



**Canal &  
River Trust**

Making life better by water

## **The Kennet & Avon Canal**

Canal Heritage Lottery Fund Partnership  
(HLFP)



Annual Report  
April 2022 to March 2023

## Executive Summary

This report summarises maintenance and operation expenditure on the Kennet and Avon Canal, as divided by Local Authority Area, for business year 2022 to 2023. The report sets out information that fulfils the Trust's reporting obligations as outlined in the HLF (Restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal) agreement.

## Role and Objectives of the Canal and River Trust

The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) was established in July 2012 and has guardianship of 2000 miles of canals, rivers, docks and reservoirs in England and Wales, in addition to a number of historic buildings, archives and museums. Our story as a charity is rooted in the history of the waterways themselves. Our vision is to have living waterways that transform places and enrich our lives, for today and generations to come.

No other charity brings so much free, open, and accessible blue and green space to the doorstep of so many. With your support, we can continue our work.

Once the nation's industrial arteries, our 200-year-old network transported vital goods and busy people around a booming Britain. When freight declined, the canals too fell into disrepair. Thankfully, our waterways today have risen, phoenix-like, to become treasured local gems - places where people can relax, re-connect, rediscover history and spot the abundance of wildlife that calls them home.

We work hard to maintain their legacy, and, together with our volunteers and communities across England and Wales, we're also transforming them into spaces where anyone can come to feel happier and healthier. A back garden for almost nine million people across the UK, today our waterways provide opportunities for boating, angling, cycling, walking, paddling or simply surrounding spending time in nature.

Our research shows that spending time by water, whether it be your lunchbreak, daily commute or just a weekend stroll, really can make us feel happier and healthier. With ever increasing rates of obesity, stress and declining mental health in the UK, we are uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to improving the wellbeing of millions of people.

## The Kennet & Avon

The Kennet & Avon navigation is made up of three waterways: the River Kennet, the Kennet & Avon Canal and the River Avon, and has achieved Green Flag status across the entire length. The through route, from Reading to Hanham, covers 87 miles. It was completed in 1810 and built to link the two biggest ports - London and Bristol - via the Rivers Thames and Avon. The waterways pass through vibrant towns and glorious countryside, including the North Wessex Downs AONB and several SSSIs.

The easterly point of the waterway is Kings Reach Foot Bridge in Reading; east of here the navigation is managed by the Environment Agency. The westerly point is Hanham Lock. The Port of Bristol is the Navigation Authority west of Hanham. The navigation has 104 'wide beam' locks, including the famous Caen Hill Locks in Devizes, the longest flight of wide locks in the country. It is listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument as the highest level of heritage designation due to its outstanding significance.

Most of the towpath side of the waterways is under the direct control of the Trust. However, in places, due to the historic nature of the rivers, the Trust does not own either bank. In these cases, we are the Navigation Authority only. The marinas along the waterways are under private ownership and are not included in the scope of this report.

Approximately 30 permanent staff and two seasonal staff are dedicated to the K&A Canal, supported by 30 regional operations staff and central expertise and resources. Full-time employees are supported by contractors and volunteers. The canal is also supported by the South West Regional Advisory Board.

## Key Statistics

Canal length in each area		Kilometres
Reading	River Kennet: London Street to Fobney lock	3
Reading	Fobney Lock to the boundary	2
West Berkshire		43
Wiltshire		65
BANES	Boundary to the River Avon	9
BANES	River Avon to Hanham Lock	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>140 km</b>

Assets	BANES	Wiltshire	West Berks	Reading	Total
Locks	12	57	34	3	106
Bridges	42	90	78	12	222
Aqueducts	2	8	2	0	12
Tunnels	2	3	0	0	5
Reservoirs	0	0	0	0	0

	BANES	Wiltshire	West Berkshire	Reading
Conservation areas	5	8	8	0
Non-statutory wildlife sites	Entire canal corridor	c. 10	c. 14	4
SSSI	5 (in or adjacent)	3	6	0
Permit holder moorings	26	41	36	2
Visitor moorings	17	28	12	0
AONB	Cotswolds AONB	North Wessex Downs AONB		
Heritage Sites	1 WHS, 5 grade II*, 2 historic parks and gardens, 6 grade II, 1 scheduled and grade I Aqueduct	1 scheduled lock flight, 1 grade I pumping Station, 1 historic battlefield, 1 grade II*, 9 grade II	1 scheduled lock, 2 scheduled and listed locks, 7 grade II, 1 grade II*	

See Appendix 1 for a list of boat services on the K&A, managed both by the Trust and third parties.

