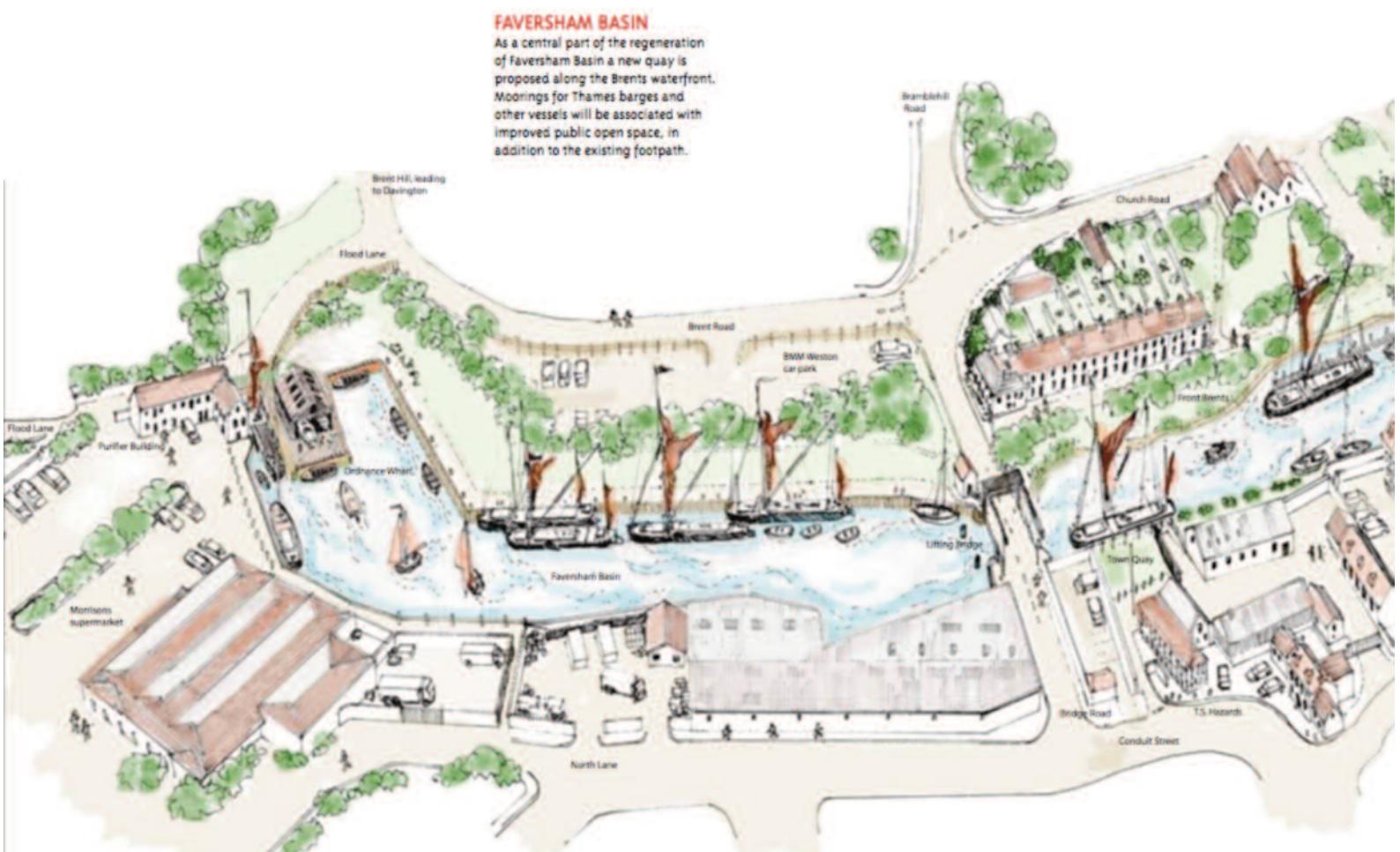


OUR VISION FOR FAVERSHAM CREEK



FAVERSHAM BASIN

As a central part of the regeneration of Faversham Basin a new quay is proposed along the Brents waterfront. Moorings for Thames barges and other vessels will be associated with improved public open space, in addition to the existing footpath.

This document expresses the vision of the Faversham community for the Bridge and Basin, giving evidence for the need and desirability of an opening bridge.

The basin represents nearly two acres of lost opportunity right in the town centre. We envisage a bustling and accessible waterfront offering

opportunity to residents and visitors alike. It would become a focal point generating and promoting local employment and tourism, training and enterprise.

The economic and social potential of the Creek Basin can ONLY be unlocked with an opening bridge.



