MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Items in red are confidential.

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees ("the Trustees") of the Canal & River Trust ("the Trust") held at 08.30am on 15th May 2025, Hyatt Regency, 55 Booth Street West Manchester, M15 6PQ

Present:

David Orr CBE	-	Chair
Dame Jenny Abramsky	-	Deputy Chair
Sir James Bevan	-	Trustee
Chris Fellingham	-	Trustee
Janet Hogben	-	Trustee
Sir Chris Kelly	-	Trustee
Bronagh Kennedy	-	Trustee
Jennie Price CBE	-	Trustee
Ranjit Sondhi CBE	-	Trustee

In attendance:

Richard Parry	-	Chief Executive
Heather Clarke	-	Strategy & Impact Director
Steve Dainty	-	Finance Director
Tom Deards	-	Legal & Governance Director
Anne Gardner-Aston	-	Health & Safety Director
Maggie Gardner	-	Fundraising Director
Malcolm Horne	-	Chief Infrastructure & Programmes Officer
Susie Mather	-	Director of Communications and External Relations
Stuart Mills	-	Chief Investment Officer
Karen Seth	-	People Director
David Prisk	-	Reservoir Asset Manager *(item 25/112)*

25/116 WELCOME

The Chair started the meeting by announcing the appointment of Campbell Robb as the Trust's new Chief Executive, who would be joining the Trust in October 2025 - with Stuart Mills serving as Interim Chief Executive from R. Parry's departure in July to C. Robb's arrival.

The Chair thanked Trustees who had been involved in a very rigorous and competitive recruitment process.

25/117 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Peters and Tim Reeve.

25/118 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Board received and noted the Register of Interests report.

R. Sondhi noted that his term as Non-Executive Director at University Hospital Birmingham has come to an end.

25/119 MINUTES AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 March 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

The matters arising report was noted by the Board with all outstanding actions complete or on the agenda for discussion.

25/120 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION

R. Parry gave an overview of the topics being presented to the Board of Trustees at the meeting.

25/121 B25 BUSINESS PLAN

S. Dainty briefly introduced the paper, which updated the Board on the B25 Business Plan following the B24 financial year-end, highlighting the following:

- Minor adjustments to reflect B24 year-end position.
- The allocation of funds from the Designated Investment Fund, as agreed at the March 2025 Board meeting.
- Revisions to the KPI's and targets to reflect the year end position, including the Better Boating Plan and Defra Grant Agreement KPIs

DECISION: *The Board approved the revised B25 Business Plan and revised KPIs.*

25/122 LONG TERM FINANCIAL MODEL

S. Dainty summarised the paper which presented the current iteration of the Trust's long term financial model.

Four long term model scenarios had been prepared as follows:

- a base financial case – with an unconstrained infrastructure spend plan and a downside sensitivity to the fundraising strategy
- an upside plus financial case – with a constrained infrastructure spend plan and fundraising strategy as approved by the Board
- an upside financial case – with a constrained infrastructure spend plan and base cash from a fundraising perspective
- and a downside financial case – base case adjusted to reflect additional asset costs take account of climate change

The Board thanked S. Dainty for the paper, which it was agreed provided a sobering view of the risks to the Trust's long-term financial sustainability.

There was further discussion which covered the following:

- The unsustainability of the base case in the long-term, as presented in the paper
- The importance of the two key factors of asset risk and fundraising income
- The need to fundamentally review the Trust's operating model, with a view to finding a path to long-term financial sustainability

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ACTION: *Prepare a revised paper for the July Board meeting, setting out a revised sustainable base case which balances risk management with affordability constraints*

25/124 ANNUAL RESERVOIR REPORT

The Board welcomed D. Prisk (Trust Reservoir Asset Manager) to the meeting, who summarised the Annual Reservoir Report which contained details of reservoir safety work carried out by the Trust over the past 12 months.

The Board thanked D. Prisk for the Report which provided a comprehensive and informative account of the huge amount of work undertaken to effectively manage and mitigate the Trust's reservoir risks.

25/125 TODDBROOK RESERVOIR REVISED PROJECT APPROVAL

M. Horne introduced the paper, which sought Board approval for an additional £6.8m, to cover completion of the main construction elements at Toddbrook reservoir, taking the total project value up to £56.2m.

M. Horne noted the highly complex nature of the project in respect of design, construction and regulatory requirements, which had resulted in increased costs and some delay to the project and the implementation of actions arising from mandated measures in the interest of safety (MIOS), of which the Environment Agency had been kept fully informed.

M. Horne confirmed that the project is close to reaching a key milestone where storm flows will be able to use the new spillway, which removes the risk of evacuation for the local community.

DECISION: ***The Board approved an additional £6.8m to cover delivery of the main construction elements at Toddbrook reservoir.***

25/124 GRAND UNION CANAL TRANSFER – GATE 3 APPROVAL

M. Horne set out the purpose of the paper, to request approval from the Board for the submission of the Grand Union Canal Transfer (GUCT) project's Gate 3 (outline design) approval package to the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID) by 31 May 2025. This

will allow the project to move to Gate 4 (detailed design and Development Consent Order (DCO) submission). Similar approvals were being requested from the Boards of the other project partners, Severn Trent and Affinity Water.

