



Canal &
River Trust

Shaping our future

Strategic priorities



Contents



From top: Taking them for a walk, Bumble Hole Branch, Dudley | BrindleyPlace, Central Birmingham | Little Venice, London | Bird spotting at Tring Reservoirs | School children build bridges on the floating classroom, London



Front cover: Marsworth, Grand Union Canal

“Today, canals are not only a national treasure, but also one of the finest examples of working industrial heritage to be found anywhere.”

H.R.H. The Prince of Wales

Patron of the Canal & River Trust

“Once on a canal boat, you get a real sense of nature around you, even in cities. They offer peace and tranquillity in a very hectic world.”

David Suchet

Friend of the Canal & River Trust

“We are securing the future of our rivers and canals for future generations, and giving local communities – the very people who use and cherish the waterways – much greater influence over how the canals and rivers are run.”

Caroline Spelman MP

Secretary of State for Environment

Welcome

Setting up a new charitable trust to run many of the wonderful canals and rivers of England and Wales has been an extraordinary and inspiring process.

Because we are new, many people want to know more about what we intend to do and this document sets out in very broad terms our priorities for the early years.

In doing so, we hope to inspire and motivate everyone who cares about canals and rivers to become involved in our great endeavour. It's been over 50 years in the making and involved thousands of dedicated people, all of whom had a vision to ensure future generations were able to enjoy the wonder of the waterways.

Whether you want to enjoy the wildlife on the towpath, soak up the history, go boating or help us through gifts of your time or money there is plenty of opportunity for everyone. So please do get in touch via our website if you think you have something to share.

Our priorities will inevitably change over time as we gather advice and support across the country and we would love to hear from you. But in the meantime, I hope you enjoy reading this and that it makes you want to visit your local canal or river, join us and get involved!

Tony Hales CBE
Chair
Canal & River Trust



Above: Little Venice, London | Bingley Five Rise, Leeds & Liverpool Canal | Enjoying the peace and quiet, Wolverley, Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal | Dragonfly





About Us

The Canal & River Trust is one of the UK's newest charities – having been created in July 2012 as the successor to British Waterways. We are also one of the largest – the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic inland waterways in England and Wales.

Who we are

We believe that our canals and rivers are a national treasure and a local haven for people and wildlife. It's our job to care for this wonderful legacy – holding it in trust for the nation in perpetuity.

On a practical level, we have responsibility for canals, rivers, docks and reservoirs – along with historic buildings, archives and three waterways museums, including the National Waterways Museum.

We like to think of our work as 'keeping people, nature and history connected'.

Opposite: Gongoozling, Bradford on Avon, Kennet & Avon Canal

About Us



Left: National Waterways Museum, home of the National Collection & Archive | **Below:** Crossing the River Trent | **Bottom:** Canal Cavalcade, Little Venice, London



Our vision

A sustainable and evolving canal and river network that is a national treasure – accessible to and cherished by all.

Our purpose

To act as guardian for the canals and rivers of England and Wales – ensuring that history, nature and communities are central to everything we do.

Our mission

To inspire people to connect with our canals and rivers.

We will do this by:

- Being passionate about what we do
- Encouraging those with an interest in our work to become part of it
- Reaching out to those who have yet to discover this national treasure
- Ensuring our financial security by attracting sustainable income

Below: Cycling with the family | **Bottom:** Wildlife on the River Severn | **Right:** Pond dipping, Birmingham Canal Navigations



Our values

We want our approach to our work to be based on a positive and distinctive attitude. To help us we have summarised the values we believe are important and a mnemonic which reminds us that it is important to be 'close' to our stakeholders, customers and supporters.

To connect people with our work, we need to demonstrate that it is underpinned with values that they respond to and want to share.

To bring people close we need to be:

Caring

We care passionately about our canals and rivers, about their past, their future and about everyone who uses and enjoys them.

Local

We operate at a local level and try to reflect local needs and local ambitions in all that we do.

Open

We welcome new people and new ideas – and we are transparent in all that we do.

Safe

The personal safety of everyone on our canals and rivers is our number one priority.

Expert

We combine years of experience with the latest innovations to deliver the very best results.

About Us



Our structure

We manage our canals and rivers as one network with common policies across England and Wales. We do this because we need to allocate resource where it is most needed and to be as efficient and effective as we can.

We also seek to reflect local views and aspirations in all that we do. We put great emphasis on our Waterway Partnerships, which bring together representatives of local communities, businesses and organisations.

These partnerships work closely with our local management and influence what we do in each local waterway.

