

BRUNEL SWIVEL BRIDGE NEWS

July 2026



THE REGIONAL MAYOR VISITS THE SWIVEL BRIDGE

On 23rd July we were pleased to explain our restoration plans to some of the key people in whose hands the future of the Swivel Bridge lies. Mayor Helen Godwin (centre) and Emma Blackham, Executive Director of Transport (right) from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) control regional transport with a focus on active travel. The Bridge will form an important part of the local walking and cycling networks.

Councillor Andrew Brown (left), Chair of Bristol City's Economy and Skills Policy Committee and of the Harbour Committee who are responsible for the Bridge, and will have to approve final plans for its restoration.

We also welcomed Jerome Tait, English Heritage's Historic Places and Listing Advisor (second from the left), and Swivel Bridge Group Trustee Simon Hickman, (second from the right).

BRISTOL CITY SUPPORT FOR THE SWIVEL BRIDGE

We have received a letter of qualified support from three Bristol City Committee Chairs:

- **Tony Dyer**, Council Leader and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee
- **Ed Plowden**, Chair of the Transport and Connectivity Committee.
- **Andrew Brown**, Chair of the Economy and Skills Policy Committee and also chairs the Harbour Committee.

The letter dated 26th June from the Council Leader's office reads:

We welcome the opportunity to consider your proposals and would like to begin by recognising the clear enthusiasm and commitment behind your efforts to bring the bridge back into use. While we are supportive of the principle of restoration, we do have some important considerations to highlight, particularly in relation to the prospect of reinstating the bridge to full operational functionality.

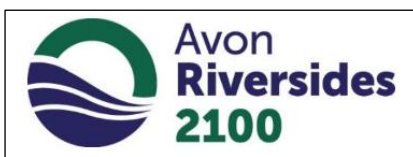
The letter goes on to explain the Harbour Authority's legal duties, the importance of mechanical reliability, and the need to provide for ongoing maintenance. These matters are already being addressed in our plans, but it is helpful to have them clearly stated.

The letter continues:

Notwithstanding these concerns, we would like to express our continued commitment to working in partnership with the Brunel Swivel Bridge Group. We welcome ongoing engagement and look forward to maintaining a constructive dialogue as your plans and proposals for the restoration develop.

We would appreciate it if you could keep us updated on your progress and any emerging plans. Thank you for your continued efforts, and we look forward to staying in touch.

AVON RIVERSIDES 2100



Avon Riversides 2100 is Bristol City Council's long-term project to protect communities from flooding along the River Avon while enhancing the riverside for all.

We met Matthew Sugden, Senior Project Manager, on site. Matthew subsequently wrote:

'Delivering enhanced heritage spaces is one of the project's strategic objectives so I think there's strong potential to deliver on that in this area.'

We look forward to working with Matthew and his team, including Jacobs project managers who are developing the flood defences project. The new defence will run close to the Swivel Bridge, and over the Replica Bridge, both Grade 2* Listed structures.

For more information about Avon Riversides 2100 see www.avonriversides.co.uk
You can e-mail your views to them at avonriversides@bristol.gov.uk

HISTORIC ENGLAND on the FLOOD RISK STRATEGY

Avon Riversides 2100 builds on previous work. Looking back to February 2021 Bristol City Council's Avon Flood Risk Management Strategy included a Strategic Environmental Assessment Consultation Report. To view it please [CLICK HERE](#)

Historic England were statutory consultees, and submitted the following response:

We would encourage proposals for flood defence works around the Cumberland Basin to be used to bring forward proposals for the restoration of the Grade II listed swing bridge, to bring it back into use and secure its removal from the Heritage at Risk register. We would also encourage any plans to better interpret the South Entrance Dock and improve its setting.*

Bristol City's response was:

At the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage consideration will be given to this as part of the refinement of the defence designs and alignments, including integration of regeneration and placemaking opportunities.

HARBOUR FESTIVAL 2026



The Swivel Bridge Group participated in the Harbour Festival on Saturday 18th July.

We put on an engaging photographic exhibition about the heritage assets around the Cumberland Basin and the Knuckle, and displayed a number of artefacts from the Swivel Bridge, including a giant spanner used to (attempt to) unscrew the central adjuster, and the wooden patten for a turntable wheel.

Visitors were able to view the interesting underground early 20th century hydraulic jiggers that once turned the Bridge, and adults could climb onto the deck under supervision.

Visitor numbers in the afternoon were sufficient to keep three volunteers busy guiding, but it was clear looking across Cumberland Basin to Merchants Road (Junction Lock) Bridge that Festival-goers were walking as far as Underfall Yard, and then returning eastwards towards the City Centre.

Clearly the challenge for the City Council, and us, is to persuade people to walk 10 minutes further westwards to view the amazing heritage at the Entrance Locks. We can help.

SS GREAT BRITAIN PROJECT RE-BRANDS



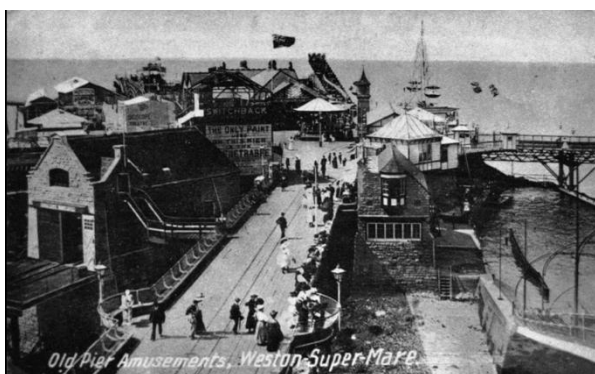
The SS Great Britain trust has changed the name of its operation to *Bristol Dockyards*.

This recognises that they hold a title to Albion Dockyard, occupy the Great Western Dock, and aim to tell a wider story than that of the Ship alone. However, it has caused some objection from folk who have misinterpreted the change as renaming the *Ship*!

To view their new website [CLICK HERE](#)

We wish our SS Great Britain friends success with their new image in these financially challenging times.

BIRNBECK PIER



This image is from 1910 shows how active the famous 1867 pier in Weston Super Mare was.

Designed by the famous Eugenius Birch, it became derelict and demolition was planned. However, the vision and persistence of a small number of people in North Somerset Council and Historic England led to a £20million funding package being put together, and restoration is now well under way. [CLICK HERE](#)

Can you think of another piece of local, Victorian iron infrastructure being saved by a small number of enthusiastic individuals? We wish the Pier well, but we wonder why the Swivel Bridge's future relies on a voluntary charity, while the Pier is being cared for by public bodies.

SWIVEL BRIDGE FUND-RAISING VIDEO

Our new fund-raising video is on our website, featuring Dr. Jonathan Foyle, [CLICK HERE](#) to view, or scan the QR code below, or you can view it on YouTube [CLICK HERE](#)

PLEASE DONATE TOWARDS THE SWIVEL BRIDGE RESTORATION VIA THE WEBSITE OR TO:
Metrobank Sort: 23-05-80, Acct. name: Brunel Swivel Bridge Group. Acct. No: 56433724

THANK YOU, WE GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT ! Geoff Wallis
Secretary, Brunel Swivel Bridge Group is a CIO, Charity No: 1214276



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