In addition, approval was being sought for the Executive to pursue the optimum applicant status for the Trust in relation to the submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) in December 2026 (likely to either be as Applicant (with 'day 1' powers under the DCO) or as a Nominated Transferee (to take the benefit of statutory powers granted by the Order).

The paper also provided an update on progress, current issues and risks & opportunities. It was noted that acceptance of the recommendations in the paper did not bind the Trust into commercial, contractual or legal agreements at this stage – with discussions on heads of terms in train between the various parties.

(a) DECISION: ***The Board approved the submission of the Grand Union Canal Transfer (GUCT) project's Gate 3 (outline design) approval package to the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID) by 31 May 2025.***

(b) DECISION: ***The Board approved the Executive to pursue the optimum applicant status for the Trust in relation to the submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) in December 2026.***

25/126 MONMOUTHSHIRE & BRECON CANAL: IMPACT OF WATER RESTRICTIONS

The Board received a report which provided an update on the current issues facing the Monmouthshire & Brecon (Mon & Brec) Canal now that severe restrictions are being applied to its water supply, principally the main abstraction from the River Usk, and outlines the political and public campaign to protect the Canal and secure a sustainable and affordable long-term water supply.

The Board noted the short-term agreement entered into with Welsh Water to secure water supply for this year and recent public campaign and political engagement with the Welsh Government, which was felt to be positive and worth continuing to pursue, to ensure the future of the Canal was seen as a shared problem for all relevant stakeholders in Wales.

25/127 GOVERNANCE REPORT

TD summarised the Governance report which had been previously circulated.

The Board:

(a) **APPROVED** the proposed amendments to the newly named People & Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference.

(b) **NOTED** the National Advisory Group Annual Reports, emphasising the importance of focus on the Youth Engagement Advisory Group to ensure it had sufficient support for its activities from the Trust.

(c) **APPROVED** the extension of the deadline for the Boat Licensing Review Commission report to 10th November 2025.

(d) **APPROVED** the updated Customer Services Facilities Policy Statement and the New Tax Strategy Policy Statement and requested a review of the wording of the Restoration Policy Statement

ACTION: To review the wording of the Restoration Policy Statement

(e) **NOTED** the reminder relating to Trustee HGV Operators Licence registration with the Traffic Commissioner.

(f) **NOTED** the update on Trustee recruitment.

(g) **NOTED** the recent Board Committee Minutes.

25/127 FORWARD PLAN

The Board of Trustees Forward Plan detailing future agenda items was received and noted.

25/128 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

RP summarised the Chief Executive's report which included updates from individual Executive Team members, noting particularly the following:

- Drought planning already taking place in light of the recent dry conditions.
- The decision to withdraw the Trust's regional-level Heritage Lottery Fund bid of £4.5m million for repairs to the Anderton Boat Lift, with a view to submission of a national-level bid for up to £10m.
- The annual National Boat Count, which confirmed an increase in boat licence evasion to almost 10% and a c12% increase in the number of boats without a home mooring.

25/129 FINANCE REPORT

S. Dainty briefly summarised the report which set out the Trust's financial performance in the year to date.

25/130 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business conducted.

25/131 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17th July 2025, London.

Trust Board Meeting
15th May 2025
Information & Decision Report
Confidential Wording in Red

GOVERNANCE REPORT
Tom Deards, Legal & Governance Director

1. PURPOSE

This paper sets out the governance matters which require a decision or noting by the Board.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

2.1 **APPROVE** the proposed amendments to the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference

2.2 **NOTE** the National Advisory Group Annual Report

2.3 **NOTE** the update on the Boat Licensing Commission

2.4 **APPROVE** the new and updated Policy Statements

2.5 **NOTE** the update relating to Trustee HGV Licence registration

2.6 **NOTE** the update on Trustee and Chief Executive recruitment

2.7 **NOTE** the recent Board Committee Minutes

3. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 Under paragraph 13d of the Trust Scheme of Delegation, it is for the Board to determine the terms of reference of Board Committees.

3.2 The Remuneration Committee has recently reviewed its terms of reference in the light of current best practice and emerging trends in good corporate governance.

3.3 A recent governance trend (advocated by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) has been to expand the remit of remuneration committees to include oversight of wider colleague pay and benefits (financial and non-financial), people matters and culture.