## Funding and Finance

Funding streams remain as reported in previous reports. Income is derived from the following sources:

- individual donors, fundraising, and corporate sponsors;
- commercial income including revenue from the licensing of boats, moorings and angling; and revenue from property and utilities;
- grants from the other organisations e.g. HLFP; and
- an eleven-year contract with government.

At the point of writing, the Trust also receives £115,700<sup>1</sup> from a maintenance agreement with Bath and North East Somerset (BANES), West Berkshire and Wiltshire Councils. This council funding is incredibly important and enables us to carry out critical maintenance work, and improve towpaths and structures for the benefit of the local communities and visitors to our waterways.

Many individuals and organisations support the Trust on both local and national levels. With respect to grants and contributions from other organisations, the Trust is similarly continuing to explore new opportunities all the time.

The Trust is proactive in utilising its property assets and joint venture vehicles to bring forward land to deliver regeneration, wider benefits to the community and to attract private sector investment. As a charitable trust, all net rental income and capital receipts generated from our property estate and other commercial activities are used to maintain the waterways.

## Expenditure – Kennet & Avon, April 2022 to March 2023

The Trust has undertaken an analysis of what was defrayed on the Kennet & Avon in the 2022/23 financial year, on activities ranging from lock repairs and vegetation management to bank and weir maintenance. In 2022/23, the cost to the Canal and River Trust of operating and maintaining the Kennet and Avon Canal was **£6.7 million**.

The Trust operates on a flat cash policy and needs to be able to maintain the high standards of waterway management, whilst at the same time, reducing spending in line with inflation. This has proven particularly challenging to achieve in recent years due to the steep increase in inflation. Therefore, the Council contributions to maintaining the K&A Canal remain vital in helping us continue to deliver essential maintenance and projects.

Maintenance works along the canal are prioritised every year, taking account of factors such as public safety, structural condition, amenity and usage. This being the case, the proportion of total expenditure in each Local Authority area varies from year to year, depending on current priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> The maintenance agreement funding is divided as follows:

Bath and North East Somerset	£20,000
Wiltshire	£70,000
West Berkshire	£25,700

The figures below have been taken from the Canal and River Trust's accounting system and summarise the breakdown of last year's spending in each local authority area:

	West Berkshire (£)	Wiltshire (£)	BANES (£)	Total K&A (£)
K&A Work Orders	633,677	680,687	106,179	1,420,543
CSI Projects	14,464	21,864	9,082	45,409
<b>Total</b>	<b>648,140</b>	<b>702,551</b>	<b>115,260</b>	<b>1,465,952</b>

<b>K&amp;A Overheads</b>	<b>792,640</b>	<b>1,198,176</b>	<b>497,704</b>	<b>2,488,520</b>
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Priority Projects				
Crofton Pumping Station Improvements		4,261		4,261
K&A Pumping Resilience	40,476	61,185	25,415	127,076
Bridge 83 Replacement	-44			-44
Avoncliff Embankment 95 Subsidence		1,653		1,653
Long Pound Badger Management		9,165		9,165
K&A East Lock Approach Dredging	13,508			13,508
Culvert 34	12,953			12,953
Burghfield Sluices Inspection	45,000			45,000
Embankment 8A	138,521			138,521
Culvert, Aqueduct 7	36,139			36,139
K&A East Dredging		432,448		432,448
K&A Burghfield Breach Emergency Repair	10,187			10,187
Embankment 96 Grouting		27,713		27,713
Lock 16, Harris Lock Grouting		70		70
Queen Elizabeth Lock Grouting		70		70

Culvert 56 CCTV inspection		7,500		7,500
Culvert CCTV Inspection Prog	17,793		1,717	19,510
Crofton Pumping Station Phase 2		1,858,192		1,858,192
K&A East Dredging Phase2		14,740		14,740
Total	314,534	2,416,997	27,132	2,758,662

Total	1,755,314	4,317,724	640,096	6,713,135
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## Visitors & Users

The Kennet & Avon is one of our busiest waterways for boats, annually attracting about 3,000 boats. Bradford on Avon is one of the top three busiest locks nationwide, operating c. 8,000 times a year. The K&A attracts approximately 150,000 visitors (16.7 million visits) per annum. The canal attained Trip Advisor’s ‘Travellers’ Award 2022’, along with some of its primary destination sites such as the Caen Hill Flight.