Top: Catching up with family and friends, Brecon Basin, Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal |

Above: Pontcysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage Site, Llangollen Canal | **Top-right:** Grand opening of the restored Droitwich Canal |

Opposite: Enjoying the mud at a winter works open day, Bingley Five Rise, Leeds & Liverpool Canal

How we fund our work

Our income will come from a wide range of sources – from individual donors and boat licence sales through to corporate sponsors and tenants of our properties to significant business partnerships and our vital contract with government.





Our Priorities

Almost 50% of the population lives within five miles of our extraordinary network of canals, rivers and towpaths. They are cherished by millions of visitors, neighbours and communities.

Yet until recently, many people had few opportunities to get involved in its present wellbeing or to shape its future.

We believe that the true potential of our canals and rivers and their long-term survival will only be secured if we fully engage with our visitors, neighbours and business partners. By harnessing their goodwill, energy and expertise, we can widen the enjoyment of our waterways today whilst protecting them for future generations.

Trustees believe it is our priority to unlock this potential through six strategic priorities:

-  • Ensuring our canals and rivers are open, accessible and safe
-  • Inspiring more people to enjoy the canals and rivers and support our work
-  • Earning financial security for our canals and rivers
-  • Doing everything we can to deliver on our charitable objectives
-  • Minimising the impact we make on scarce resources
-  • Establishing the Trust as a respected and trusted guardian of our canals and rivers

These strategic priorities are all more fully explained and developed in the following pages.

Caption: Enjoying the fresh air, Skipton, Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Springs Branch



The 2,000 miles of canals, rivers and the linked docks, harbours and museums held by the Trust embrace an extraordinary variety of interests, activities and communities including:

- The UK's third largest collection of listed buildings and structures
- 65 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Over a thousand wildlife conservation sites
- A floating community of around 35,000 boats

Keeping canals and rivers open & accessible



Canals and rivers open and accessible for everyone

We are pleased that millions of people make use of the waterways in many different ways, but we believe that even more people can and should benefit from them.

To ensure our canals and rivers are open and accessible to everyone we will:

- Keep them safe by a rigorous regime of inspection, maintenance and repair using our specialist staff and contactors
- Keep them open, only closing them when we have no other option
- Keep them attractive by caring for historic structures and vulnerable habitats
- Keep them accessible by improving entry points, providing information and raising awareness
- Meet our statutory obligations in respect of navigation and other matters
- Encourage an active community of boaters

Below: Boating, Wolverley, Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal | Repointing a lock wall, Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal | Enjoying the scenery at Fradley Junction, Trent & Mersey Canal



Inspiring more people to enjoy canals & rivers



More people inspired to enjoy canals and rivers and support our work

We know that being on or close to a canal or river is uplifting, relaxing and a welcome change of pace. We want everyone to experience the wonders of our extensive waterway network because we believe many of them will want to become more involved by donating their time, money or expertise.

We need to grow awareness, understand the needs of local canal and riverside communities, work with others and open not only the waterways but our minds to new people, new ideas and new uses.

Below: Exploring Foxton Locks, Grand Union Canal, Leicester Line



To inspire more people to enjoy the waterways and support our work we will:

- Promote our canals and rivers as a haven for people and nature and encourage more people to discover them
- Develop our Waterway Partnerships to improve links with local communities and seek to adapt our ways of working to suit local needs and aspirations
- Grow the number of volunteering opportunities within the Trust and make volunteers a key part of who we are and what we do
- Develop a funding strategy that enables supporters to contribute to our work and feel part of a community of like-minded people who care passionately about the future of our canals and rivers
- Work even more closely with local and national stakeholder groups to combine our knowledge, resources and enthusiasm for mutual benefit
- Encourage more people from ethnic minority and socially disadvantaged groups to discover and enjoy their local canals and rivers
- Sustain and develop our three waterways museums as vibrant places for interpretation, conservation, learning and recreation

Safeguarding financial security



Financial security

The Trust has significant responsibilities and liabilities but is also fortunate to have a large property endowment and a number of relatively secure income streams. Our 15-year contract with government has given us a tremendous platform on which to build our financial security for the future and we believe that the waterways have never before faced a period of such financial security.

However, we cannot yet foresee a time when we will not need government support. So over the coming 15 years we must be sure to continue to meet our obligations under the funding agreement so we can secure a further contract after 2027.

We will also continue to grow our earned income through commercial and fundraising activities and drive efficiency and savings in our cost base.

