

# WATERWAYS FOR PEOPLE





# IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN WATERWAY COMMUNITIES

## A PARTNERSHIP PROSPECTUS

British Waterways is responsible for the 2,000-mile canal and river network in England, Wales and Scotland, and has been the catalyst for over £2 billion of waterside regeneration and the creation of over 20,000 jobs over the last decade. Ten million people visit the inland waterways every year, and half the population of the UK lives within five miles of an inland waterway.

We are already engaged in many successful projects for improving the quality of life for people and communities close to our waterways. We do this in partnership with a wide range of national and local organisations including Groundwork UK, the Fieldfare Trust, local authorities and charitable bodies (see page 16 for a list of organisations involved in the work mentioned). This book gives a flavour of BW's extensive activities to promote social inclusion, by describing a typical cross section of the vital work in which we and our partners are engaged in. However, we believe there is more that we can do.

**We wish to work with others** – whether from the voluntary, private or public sectors – **to develop projects that will lead to real improvements in peoples' quality of life.**



If you have any ideas for projects that would realise these aims, we would like to hear from you. There is a list of local waterway office contact details inside the back cover, and a map of our waterway network is available from our Customer Service Centre (01923 201120).

Our aims:

- to make sure that everyone in society has the chance to enjoy waterways that are attractive, safe and accessible.
- to see the waterways used as an asset and resource by groups and organisations working to overcome the different barriers that lead to social exclusion.

In particular we wish to attract greater participation and involvement in our waterways by people who may feel excluded from them – people on low incomes, people with disabilities, older people and minority ethnic communities.

We hope that, through the examples of projects already under way contained in this booklet, we can stimulate ideas and develop local partnerships that can deliver benefits for all sectors of the wider waterway community.

The government has said:

'Social exclusion is a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.'

A more straightforward definition might be that people are excluded when they fail – through no fault of their own – to take part in activities that most of the population enjoys.

We think the concept relates to British Waterways in two ways:

Firstly, not everybody in society benefits equally from the leisure and recreation benefits that local waterways provide. Four reasons have been put forward to explain this under-use:

- Stretches of poorly maintained and unattractive waterway, frequently in depressed urban areas.
- Problems of access for disabled people.
- Fear over crime and personal safety.
- A lack of appropriate activities to attract excluded groups.

Secondly, we believe that waterways have a value beyond their immediate health and leisure benefits. They can be used as a resource within projects that tackle the many different causes of exclusion, e.g. low skills, propensity to criminal or anti-social behaviour, poor levels of confidence, low levels of community esteem. Examples include:

- **Training:** working on the waterways can enhance people's skills and employment prospects.
- **Education:** where local education services are dealing with the problems of exclusion, waterways can help by bringing subjects in the national curriculum 'alive'.
- **Young people:** projects on waterways can be aimed at local young people considered 'at risk' of falling into criminal and anti-social behaviour.



- **Community:** waterways can be used to bring different sections of a community together and provide a focus for local pride.
- **Planning and consultation:** people are excluded when they are not involved in changes or developments that affect their area. Hence, community consultation linked to planning change is a valuable form of social inclusion.

Our response to these issues is:

- 1. We will work to ensure the waterways' leisure and recreation benefits are available to all.**
- 2. We will promote the use of waterways within projects addressing the causes of social exclusion.**

We are already doing much work that helps meet these twin objectives.

We are continually in search of funds to improve the physical environment of the waterways in deprived areas. The significance of this type of work was highlighted in a report published by the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council, 'The Inland Waterways: towards greater social inclusion'.

At a national level British Waterways is creating the conditions for improved access to our waterways through the 'Waterways Access for All' programme developed jointly with the Fieldfare Trust.

Through this programme we are reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure we take account of the needs of people with disabilities, implementing a programme of awareness training for staff and undertaking disability access audits and pilot projects to demonstrate good practice. We wish to extend this work in the future.