The Trust aims to inspire more people to enjoy the Kennet & Avon and support our work. We offer all our stakeholders opportunities to provide us with feedback on a regular basis and ensure visitors and users can contact us. We provide visitors with information about the canal, its history and visitor mooring facilities, which we are working to rehabilitate where reed growth has established.

The Trust promotes our activities on the K&A via a number of channels and provides information for visitors through local signage and interpretation, printed materials, our [website](#) and social media - [@CRTWalesandSW](#). One example of this is our ‘[Places to Visit](#)’ maps which carry local information and facts about each key destination site.

We have a [dedicated website section](#) for our boating customers, where they can find information on everything from licensing, navigation, stoppages, water points and events. We also support boaters in need of assistance or who may be considered vulnerable through our [licence support officers](#) and/or assistance from volunteer waterway chaplains.



## The Great West Way

The Trust is a member of the Great West Way partnership (led by Visit Wiltshire), which aims to create one of the world's premier touring routes and will be the first of its kind in England and the only touring route in the world to be multi-modal, focusing on the waterways. It is helping the Trust develop and distribute engaging contents, drive domestic and international visits and connect us with key GWW influences.

## Sharing the Resource

The towpaths are limited spaces and attract different users who may have conflicting views on how they should be used. To help resolve them the Trust completed a stakeholder consultation, resulting in the development of a towpath code and national campaign '[Stay Kind, Slow Down](#)'.

## Advisory Boards

Across the Trust we continue to work with seven advisory boards, all of whom support us in shaping our direction and strategy locally. They guide the Trust's decisions in developing engagement and forming new partnerships, advising us on spending and external funding, whilst also championing the interests of their local waterways.

The South West Regional Advisory Board provides a crucial role in guiding the Trust's strategic priorities for the Kennet & Avon Canal. Members also play an important role in advocating the Trust amongst key external partners and stakeholders.

The key aims of the South West Regional Advisory Board for 2022-24 are:

1. Sustain links with canal societies and Inland Waterways Association.
2. Regular dialogue with boating and canal-side businesses.
3. Extend relationships with health and wellbeing commissioners and providers.
4. Monitor and review the 'Trust Volunteer' experience.
5. Extend relationships with key organisations.
6. Identify initiatives and partners to help the Trust achieve net zero target.
7. Lobby and liaise with all Members of Parliament across the region.

## Asset Management

Infrastructure on the K&A is extensive and widely varied in its scope with some assets which are over 300 years old. The Trust's asset/infrastructure management and maintenance work encompasses both the canal and its associated structures (bridges, locks, etc.). We also operate a maintenance regime to ensure all operational plant and equipment satisfies our legal obligations and is fit for purpose.

Our aim is to ensure that none of our assets present a risk to our users, staff or volunteers, and that we keep maximum free passage of the network. We take a risk management approach where asset condition is combined with an assessment of the consequence of failure to generate an overall risk score. It is this aspect that drives our work prioritisation and our budgetary process.

The Kennet & Avon Inspection programme is undertaken by a dedicated team of certified inspectors and engineers. Safety and Service inspections are undertaken bi-monthly. The purpose of the inspection is to ensure the waterway is safe and customer service standards are being met. A total of 132 inspections will be delivered in 2023.

General Inspections monitor the asset condition and provide up-to-date information for work plans. These are delivered on either a two- or four-year cycle depending on the type of structure. No inspection of this type will be delivered in 2023. However, 365 inspections were delivered in 2022 and a further 420 will be delivered in 2024.

Principal inspections are a comprehensive inspection and written report addressing condition, maintenance, compliance, and risk. A total of 62 were delivered in 2022.