We will build on our current financial security by:

- Meeting our obligations and responsibilities under statute and the Defra funding agreement
- Constantly challenge our cost base to seek efficiencies
- Growing our earned income from existing sources and developing new ones
- Developing our fundraising capability to (at least) meet the targets we have set ourselves for the first 10 years



Improving people's lives



Delivering on charitable objectives

Research shows that our waterways provide more than £500m of public benefit every year by making them available for recreation and leisure, managing them as an important drainage and flood control system, improving the waterside through regeneration and much more.

Our charitable status means that everything we do must be for the public good and our charitable objectives are entirely about improving the lives of others through the upkeep and use of our waterways. We know our canals and rivers play an important part in the lives of millions of people but there is still potential to benefit millions more.

We will seek to achieve this through:

- Maintaining our canals and rivers, keeping them open and accessible for everyone
- Engaging with, understanding and helping to meet the needs of local communities
- Welcoming new social enterprise onto our canals and rivers wherever we consider it is compatible with our ambitions and where it adds value to the waterways
- Tapping into the innovation, goodwill and energy of our supporters to help them grow their use and enjoyment of the waterways



From left to right: Fundraising campaign | Fishing on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal | Volunteers help with dry-stone walling, Rishton, Leeds & Liverpool Canal

Minimising our impact on natural resources



Impact on scarce environmental resources minimised

Our canals and rivers depend on a plentiful supply of water but this natural resource, like many others, is being adversely affected by increases in demand and climate change. We recognise the importance of safeguarding our natural resources and using them responsibly and sparingly. We adhere to the Brundtland approach to sustainability, which is 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

We will seek to minimise our impact on scarce resources by:

- Continuing to maintain and manage our canals and rivers to minimise water wastage
- Continuing to develop our monitoring systems to give us up to date information about water supplies
- Constantly seeking ways to reduce our use of energy, particularly electricity (for water pumping) and fuel (for our vehicles)
- Developing new sources of green energy, particularly micro generation using hydro power and wind generation
- Preparing, publishing and reporting on a green plan for the Trust

From left to right: Marina Nicoli, a volunteer, now an employee, carrying out environmental recordings | Rebranding signs with stickers, Watford, Grand Union Canal



Establishing ourselves as a respected guardian



The Trust established as a respected and trusted guardian of our canals and rivers

The Trust's public sector predecessor helped to transform the canals and rivers from neglected, unwanted backwaters to the thriving valued waterways of today. The Trust is proud of its origins but also wants to differentiate itself from the past – creating a different, more inclusive and ultimately more sustainable approach to safeguarding our waterways.

We want to create our own identity and demonstrate that we have the vision and resources to continue to transform the way our waterways are appreciated, enjoyed and safeguarded for the future.



To establish the Trust as a respected guardian of our canals and rivers, we will:

- Make the safety of our staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors and neighbours our first priority
- Recognise that the heritage and natural environment of the waterways are what makes them attractive to millions of visitors
- Develop our people so they are expert in their field and are ambassadors for the Trust
- Engage with and empower volunteers so they feel part of and fully represent the Trust
- Celebrate that most communities are passionate about their local waterway and recognise this through our governance and management structure to benefit from their enthusiasm and interest
- Seek to engage everyone and every organisation and community that has an interest in our work to develop common understanding and common goals
- Manage the affairs of the Trust so that we are financially prudent whilst optimising the opportunities available to us to grow our income and expand our work
- Be open and transparent in all that we do



Measuring Progress

These strategic priorities will guide everything we do in the next five years. In particular they will inform the preparation of our rolling three-year business plans. We will publish these plans every year.

We will also monitor our progress through the publication of our Stewardship Score (an overall index calculated to take account of progress on a whole range of factors including the condition of waterway structures, numbers of visitors, and visitor satisfaction) and through market research.



Top: Heritage signpost, Skipton, Leeds & Liverpool Canal | **Above:** Cill repairs, Offerton, Worcester & Birmingham Canal | **Right:** Capturing waterway memories at the Crick Boat Show 2012 | **Opposite:** Boating at Hazelhurst Junction, Caldon Canal