At a local level, there are many innovative projects underway. A range of these initiatives is described in the following pages. We hope this booklet will help to generate many more.

<sup>1</sup>In the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council report 'The Inland Waterways: towards greater social inclusion'.

### **British Waterways and Groundwork UK**

We have cemented a 20-year relationship with Groundwork UK, by signing a memorandum of understanding which commits both our organisations to a partnership that recognises the value canals and rivers can bring to wider regeneration strategies. Groundwork UK has a network of 40 local trusts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, working to build sustainable communities through joint environmental action. Many of the projects included in this booklet have been undertaken in partnership with Groundwork UK, and lots more will follow.

## A LOCAL ATTRACTION



- 1 Environment minister Michael Meacher congratulates school boy for naming the new litter-busting boat, 'Taranchewer'.
- 2 Improvements on towpath leading to Ellesmere Port.
- 3 Improving the River Calder.

City or countryside, everyone with a canal on their doorstep wants to enjoy the peace and tranquillity that waterways offer – the chance to 'get away from it all'. We know that, whether in an urban or a rural setting, people want canals that are attractive and well maintained. But this is not always an easy task. We know we have to put real effort into maintaining and improving the environmental quality of waterways. People's aspirations are the same wherever they live, and having a waterway network that is attractive throughout its entire length is one of the best ways to ensure that waterways really are for all.

### 1. TARANCHEWER, LONDON

In central London there is a growing emphasis on making the urban waterways a thriving part of the capital's public space. Regular graffiti removal and a new litter-busting boat, named 'Taranchewer' in a local schools' competition, are two ways in which we are making London's canals more attractive.

### 2. ELLESMERE PORT, CHESHIRE

Attractive and accessible towpaths are a simple and proven way to make waterways look better and get more life onto them. In Ellesmere Port, towpath improvements have been carried out on the towpath leading into the town from the Wirral countryside.

### 3. THE "CALDER FUTURE", YORKSHIRE

This partnership was formed from a wide selection of local businesses, community and environmental groups and the local authority. It aims to improve the environment of the River Calder between Horbury and Castleford in Yorkshire.



# SECURING THE FUTURE



Research has consistently shown that fears over personal safety can prevent some people from using our towpaths. These fears are not always a reflection of reality, but perceptions matter – and safety initiatives are another important way that British Waterways can make sure all our waterways are comfortable places to relax.

#### 4. 'EYES AND EARS' OF THE LONDON CANALS

'More eyes and ears on the towpath' is a request we often hear from urban communities near canals. In London a new project is breaking ground by setting up a series of fully trained volunteer neighbourhood wardens. They will keep tabs on what's happening along their stretch and liaise with local police.