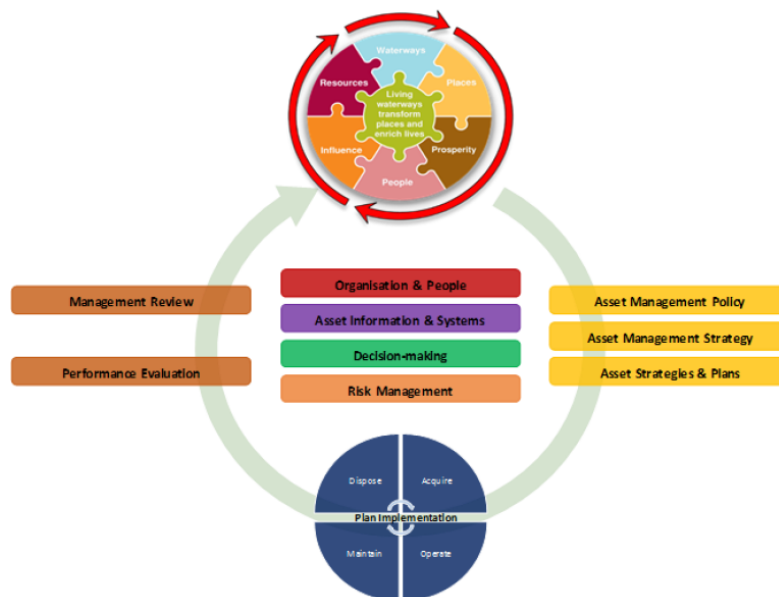


Figure 1 Our asset management framework

Our current standard for maintaining the asset ‘Planned Preventative Maintenance 2016’ defines maintenance requirements and responsibilities for the PPM of fixed and moveable operational infrastructure. This provides the framework for a formal maintenance process and ensures adherence to consistent maintenance standards and specifications. It identifies the level of resource and expenditure required to carry it out effectively, and to enable effective monitoring of the maintenance regimes. On the Kennet & Avon Canal PPM is undertaken by a combined Trust and volunteer team and 913 PPM visits will be undertaken in 2023.

## K&A Enterprise & Priority Projects

### K&A Planned Winter Stoppages (2022-23)

Waterway	Location
Kennet & Avon Canal	Bridge 203, Windsor Bridge and pipe bridge gas works.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Crofton Pumping Station & Locks 52, 55, 57, 60, 61, 64 & 65.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Lock 97, Towney Lock.



Kennet & Avon Canal	Lock 43, Queen Elizabeth Lock, Caen Hill.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Aldermaston Wharf Lift bridge.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Lock 93, Heales.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Caen Hill Pumping Station.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Lock 86, Greenham.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Lock 72, Bottom Gate.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Lock 20, Seend.
Kennet & Avon Canal	Lock 16, Harris Lock, Semington.

## Enterprise Projects (2022-24)

### Newbury Towpath

Towpath improvements between Ham Bridge Road and Bulls Lock. Works to begin later in 2023 subject to funding being raised via the Good Exchange.

- Expenditure: £390,000.
- Income from West Berkshire Council - £80,000.
- Income to be raised via the Good Exchange - £310,000.

### Reading Towpath Activation Project

Phase 1 of towpath improvement works from Aldermaston to Padworth. Works to begin March 2023.

- Expenditure - £1,067,689.
- Income from DfT via partner Sustrans - £1,067,689.

### Bath Lock Flight Towpath

Phase 1 of towpath improvement works. Works currently being scoped and costed.

- Expenditure – c.£135,000.
- Income from B&NES Council (including local and strategic CIL funds) - £125,000.

Planned future works:

### Devizes Lock 44 Access Ramp

Improvements to be made to the access ramp at Lock 44. £33,000 via Wiltshire Council, waiting to hear if a further £42,000 has been secured. Estimate £75,000 (subject to re-costing).

## Community Engagement & Involvement

Community engagement and volunteering is at the heart of everything we do on the K&A. To attract new audiences and expand our wellbeing offer for the local community, the Trust hosts a range of events, develops volunteering opportunities and puts on themed activities such as boat trips, fishing taster days, hedge laying courses, tree planting and photography lessons for people to get involved in. Volunteers continue to support the work the Trust

carries out with a range of different tasks and demonstrate their dedication to keeping the canal maintained and supporting the wellbeing of our local communities.

Over the last year we have refreshed the variety of community engagement activities on offer along the canal. In July 2022 we hosted the Queen's Baton Relay at Devizes Locks with one of our volunteers carrying the Baton for a section of the relay. We have reached out to new audiences including working with the Ministry of Justice to support community payback experiences for People on Probation at Caen Hill.



Our Newbury team is working closely with volunteers from West Berkshire Action for Refugees. Our Let's programme of wellbeing activities continue to be delivered at key sites along the canal. Corporate volunteering days were successful in 2022 with the teams involved significantly contributing to the maintenance of the canal.