Vision

- New opening bridge – essential for maritime access and stimulation of activity in the Basin.
- Safe pedestrian access across the creek, uniting both sides of the town.
- Employment opportunities especially for local residents including those on the North Preston Estate, which has suffered from long-term neglect and under-investment. See summary report on NPE. **Appendix 1**
- Basin in full use, new wharves and moorings, slipway, public access.
- Boats especially barges attracting visitors, consequent economic benefits to the town.
- Thames sailing barges berthed in the Basin for winter repair and maintenance See Business case 2014. **Appendix 2**
- Ship-wrighting, boatbuilding, rigging, sailmaking, repair and maintenance conserving important heritage skills through apprenticeships, training etc. Already successfully demonstrated but needing more space and investment. See summary report from Faversham Creek Trust. **Appendix 3**
- Regional, national and international tourist destination, cf Sandwich, Maldon, Salford, Birmingham, Ipswich, etc where new quays have proved transformational, consistently attracting visitors. **Appendix 4**
- Local benefit – focal point for community activities, Sea Cadets, water-skills, rowing and sailing clubs etc.
- Heritage and historic interest in gunpowder, Cinque Ports, etc visible in the Basin. See Harrison's report 2015. **Appendix 5**



ABOVE LEFT Apprentice boatbuilders at work in the Purifier Building. Reviving the upper creek opens up new opportunities to expand training and employment

TOP Boat building is today constrained by lack of space

ABOVE Local fishermen need their landing rights restored

FRONT PAGE Drawing by Ben White

● The creek is the town's most sought-after destination according to local shopkeepers and traders. (See 2013 survey) **Appendix 6** An opening bridge and resulting enlivened water front at the Basin will fulfil visitor expectations and contribute to the town's economic regeneration, and the county's attractiveness.

● Shepherd Neame are investing in a new tourist-friendly glass wall for their bottling plant right alongside the bridge road beside the creek, according to MD Jonathan Neame (Chairman of Visit Kent) in a public talk (2018).

● Enhance the whole area.



Present challenges and difficulties

- The town's stark social and economic divisions are symbolised by the creek's neglect. Faversham is divided in two by the creek, with consequent isolation, extreme poverty and deprivation in North Preston Estate See summary of Optivo report. **Appendix 7**
- The existing bridge contributes to these problems – it is the only crossing, but it is dangerous with very narrow footpaths: wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs must use the carriageway.
- Legal right of navigation to the head of creek is impeded. What is the remedy?
- Need for public access around the waterfront, and a launching slipway into the Basin is needed for people to use their boats.
- Local inshore fishermen have nowhere to unload their catches despite statutory requirements. (1721, 1953, 1968)
- Many Thames sailing barges need winter berths. See FTC Outline Business Case for the Basin, 2014.
- Sea Cadets need proper facilities – present base in TS Hasard unsuitable.
- Visiting vessels need moorings, toilets and washing facilities.
- The annual Nautical Festival is diminished through lack of moorings.
- The Basin is an ugly, neglected, depressing, wasted space, littered and vandalised.
- An opening bridge is essential to unlock the benefits listed in the Vision.

Community support for a new bridge

- The Faversham community demonstrated remarkable support for a new opening bridge, enabling Faversham Creek Trust's campaign to raise £125,000 in five months towards costs of a new bridge.
- This support continues unflagging over several years.
- 2000 people signed the Where's Our Bridge? petition.
- Five hundred people attended a meeting (Nov 2019) in the parish church for Kent County Council's Leader Cll. Paul Carter to hear the community's case for an opening bridge and report on what the council was doing.
- In a referendum the Neighbourhood Plan was passed because Swale Borough Council's support for a new bridge was made contingent on its endorsement.

This document has been prepared with contributions from Faversham Creek Trust, Where's Our Bridge?, the Brents Community Association (for NPE) and the Faversham Society. We have referenced material from The Kentish Sail Association, Medway and Swale Boating Association, Old Gaffers Association, the Association of Bargemen **Appendix 8** and National Historic Ships.

Appendices

We have attached a number of appendices some of which are referenced above, and some provide useful background information. (**Appendix 5+9**)

- 1** Optivo report NPE.
- 2** Business case (Dickinson) Jan 2014 Creek Business Case for the repair and maintenance of traditional vessels in Faversham Creek, Faversham Town Council.
- 3** Creek Trust report on boat-building in Purifier Building.
- 4** Suzanne Moore article - Ipswich effect.
- 5** J Ray Harrison Sept 2015, Part Conservation Area Appraisal, Faversham Creek pool and Ordnance Wharf, report for Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants.
- 6** 2013 survey of shopkeepers.
- 7** Summary of NPE report.
- 8** Letter from the Association of Bargemen.
- 9** Eldon Hinchliffe, Basin map and data.



The Creek basin in its heyday