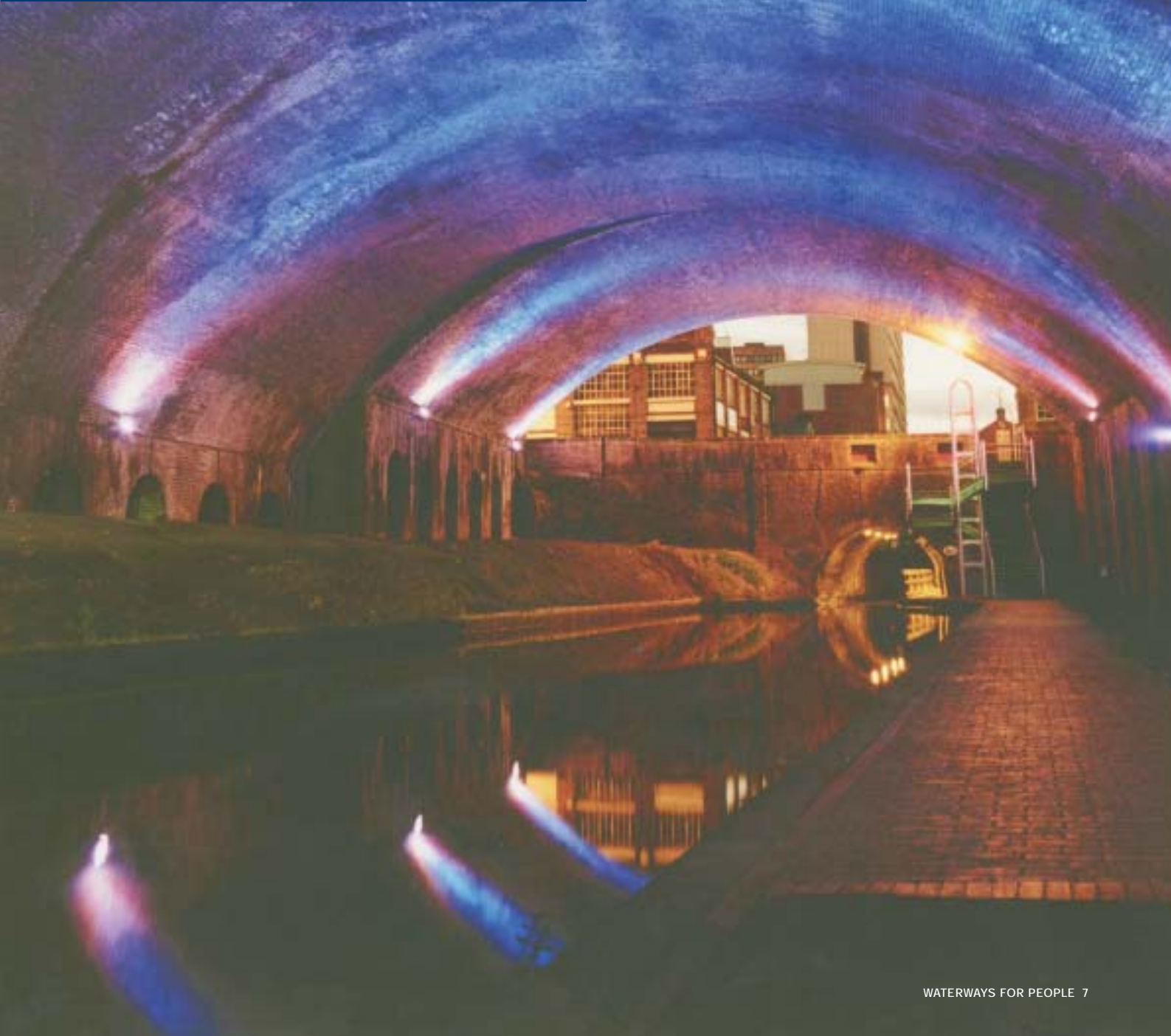
#### 5. WESTER HAILES, EDINBURGH

British Waterways Scotland is working with local community organisations to provide CCTV coverage on part of the newly-constructed Union Canal through this housing estate on the western edge of Edinburgh, whilst canal-side timber sculptures are helping to make the waterway a local landmark.

#### 6. LIGHTING UP THE JEWELLERY QUARTER, BIRMINGHAM

Laser-cut images and lighting in rich reds and blues has transformed the look of the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal near the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham. The scheme, designed by a local artist, has led to a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour in an urban area being brought to new life.

- 4. More eyes and ears on the towpaths.
- 5. Wester Hailes, Edinburgh.
- 6. Lighting up the Jewellery Quarter.



## ACCESS FOR ALL

Designed with a horse rather than a buggy or a wheelchair in mind, towpaths are not always the easiest places to reach or travel along. However, towpaths are often wide and not very steep, so can be ideal places for easy contact with the environment. Twelve million people in the UK have some form of disability, and British Waterways is working to make the waterways more accessible for them, through a national agreement with the Fieldfare Trust on access standards. This 'Access for All' standard is used to assess all new developments.