We regularly record the number of visitors to our activities and events, including children and young people. We encourage those who visit and use the canals to develop into more committed supporters through our Friend's scheme or through our programme of volunteering, adoptions and events.

By 2025 we aim to have significantly increased the number of volunteers who will be fully integrated as 'one team' alongside colleagues and contractors. Our volunteers will contribute one million hours of their time and 85% will be fully engaged with the Trust. They will continue to contribute to waterway management, conservation, promotion and restoration. Find out more about our [volunteer opportunities on our website](#).

## Youth Engagement

In partnership with the Scouts we deliver waterway-based activities with local groups, including creating wildlife habitats, vegetation management and lock painting.

We aim to deliver youth wellbeing activities with partners to introduce young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to the waterway and the opportunities it offers. Activities include boat trips, junior lock keeping, fishing; our Let's Fish activities, taster days and rod making, photography taster days and making bug hotels.

We continue to work with our Explorers education team to provide materials for events and school holiday activities, as well as with youth groups including the National Citizen Service to deliver social action projects around the arts, fundraising, gardening and marketing along the waterway. Waterside visits include schools' weeks based on school curriculum areas such as rivers, habitats, local history and STEM topics. We also deliver water safety, outreach and virtual sessions to schools and uniform groups within a mile of the canal. Virtual sessions can accommodate schools outside of that radius.



## Case Studies

Both our Trust volunteers and partner organisations support the day-to-day maintenance and upkeep of the 87 miles of this wonderful linear canal. Below are a selection of case studies highlighting the activities our dedicated volunteers carry out for the Trust. Along the

length of this canal there will be different tasks that the various volunteer groups undertake.

### Volunteers and Maintenance

Along the canal corridor we have more than 200 active Trust volunteers and a further eight community partner groups who all contribute towards the daily maintenance of the network. Tasks include painting the locks and cill markers, greasing locks, vegetation clearance, towpath repairs and keeping the network tidy. Different groups have different focuses such as the engineer volunteers on the eastern K&A, moving the working boats for project work and waterborne environmental clean-ups on the western K&A.

### Claverton Pumping Station

Claverton Pumping Station is a rare example of late Georgian technology. Twenty volunteers have painstakingly restored the waterwheel, replacing and hand finishing more than 300 wooden slats on the actual wheel. The pumping station re-opened to the public in 2017 once the waterwheel and pumps were working. The public can see the wheel running on open days. Since starting in 2012 The volunteers have given 44,000 hours of their time to the project as well as delighting visitors with their knowledge and sharing the history of the pumping station.

### Community Matters Newbury

This group has adopted the John Gould Garden at Newbury Lock Island. In 2020 the volunteers planted raised beds adjacent to the lock and have continued coming out on a regular basis. To the left you can see a beautiful example of the group's planting at Newbury Lock. Alongside providing locals with a lovely spot to sit and enjoy the canal, this also supports the local bee population. The garden looks amazing with a new seating area and the log store doubles up



as a bug hotel. The group has given 7,500 hours of volunteering time since they started in 2018.

### **Notice Board Refurbishment by Volunteers**

All the notice boards along the K&A are regularly maintained and kept up to date by a dedicated team of volunteers.

### **Volunteer Lock Keepers**

About 160 Volunteer Lock Keepers attend the K&A at seven locations: Bath, Bradford on Avon, Seend, Caen Hill, Crofton, Newbury, Aldermaston and Woolhampton. They assist boaters, complete minor maintenance tasks and welcome visitors to the canal as well as providing advice and information. They are the ambassadors raising the profile of the Trust with the local community and visitors from further afield.

### **Welcome Stations**

We have established two Welcome Stations on the K&A – one at Bradford on Avon due to reopen in April 2023, and the other on 'The Admiral', a 50ft wide-beam boat moored at the top of the Caen Hill Flight in Devizes. The Admiral has proved very popular with visitors and provides added value as a visitor centre at Caen Hill which has a significant footfall. The Admiral receives thousands of visitors, many of them international travellers. This volunteer-led service provides information, leaflets, maps and activities for children. The boat is also available as a free base for visiting schools. A popular school activity is pond dipping. The Admiral also attends local events including Reading Waterway Festival, Newbury Waterway Festival, and the Trust's winter open days.

### **Jubilee Wood Pond Project:**

Trust volunteers maintain the Diamond Jubilee Woodland at Caen Hill to ensure visitors have a great experience. Their tasks include mowing pathways through the woodland and re-staking the trees. They also work closely with our Community Youth Events Coordinator to reach out to younger audiences.

