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Sailing Replica of the Cutty Sark Could be Built in Govan

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Govan-based Clyde Docks Preservation Initiative (CDPI) is in talks with an international team of replica ship builders who are looking for a site to build a fully working and sailing replica of the tea clipper Cutty Sark.

The Cutty Sark team are keen to build the replica on the River Clyde - as close as possible to the location of the original Cutty Sark construction at William Denny & Bros Shipyard in Dumbarton. The aim is to launch the replica in 2019 if possible, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the launch of the original Cutty Sark, which is now on permanent display in a converted dry dock at Greenwich in London.

Although other sites throughout Europe are possible options, including on the South Coast of England, the preferred option is to build the replica in one of the dry docks at Govan Graving Docks in Glasgow, the site that CDPI is proposing to restore as a maritime park / centre.

The long-term objective for CDPI is to restore the dry docks fully to working order. They are confident that a suitable temporary fix can be made to seal No. 2 dry dock at Govan and drain it with portable pumping systems to prepare it for the Cutty Sark replica team's build project. This will feed into the ongoing consultation process and the CDPI team believe it will strengthen the case for full dry dock restoration to enable use for other replica build or historic ship repair and maintenance projects in the future.

CDPI is in the process of seeking to acquire the graving docks site with the intention of putting it into the ownership of a dedicated charity. They are confident that the prospect of building a Cutty Sark replica in Govan will be the catalyst to get more traction and vital political support behind longer-term objectives for preserving the docks as a maritime and leisure site.

The Cutty Sark team are keen to involve local volunteers in their project and that is something CDPI and their local partner organisations are able to support them with through their established networks. CDPI works very closely with local charity Fablevision which provides skills development for long-term unemployed young people. They also work very closely with the Govan Fair (of which First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and Glasgow Lord Provost Sadie Docherty are patrons), which is celebrating its 260th anniversary this year.

The Cutty Sark replica will not be simply a museum piece for people to look at. It will be a fully working sea going ship that the team even aim to use for sustainable eco-friendly cargo transportation, tall ship races, international outreach and sail training.

The teams are confident they can galvanise the maritime/marine and leisure industries on the Clyde Corridor, as well as corporate backers and key public sector and third sector partners, behind the project.

This is a venture that would see the first major launch of an operational non-military ship on the upper Clyde since the mid 1990s when the nearby Govan shipyard was operated by Kvaerner.