### 7. SWINTON, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

The Swinton Lock Adventure Centre in South Yorkshire has been designed to open up the waterways for adventure and discovery. Boat trips are a great escape and are very successful for people with special needs. The Adventure Centre is part of the Sobriety Project.

### 8. RATHO, EDINBURGH

Ratho is just outside Edinburgh, an easily reached rural idyll from the city. The aim of the scheme was to make it easier for groups of all abilities to visit and enjoy the site which now includes easily accessible towpaths and a car park, specially designed picnic areas, new resting places, and a sensory hedge.

### 9. GNOSALL HEALTHY TRAIL, STAFFORDSHIRE

The Gnosall trail encourages walking along the Shropshire Union Canal for people of all abilities and ages. The trail has been graded, according to the effort taken to walk different routes.



### 10. WEBSITE

The new British Waterways website at [www.britishwaterways.co.uk](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk) offers an alternative text only version of the site content. This version has been developed with visually impaired users in mind and it allows them to use their special browser readers to interpret the site. The browser reader speaks the content aloud, indicating links by changing the tone of voice.

The site complies with industry standard guidelines for accessibility set down by the World Wide Web Consortium's **Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)** and by the Centre for Applied Special Technology.

“The aim of the scheme was to make it easier for groups of all abilities to visit and enjoy.”

- 7. Swinton lock adventure centre.
- 8. Magnus Magnusson at Ratho which is making its waterways accessible to people of all abilities.
- 9. The Gnosall trail encourages walking along the Shropshire Union Canal.
- 10. The new British Waterways website.



## WINNING WIDER USE

The people who are least likely to use the waterways are much the same people who suffer from other types of exclusion in the UK today: people living in poor areas; ethnic minorities; and those with a disability. Our surveys indicate that young people tend to visit waterways less than other age groups. Improving the waterway environment, easing safety fears and making the waterway more accessible are important ways of eliminating exclusion. These methods will not always be enough. It is also important to encourage people to visit the waterways. We aim to achieve this by encouraging more community involvement with the waterways – and also by recognising that certain local canals need to be brought to life and become vibrant places.





#### 11. LABURNUM BOAT CLUB, LONDON

Based on the Regent's Canal in Hackney, London, the Laburnum Boat Club offers canoeing and sailing for children and young people, and carries out watersports training with unemployed people.

#### 12. TIVIDALE, MIDLANDS

Britain's National Hindu Temple is under construction on a canalside site at Tividale in the Black Country. The Temple Trust, Sandwell Health Authority and British Waterways have been running projects to tap into the canal memories of local people.

#### 13. YOUNG BOATERS CLUB

'The Young Boaters Club' was formed in November 2000 by a group of young canal enthusiasts looking to bring like minded people of a similar age (16-30) together. They organise various activities and meetings based around the waterways throughout the year.

#### 14. OUTREACH WORK IN WARWICKSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE AND PART OF BIRMINGHAM

British Waterways' longest-standing Community Project Officer is based in the West Midlands. Encouraging links between the region's network of canals and rivers with all sectors of the community, the Community Project Officer runs educational events and talks. Larger scale community projects are run in key areas, currently King's Norton and Leamington Old Town.

#### 15. NEWARK ON WATER FESTIVAL

Newark is host to the biggest community-based festival on our canals and rivers. Started by British Waterways, and now run by the Newark & Sherwood District authority, it draws on the inspirations of local people and uses the waterway to bring different sides of the community together.

- 11. Children enjoying a day at Laburnum Boat Club.
- 12. Looking at Britain's National Hindu Temple site, by boat.
- 14. Community project officer, Edd Moss.
- 15. Newark on Water festival.