The pond project aims to meet our youth engagement aspirations. A site meeting was held in autumn 2022 with the region's Ecologists, the area's Team Leaders and local volunteers to discuss the wildlife pond in Jubilee Wood. Two additional locations were identified where we hope to develop temporary ponds, or 'scrapes'. A document outlining the project will be shared with a local school, in the hope that students will excavate using hand tools, plant the area and fence it off.

### **Bath College**

Pre-pandemic, students from Bath College adopted three listed locks on the Bath Flight and a further section of canal up to Folly Footbridge. They planted lavender beds, litter picked and painted lock gates. This volunteering counts towards each student's diploma. During the pandemic, our Bath College group College group was unable to visit but were back out on the canal in January 2023.

The students above are pictured at Caen Hill where they prepped and painted lock 45.

## Fairfield College

The Trust is entering its fourth year working with Fairfield Farm College. Every week six students, and their teacher visit the canal in and around Bradford on Avon. They are supported by either Trust staff or volunteers and continue to carry out important work such as maintaining the car park by clearing leaves, cutting back overhanging vegetation, weeding around the fruit trees, painting, fixing fences, planting trees, cutting the grass and collecting litter. Occasionally they help with Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) on the locks and with the lock gate cleaning project. The group also visits other parts of the canal, such as Hilperton, Avoncliff and Caen Hill to carry out similar tasks.



The students attend college to help prepare them for employment and their tasks develop employability skills. These include time keeping and punctuality, developing social skills, using tools and equipment and health and safety. Not only are they making an impact on the towpath, but their fantastic work is making a big impact on their career opportunities too while providing valuable work experience.

## Working in partnership with companies



For many years, the Trust has offered companies the opportunity to book a 'team day' on their local waterway. Arranged by our Business & Corporate Engagement Partner, and delivered by our Team Leaders, companies can help with a range of practical tasks including litter picks, maintenance of our locks or towpaths and improving habitats for wildlife. By working with groups in this way, we can raise awareness and generate donations. Feedback from

companies has shown the value of these days to their people, as it gives them the opportunity to work in the fresh air, get to know colleagues and make a tangible difference to their local canals and rivers.

There are many other ways companies can help to support us, such as through employee fundraising, gifts in kind, sponsoring projects or events, or choosing us as their Charity of

the Year. More information on our corporate engagement opportunities can be found at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/donate/corporate-partnerships>.

## Communities on the Western Kennet & Avon

The initiative's purpose is to improve conditions along the western end of the Kennet & Avon Canal (between Hanham Lock and Bradford on Avon) with a canal and towpath which is materially fit for purpose and an environment of respect and consideration exists between all communities in order to enhance the wellbeing of all. The programme is being delivered in partnership with BANES Council

Amongst the key aims of this programme is to work closely with the local authorities, police force and Julian House to monitor and resolve any issues of towpath and canal misuse, anti-social behaviour, mooring abuse and high boat density. Our Waterway Ranger is employed to assist the project and deliver a clear towpath policy, as well as ensure mooring time limits and correct cruising requirements are respected.

The project has led to a significant reduction in complaints along this stretch of waterway, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour and misuse of the towpath or waterspace. It has also improved relationships between various waterways users, as well as local residents.



We continue to deliver our 'Let's Tidy' and 'Let's Chat' initiatives as part of the programme, aimed at improving towpath conditions and engaging with the local community. The Let's Tidy events have proven to be huge successes and generated considerable interest. We will continue to hold these three-four times per year and aim to engage more members of the local community to take part.

Events are promoted locally with voluntary involvement aimed at supporting the local community. It has so far had a positive (visible) impact on the towpath on the western K&A.

## Waterspace Partnership

We continue to play an active role in the Waterspace Partnership alongside Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Environment Agency and Wessex Water to identify and deliver enhancements to the waterway and nearby land. More information on the partnership and Waterspace Study can be found [here](#).

Our support of the Waterspace volunteer group has continued throughout 2022-23 and we are working with them to identify future funding opportunities to enable them to grow in size and responsibility. Their ongoing commitment to the Trust and Partnership is invaluable.

## Heritage

Canal & River Trust's waterways are a national asset of intrinsic value, reflecting Britain's emergence as the first industrial nation. This heritage comprises the structures, landscape, setting and context of the waterways, museum collections, archives, historic vessels and associated skills.