Canal & River Trust

First Floor North
Station House
500 Elder Gate
Milton Keynes
MK9 1BB

T: 0303 040 4040

E: customer.services@canalrivertrust.org.uk

canalrivertrust.org.uk

Registered charity: 1146792



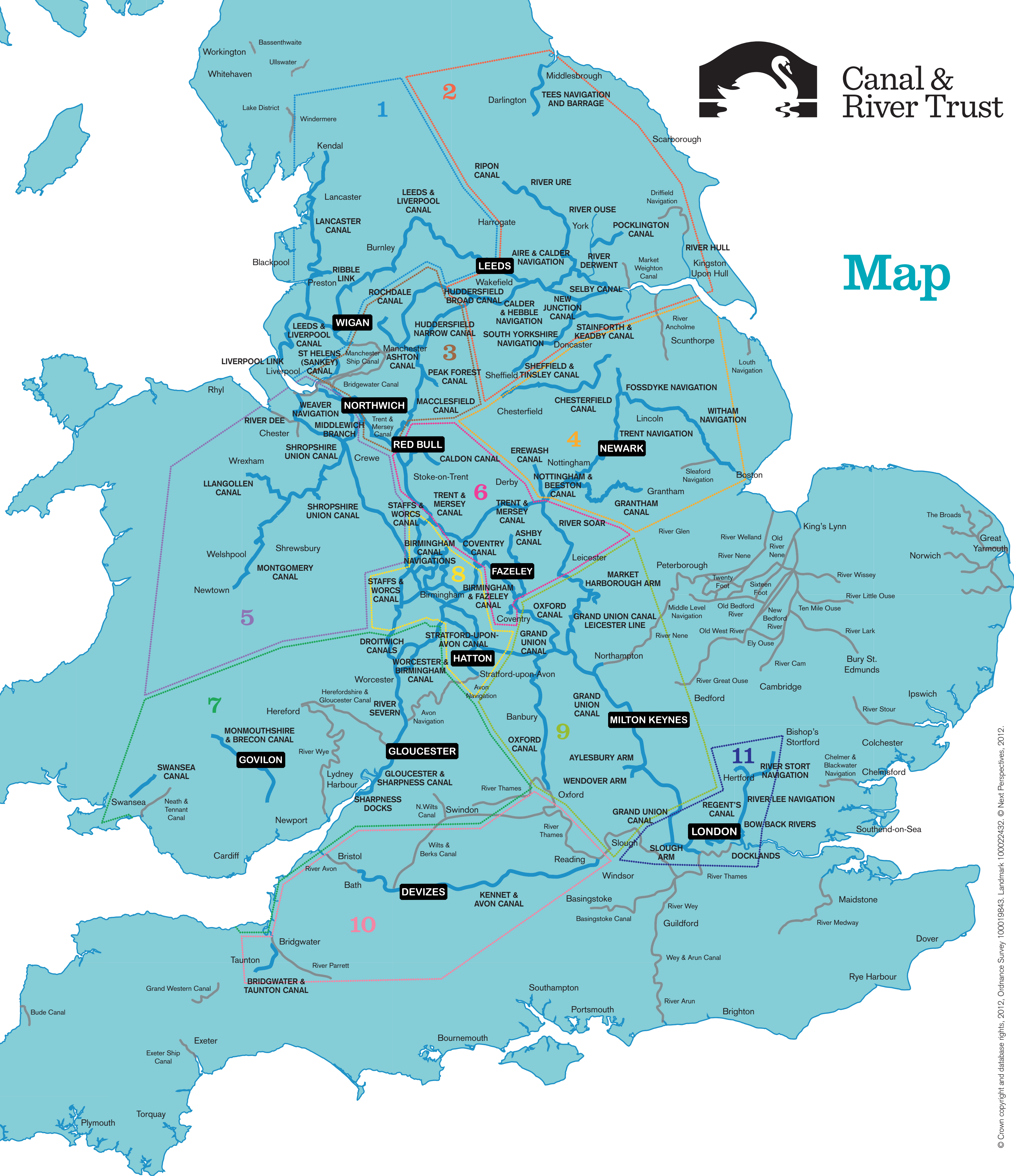
A Welsh language version of this document
is available upon request

Published: July 2012





Map



© Crown copyright and database rights, 2012. Ordnance Survey 100019843. Landmark 100022432. © Next Perspectives, 2012.

Waterway Partnership Areas

- 1. North West Waterways
- 2. North East Waterways
- 3. Manchester & Pennines Waterways
- 4. East Midlands Waterways
- 5. North Wales & Borders Waterways
- 6. Central Shires Waterways
- 7. South Wales & Severn Waterways
- 8. West Midlands Waterways
- 9. South East Waterways
- 10. Kennet & Avon Waterways
- 11. London Waterways

Map Key

- LONDON Canal & River Trust offices
- Canal & River Trust waterways
- AINA waterways

This map includes waterways managed by members of the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA). There are other inland waterways that have not been included, the information on this map is for guidance only, for accurate information please visit our website.

Canal & River Trust

First Floor North Station House
500 Elder Gate Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

T: 0303 040 4040
E: customer.services@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Registered charity 1146792



Waterway Partnerships not shown on map
All Wales Partnership
Museums and Attractions Partnership