## A PARTNERSHIP RESOURCE

People are excluded from mainstream society in many ways – low skills or lack of employment opportunities, poor health or community conflicts. Obviously, British Waterways is not in a position to be able to tackle all reasons for social exclusion. However, we recognise that we have an asset which can be used by many charitable, voluntary and community-based organisations engaged in dealing with such difficult issues. Concentrating solely on our waterways as a place for recreation, therefore, would be to under-value our asset. Working in partnership, British Waterways can contribute more and there are many examples of how this partnership can work. In some cases we are able to fund organisations who wish to use the waterways for their own work. Elsewhere, British Waterways takes a more active role, running projects that make links with local schools, health organisations and voluntary, community and charitable groups.



### 16. BEAUCHAMP LODGE, LONDON

Beauchamp Lodge Settlement at Little Venice, London, provides training for people with learning difficulties and runs a community café in a formerly derelict canalside building. Their latest project is London's first floating classroom since the 1960's. Owned by The Waterways Trust, the education barge Beauchamp has a permanent crew and teacher and is used by schools in inner London.

### 17. PROBATION DEAL

The Probation Service has built a strong relationship with British Waterways in many regions, with offenders involved in canal clean-ups and graffiti clearance work.

### 18. DRAGONFLY, MIDLANDS, SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES

Dragonfly is an education project based on a 1908 harbour launch. The boat has been fitted with a modern, clean and silent electric motor, making it ideal for waterway study. It runs on the waterways of the Midlands, South West & South Wales, visiting community events and schools.

### 19. MONMOUTHSHIRE & BRECON CANAL NEW DEAL, WALES

Waterway improvements can be allied to the government's New Deal employment training. On the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, training projects have been based around towpath improvements and lock gate construction.

“British Waterways is taking a more active role, running projects ourselves that make links with local schools, health organisations and voluntary, community and charitable groups.”



- 16. London's first floating classroom, since 1960's.
- 17. Graffiti clearance work.
- 18. Dragonfly is an education project based on a 1908 harbour launch.
- 19. New deal at Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal.





## INVOLVEMENT IN CHANGE

Communities care about how their local waterway changes – about any development that takes place and about how the waterway is managed.

Inclusion, therefore, means involving local people in the planning and management of our canals and rivers.

- 20. Towpath improvements on the River Aire.
- 21. Festival Waters.
- 22. Children showing their plans of Osterley Lock.



“Managing change isn’t just about major developments.”

## 20. EYE ON THE AIRE, EAST YORKSHIRE

Managing change isn't just about major developments. Eye On the Aire has been promoting improvement to the quality of the River Aire and its surroundings for over ten years.

Representatives from British Waterways attend the monthly meeting of the group, which consists of over 40 affiliates from environmental groups and businesses.

## 21. FESTIVAL WATERS, STOKE-ON-TRENT

Festival Waters is a development in Middleport, Stoke-on-Trent, which takes in the former Shelton steelworks. British Waterways, the local authority and the people of Middleport have worked together on a programme designed to involve local people in the planning process.

## 22. OSTERLEY LOCK, LONDON

Pupils and parents from a nearby high school created artwork that has been incorporated into the lock landscape of this Grand Union Canal site near Brentford in West London.