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One of the principal Charitable Objects of the Trust is 'to protect and conserve for public benefit sites, objects and buildings of archaeological, architectural, engineering or historic interest on, in the vicinity of, or otherwise associated with inland waterways.'

The Trust cares for more than 130 designated heritage assets on the K&A

including three Listed at Grade II\* as being of particular importance, and seven Scheduled Ancient Monuments, the highest level of heritage protection that can be awarded. These include the Caen Hill Lock Flight, regarded as the most impressive in the UK and widely attributed as 'one of the seven wonders of the waterways'. Also, the architectural gem that is the Dundas Aqueduct, which is designated as a Grade I Listed Building in addition to its Scheduled Monument Status.

## Environment

Although our waterways were not built for nature, they form natural corridors for the movement of wildlife as well as habitat to support a wide variety of plants and animals. Some of these are quite rare, such as orchids, otters and water voles. Animals such as bats and kingfishers use canals and rivers for foraging and commuting, avoiding the perils of roads.

Waterways bring the countryside into our towns and cities, as well as some of our more intensively farmed landscapes, providing vital links in a fragmented landscape. They provide a connection to nature for millions of people and a source of wellbeing for communities.

Recent surveys show that one reason our customers consistently value canals and like to visit them is because of their diverse nature and the species they may be lucky enough to spot. Many parts of our network have been designated as protected nature sites.

Much of the canal is covered by the Kennet & Avon County Wildlife Site and three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) incorporate parts of the canal. These are Thatcham Reed Beds, River Kennet and Freeman's Marsh. There are numerous SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites adjoining and adjacent to the canal throughout its length.

## Case Studies

In 2022, the Trust partnered with The Oracle and Abbey Quarter Business District to install floating reed beds along a stretch of the canal flowing through the centre of Reading. It can be difficult for nature to thrive along sections of hard-banked canal. Installing the floating reed beds along the edge gives a foothold for nature in the heart of the city.



The reed beds provide shelter and nesting for water birds, such as mallard, coots, and moorhens. They offer wildflowers for pollinators that are under threat. A micro-wilderness of submerged plant roots provides feeding grounds and habitat for aquatic fauna. And they “soften” the engineered bank and improve the experience for visitors and locals alike. Furthermore, the reed beds adsorb nutrients from the canal water which can become excessive and cause problems in urban environments.

This also provided a fantastic opportunity to engage with local businesses and school children. They all came together to plant up the reed beds before they were floated on the water.

In Autumn 2019, 2km of towpath and environmental enhancement work was completed along the Thatcham stretch, part funded by Thames Water. The work was carried out by the Trust’s in-house construction team, with help from volunteers. It included making up the towpath to cover very prominent tree roots and smoothing out dips. They planted reeds in bare soft bank locations to increase the habitat diversity along this canal stretch.

A similar scheme is due to commence in Spring 2023, in partnership with the charity Sustrans, custodians of the **National Cycle Network**. This is for a 2.5km section between Aldermaston Wharf and Ufton Lane on the eastern section of the K&A. It will benefit all users of the canal, but especially pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme also includes 575m of bank protection and reinstatement. This will provide habitat for water voles, which are currently absent from this part of the canal.

## Vegetation Management

The Trust must balance various and sometimes conflicting requirements of vegetation management for safety, conservation of the natural and built environment, and recreational activity in a cost-effective manner. We aim to respond sensitively to waterway character and level of use as well as statutory influences arising from safety, wildlife and other legislation. Vegetation management is a key interest for our visitors and we publish information on the approach that we adopt on our website. More information can be found on our [website](#).



## Towpath Mowing

Our grass cutting regime is reviewed annually and feedback from our users is taken into consideration. We have a very careful balance to manage between allowing nature to flourish while ensuring the safe usability of the towpath and navigation. Our approach to towpath mowing depends upon the waterway character and the type of towpath, its location, its surface makeup, its width, the type of edging and level of use. We aim to provide safe access for boating, walking, and where appropriate other activities while optimising biodiversity interest.

Typically, in urban locations such as Bath, Devizes, Newbury and Reading, the grass is cut frequently across the full width of the towpath.

In more rural areas grass fringes may be left to grow along the front and/or rear of the towpath. This is the regime applied to most of the K&A as it is generally a rural canal in nature.

