</p> <p>Consult on flexible arrangements such as crane pads.</p>	Immediate start, then ongoing
22	Waterborne freight: passenger, leisure and cargo	<p>Make the gradual return of low carbon impact waterborne freight a focus of Exeter's waterway revival.</p> <p>Promote the commercial, cultural and tourist attractions for the harbour and the City's image of waterborne cargo, passenger, leisure services.</p> <p>Begin consultations to establish enthusiasm among existing operators, local outlets and producers, and stakeholder and community groups.</p> <p>Initial opportunities include local supplies for markets and catering establishments to be landed at the basin, and landing of shellfish on certain days. Investigate the potential for sail cargo schemes to deliver cargo from further afield, zero carbon, to Exeter.</p>	Ongoing

		<p>Investigate options for public transport including combined bus and ferry tickets.</p> <p>Consult on and explore the immediate and longer-term feasibility of water bus/water taxi services on the length of the canal, with hop on–hop off points including for Marsh Barton railway station and the Topsham Ferry.</p>	
23	Strengthen links between the heart of the city and the waterway.	<p>Consult and offer input to plans to improve connectivity, signage and public transport between the city centre and the quays and waterway.</p> <p>An integrated, well-signed and accessible route from the centre would help ‘unlock’ access to the waterside.</p> <p>Generate maritime heritage input to basin and quayside circular walks; longer day-trails via canal, river and paths; and cultural events and activities for families and children.</p>	Ongoing
24	And a reminder ...	That living near a regenerated urban canal is good for life expectancy, mental and physical health, interest and engagement, and all-round fitness and well-being.	Always

## Summary of next steps

### First priorities

The Route Map’s aim for a working and varied Heritage Harbour will take time and critically resource for EHHG to progress. It will require a focused mindset, as well as an open-mindedness that can take the considerable knowledge and enthusiasm of existing stakeholders and harness them so they can better support and promote the concepts of the Route Map.

An initial list of priorities is summarised below:

- A     **Establish the future make-up of Exeter Heritage Harbour Group and its channels of communication with Exeter City Council, Exeter Harbour Board and ECQT** – this is critical to agreeing priorities, execution, consultation, and maintaining momentum in order to develop ideas contained in the Route Map.
  
- B     **Develop initial priorities:**
  - i     **Trial Harbour Festival 2023** – trial a range of lively waterside activities and initiate relationships with owners of historic and traditional vessels as well as gain opportunities for feedback and evaluation.

- ii     **Investigate** the potential for a vibrant hub for canal management and community and visitor involvement and information at the heart of the basin.
- iii    **Historic and traditional vessels visits and moorings** – that will add interest to the canal and basin, and build relationships with vessel owners, in particular those wishing to develop a longer-term partnership.
- iv     **Traditional vessel restoration** – to contribute to the development and promotion of traditional maritime skills and potential apprenticeship schemes; create visible dynamism throughout the harbour and in particular pursue development of the basin's East Quay as a traditional vessel restoration site; and to attract vessel owners, businesses and heritage organisations to Exeter canal and basin and the wider area.
- v      **Topsham Lock Cottage (below)** – support and contribute as required towards a sound and appropriate business plan for the cottage, taking into account the ongoing conservation requirements of the building, its use by the Harbour Master's staff and the council-run Topsham Ferry, and the contribution of volunteers.



- vi     **Waterside lettings policy review** – urge ECQT to consider and implement a plan for maritime businesses at the basin, as well as for facilitating short-term 'pop-ups' for maritime uses or traditional skills or similar.
- vii    **Review proposals for development** – by identifying and advising on proposed developments that might impinge on the Heritage Harbour and the Route Map's proposals and aims.

#### **The first consideration: Exeter Heritage Harbour Group**

The first consideration is the Exeter Heritage Harbour Group. The progression of every activity thereafter will be defined by the structure of the EHHG, its meeting and reporting schedules, and the way it organises itself to take the Route Map forwards.

The EHHG in whatever form it takes must be prepared collectively to take on the role of Heritage Harbour 'champions,' to represent the interests of the group through the communications and networking strategies, and to review and adapt the Route Map plan as heritage harbour activities develop.

### **Focus**

Whether it is to meet the need for the well-being of local communities, add a new dimension to appreciation of Exeter as a maritime city, support historic and traditional vessels and the return of traditional maritime skills and crafts, or put Exeter back on the wider maritime map, the useful waterway can only be achieved by careful and focused planning and management of its operational needs and of the area around it. The Route Map aims to contribute to this.

### **Timetable**

The timetable must be coherent and ‘stagger’ activity so it is realistic and achievable and subject to external variables. There is cumulative impact to be gained: projects will successively support and reinforce the broader aims in a complementary fashion. As some opportunities recede or become difficult to progress, there will undoubtedly be others that emerge to pursue.

### **Resource**

The Route Map represents a major voluntary commitment of time and commitment by EHHG or its successor. The inclusion of the suggestion for finding funding for a single year of a .5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Co-ordinator post does not mean it is essential to progressing the Route Map. It may be desirable to support activities through existing staff, or EHHG and other volunteer time, or through temporary consultant support – or a mixture of all these. This needs to be an early consideration.

### **Vision**

Much is said and written about ‘Vision’ when reports such as this are prepared and considered. The Route Map identifies a goal and a way to get there. Its guiding principle is: Have the right aims and the right steps will follow.