# APPENDIX

## Organisations who have helped us achieve the projects in this document:

1. Taranchewer: Thames 21 Partnerships\* and London's Waterway Partnership
2. Ellesmere Port: Environment Agency, Mersey Basin Campaign, Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council, Cheshire County Council, Shropshire Union Canal Society, Countryside Commission (now Countryside Agency), Epicentre Partnership (provided Single Regeneration Budget), Cabot Carbon Ltd, Cleanaway Ltd, Associated Octel Ltd, UK Waste, European Regional Development Funds and Mersey Forest
3. The "Calder Future": Calder future\*\*
4. "Eyes and Ears" of the London Canals: British Waterways London, Thames 21\*, London's Waterway Partnership, Metropolitan Police, DEFRA (Pathfinder Funding) and Camden Street Management Team
5. Wester Hailes: Scottish Executive Wester Hailes Partnership, Wester Hailes Land & Property Trust, City Of Edinburgh Council, Lothian Health, Scottish Homes Prospect Community Housing Association, Wester Hailes for Arts & Leisure (WHALE) and Millennium Forest for Scotland Trust
6. Lighting up the Jewellery Quarter: British Waterways Fazeley, Birmingham City Council, Groundwork Birmingham, Railtrack, Advantage West Midlands, West Midlands Police, local business and public interest groups
7. Swinton: Goole Council, East Riding Council, Kingston upon Hull City Council, Rotherham Council, National Lottery Charities Board, European Social Fund, East Riding Health Authority, Single Regeneration Budget, Yorkshire Museums Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Yorkshire Forward, Humberside Training and Enterprise Council, Goole Development Trust, Partners in Regeneration, Neighbourhood Support Fund and Coalfields Regeneration Trust
8. Ratho: Edinburgh Green Belt Trust, ECAS, Ratho Environment Group and Steering Group
9. Gnosall Healthy Trail: The Heron Trail organisation, Staffs County Council & Staffs Borough Council, Gnosall Parish Council, The Probation Service
10. Website: Plan 9
11. Laburnum Boat Club, London: London's Waterway Partnership Laburnum Boat Club, Shoreditch New Deal Trust, West Reservoir Project, Pirate Club, London Borough of Hackney and Cripplegate Trust
12. Tividale: The Temple Trust, Sandwell Health Authority, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Groundwork Black Country, BTCV and The Wildlife Trust
13. Young Boaters Club: The Young Boaters Club, British Waterways, Netscheme and GradU-8
14. Outreach work in Warwickshire, Worcestershire and part of Birmingham: Allenscroft Initiative, Groundwork Birmingham and Tidy Britain/ENCAMS
15. Newark on Water Festival: Newark and Sherwood District Council
16. Beauchamp Lodge: Beauchamp Lodge Settlement, London's Waterway Partnership, The Waterways Trust, Paddington Basin Developments Ltd, New Life of Paddington, Cleanaway Ltd, Timeplan Educational Group plc.
17. Probation deal: Various partners nationwide
18. Dragonfly: Tarmac
19. Monmouthshire & Brecon New Deal: Newport County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, Monmouthshire, Brecon & Abergavenny Canal Trust, Hemmings Waste – Bristol, Corus – British Steel
20. Eye on the Aire: Eye on the Aire\*\*\*
21. Festival Waters: Middleport Development Group, Groundwork
22. Osterley Lock: Groundwork, London's Waterway Partnership and Elthorne Park High School

\*Thames 21 Partnerships includes: Tidy Britain Group, British Waterways London, Port of London Authority, Thames Water, Environment Agency, Corporation of London

\*\* Calder future is a partnership of local businesses, community and environmental groups and the local authority

\*\*\* Eye on the Aire is a partnership of over 40 affiliates from environmental groups and business

# BRITISH WATERWAYS CONTACTS

## BW Scotland

Tel: 0141 332 6936  
Canal House, Applecross Street,  
Glasgow, G4 9SP

### **Caledonian Canal**

Tel: 01463 233140  
Canal Office, Seaport Marina,  
Muirtown Basin, Muirtown,  
Inverness, IV3 5LS

### **Crinan Canal**

Tel: 01546 603210  
Canal Office, Pier Square, Ardrishaig,  
Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA30 8DZ

### **Lowland Canals**

Tel: 01324 671217  
Rosebank House, Main Street, Camelon,  
Falkirk, FK1 4DS

## North West Region

Tel: 01606 723800  
Navigation Road, Northwich,  
Cheshire, CW8 1BH

### **Border Counties Waterways**

Tel: 01244 390372  
Tower Wharf, Raymond Street,  
Chester, CH1 4EZ

### **Leeds & Liverpool Canal, East**

Tel: 01274 611303  
Dobson Lock, Apperley Bridge, Bradford,  
West Yorkshire, BD10 0PY