In 2020, in an effort to be more open with our users, we enabled [access on our website](#) to part of our GIS system so that people could view the mowing regime local to them. This allows people to see how frequently an area will be cut and the standard that will be applied.

## Our Green Plan

The Trust has developed a 'Green Plan', which you can find more information about [here](#), and our Climate Change education pack [here](#).

## Carbon Trust Certification

As a recognition of our sustainability work, we are delighted to announce our re-certification to the Carbon Trust Standard.

This re-certification acknowledges our on-going efforts to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. This progress has been achieved through several initiatives, including:

- investment in energy efficient LED lighting
- fuel management software and internal speed limits on our commercial vehicles
- increasing our travel by train, rather than by car
- increased energy awareness leading to positive change
- introduction of electric vehicles and charge points

## Waste

We are increasing the amount of waste that is recycled every year. In 2022 we increased landfill diversion rates to 94%.

We're constantly looking at the services we provide for our customers and waste disposal is no exception. We monitor the services at these sites to make sure they offer our customers what's needed and that they provide value for money for the Trust.

We provide services to our customers along the K&A which include general waste, elsan points and pumps outs. In some locations, local councils provide recycling facilities for glass, tin and paper.

## Appendix 1 – Boat Services on the Kennet & Avon

Miles from Thames	Km from River Thames	Cruising time (Hour)	Description	Pumpout	Elsan	Water Point	Rubbish Point	Operator
0.00	0.00	0.00	Thames & Kennet Marina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Tingdene Marinas
5.00	8.01	2.20	Burghfield/Southcote Moorings	Yes	Yes	Yes		Kennet Cruises
8.50	13.66	4.00	Tyle Mill	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT
10.70	17.27	5.20	Aldermaston	Yes		Yes	Yes	Reading Marina
10.80	17.31	5.30	Aldermaston Wharf		Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT
11.60	18.59	5.80	Froudes Bridge Marina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Froudes Bridge
18.80	30.33	9.50	Newbury Boat Co.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Newbury Boat Company
19.00	30.90	10.00	Greenham Island Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greenham Island Services
24.90	40.10	13.20	Kintbury-above Lock 78	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT
28.00	45.00	14.80	Hungerford	Yes	Yes	Yes		CRT
32.90	53.00	18.60	Great Bedwyn	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT
34.70	55.79	20.20	Crofton			Yes	Yes	CRT
38.90	62.67	23.50	Wootton Rivers			Yes	Yes	CRT
41.90	67.35	24.20	Pewsey Wharf	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT
45.80	73.66	25.20	Honeystreet -Moonraker Canalboat	Yes	Yes	Yes		Moonraker Canalboats
47.81	76.50	25.70	All Cannings				Yes	CRT
52.40	84.35	26.90	Devizes Marina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Devizes Marina
53.80	86.50	27.20	Devizes Wharf	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT
54.80	88.18	29.10	Caen Hill - above Lock 44	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT
55.70	89.70	34.00	Caen Hill Marina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Land & Water
56.70	91.20	35.40	Sells Green Bridge			Yes	Yes	CRT
58.30	93.90	36.40	Seend, The Barge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT
62.70	100.94	38.60	Hilperton Marina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Hilperton Marina
64.90	104.40	39.00	Bradford-on-Avon Marina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bradford on Avon
65.80	105.90	39.50	Bradford Wharf	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT & Sally Boats
67.25	108.20	39.90	Avoncliff			Yes		CRT
70.00	112.57	40.50	Dundas & Somerset Coal Canal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	CRT & Somerset Coal Canal
73.10	117.56	41.30	Jenkins Knill (Bathampton) S/B	Yes	Yes			Jenkins Knill
73.10	117.56	41.30	Bathampton			Yes	Yes	CRT
74.40	119.70	41.60	Darlington Wharf				Yes	CRT
74.80	120.40	41.90	Sydney Wharf	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bath Narrowboats
74.90	120.55	41.90	Bath - Bath Top Lock 13			Yes		CRT
75.00	120.75	42.40	Bath - Lock 11				Yes	CRT
78.30	126.00	44.30	Bath Marina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	BWML
81.40	130.93	45.50	Saltford Marina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Saltford Marina
82.10	132.20	46.00	Swineford		Yes	Yes		Wessex Water
84.60	136.13	46.50	Portavon Marina		Yes	Yes	Yes	Portavon Marina
86.60	139.40	47.60	Hanham			Yes		CRT