### **Leeds & Liverpool Canal, West**

Tel: 01257 481054  
White Bear Marina, Park Road, Adlington,  
Lancashire, PR7 4HJ

### **Lancaster Canal**

Tel: 01524 751888  
Main Road, Galgate, Lancaster, LA2 0LQ

### **Peak and Potteries Waterways**

Tel: 01782 785703  
Red Bull Yard, Congleton Road South,  
Church Lawton, Stoke on Trent, ST7 3AP

### **South Pennine Ring**

Tel: 0161 819 5847  
Middle Warehouse, Castle Quay,  
Manchester, M15 4NJ

## North East Region

Tel: 0113 281 6800  
Fearn's Wharf, Neptune Street,  
Leeds, LS9 8PB

### **Aire & Calder Navigations**

Tel: 01977 554351  
Lock Lane, Castleford,  
West Yorkshire, WF10 2LH

### **East Midlands Navigations**

Tel: 01636 704481  
The Kiln, Mather Lane, Newark,  
Notts, NG24 1FB

### **Grand Union Canal, North**

Tel: 01159 734278  
Sawley Marina, Sawley,  
Nottinghamshire, NG10 2AE

### **North Yorkshire Navigations**

Tel: 01904 728229  
5 Bramley's Barn, The Menagerie,  
Skipwith Road, Escrick, York YO19 6EH

### **South Yorkshire Navigations**

Tel: 01302 340610  
Doncaster Wharf, Greyfriars Road,  
Doncaster, DN1 1QN

## Midlands & South West Region

Tel: 01827 252000  
Peels Wharf, Lichfield Street, Fazeley,  
Tamworth, Staffs, B78 3QZ

### **Birmingham & Black Country Canals**

Tel: 0121 506 1300  
Bayleys Lane, Tipton  
West Midlands, DY4 0PX

### **Coventry, Ashby & Trent &**

### **Mersey Canals**

Tel: 01283 790236  
Fradley Junction, Alrewas, Burton on Trent,  
Staffs, DE13 7DN

### **Gloucester and River Severn**

Tel: 01452 318000  
Llanthony Warehouse, Gloucester Docks,  
Gloucester, GL1 2EJ

### **Shropshire Union, Staffs & Worcs & Trent & Mersey Canals**

Tel: 01785 284253  
Norbury Junction, Stafford, ST20 0PN

### **South Wales and Somerset Canals**

Tel: 01873 830328  
The Wharf, Govilon, Abergavenny,  
Gwent, NP7 9NY

### **Stratford, Grand Union & Worcester & Birmingham Canals**

Tel: 01564 784634  
Brome Hall Lane, Lapworth, Solihull,  
West Midlands, B94 5RB

## Southern Region

Tel: 01923 208700  
Brindley Suite, Willow Grange,  
Church Road, Watford, WD17 4QA

### **Grand Union Canal, South**

Tel: 01442 825938  
Marsworth Junction, Watery Lane,  
Marsworth, Tring, Herts, HP23 4LZ

### **Kennet & Avon Canal**

Tel: 01380 722859  
The Locks, Bath Road, Devizes,  
Wilts SN10 1HB

### **Oxford and Grand Union Canals**

Tel: 01788 890666  
The Stop House, Braunston,  
Northants, NN11 7JQ

## London Region

Tel: 020 7286 6101  
The Toll House, Delamere Terrace,  
Little Venice, London, W2 6ND

### **London Canals**

Tel: 020 8571 8900  
Norwood Top Lock, Poplar Avenue,  
Southall, Middlesex, UB2 4PN

### **London Docklands**

Tel: 020 7515 1046  
Marine Office, West India Dock Pierhead,  
420 Manchester Road, London, E14 9ST

### **Lee & Stort Navigations**

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Enfield Lock, Ordnance Road, Enfield,  
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## Other useful contacts:

### Head Office

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