3.4 The Committee considers that an expansion of their role to cover these aspects would provide the Board with greater oversight for key strategic decisions in these areas whilst retaining sufficient focus on Executive pay (which does not have the complexity of some organisations in the absence of share-based and long-term incentive arrangements)

3.5 A copy of the proposed updated terms of reference for the proposed newly named People & Remuneration Committee are included at Appendix 1 for Trustee approval, which includes the following amendments

- Section 2 (Purpose) – expanded purpose to oversee people objectives for the Trust, with particular focus on alignment of wider colleague pay, people matters and culture with Trust organisational strategy and achievement of long-term goals.
- Section 4 (Duties & Responsibilities) – additional duties added to reflect broader Committee purposes.
- Appendix 1, Para 11 (Delegations) – updated to reflect broader Committee purposes (including succession planning, performance management, collective bargaining agreement and change to people processes and contractual provisions) and an increase in Committee Chair approval of severance costs from £50,000 to £80,000

4. NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUPS ANNUAL REPORT

4.1 A copy of the National Advisory Groups Annual Report is included with this report at Appendix 2.

4.2 The Reports summarises membership and recent activity of the following currently active National Advisory Groups

- Navigation
- Cultural Heritage
- Fisheries & Angling
- Youth Engagement

4.3 The Environmental Action advisory group has not been active over the past 12 months. Its role and scope are to be reviewed shortly take account of recent Trust activity around climate change adaptation, transition to net zero and establishment of the network's ecological baseline.

5. BOAT LICENCE REVIEW COMMISSION UPDATE

5.1 The Boat Licence Review Commission gave an update to the Boating Committee on 6 May, covering the following:

- Closing of engagement survey on 22 April with 4,678 responses, with a draft report due to be sent to the Commission by 9 May.
- Series of planned meetings with boating groups on 16 and 19 May

- Further recent briefings on relevant factors for Commission's consideration of options including charity and planning law

5.2 Given the depth of issues involved and their desire to fully explore these issues through engagement with relevant stakeholders, the Commission discussed with the Boating Committee an extension to the deadline for the Commission report to the Board - which was originally set by the Board (at the November 2024 Board meeting) for the Board meeting on 25 September 2025.

5.3 Following that discussion, the Committee is recommending to the Board that the deadline for the Commission's report is extended to the end of October 2025.

5.4 A further update will be provided to the July Board meeting, including a proposed timeframe and process for the Trust's response to the Commission's report.

6. POLICY STATEMENT APPROVAL

6.1 The Board is asked to approve the following Policy Statements (copied included in the Resources section of Diligent)

- The new Restoration Policy Statement - ahead of proposed wider consultation on the draft process for working with individual restoration groups (also included in the Resources section of Diligent).
- The updated Customer Services Facilities Policy Statement, (with amended wording to clarify closure process for CSFs)
- New Tax Strategy Policy Statement, intended for internal use only

7. TRUSTEE REGISTRATION ON TRUST HGV OPERATORS LICENCES

7.1 Trustees are reminded that the Trust is required to register each individual Trustee (upon appointment) under the Trust's HGV 4 Operators Licences with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.

7.2 This registration confirms overall Trustee accountability for ensuring the Trust complies with the conditions of the Licence, including safe operation, proper maintenance and adherence to drivers' hours rules.

7.3 The registration is taken forward as part of the Trustee induction process and involves responding to several questions including whether the individual Trustee is registered under any HGV Operators Licence.

7.4 In the event that Trustees take on roles in other organisations that require registration on an HGV Licence, they should disclose details of their Trust Licence registration, which can be provided upon request by the Governance team.

8. TRUSTEE AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

8.1 The Appointments Committee are taking forward the recruitment process for new Trustees ahead of appointment by Council at the September AGM, with a long list of 11 candidates currently being interviewed.

8.2 The appointment process for a new Chief Executive is progressing well with a decision to be made and communicated to the Board shortly - by the Trustee sub-group to whom the Board have delegated the appointment decision.

9. BOARD COMMITTEE MINUTES

Redacted

PEOPLE & REMUNERATION COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. CONSTITUTION

1.1. The People & Remuneration Committee is a Committee of the Board of Trustees.

1.2. The Delegations to all such Committees including the People & Remuneration Committee is laid down in the Board of Trustees' Scheme of Delegation.

2. PURPOSE

2.1. The Committee:

2.1.1. Reviews the priority people objectives for the Trust, with particular focus on how workforce pay, people matters and culture are aligned to organisation strategy and the achievement of long-term goals.

2.1.2. The Committee shall identify any matters where it considers that action or improvement is needed, make recommendations as to the steps to be taken and report its work, conclusions and any recommendations to the Board.

3. DELEGATIONS

3.1. The Board has delegated specific decisions to Board Committees, including the People & Remuneration Committee, via its formal Scheme of Delegation. These delegations are reproduced in Appendix 1.

4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. The Committee shall:

4.1.1. Review the overall people strategy for the Trust, ensuring it is transparent, easy to understand and contributes to the achievement of the organisation's goals and objectives;

4.1.2. Support the growth and development of an effective employee value proposition and internal culture;

4.1.3. Review how the results of colleague engagement and listening activities can be best utilised to support the Trust;

4.1.4. Review any major changes managed by the People Team that directly impact colleagues;

4.1.5. Establish the selection criteria, appointing and setting the terms of reference for any consultants who advise the Committee, and to obtain reliable, up-to-date information about people issues and approaches in other organisations. The Committee shall have full authority to commission any reports or surveys which it deems necessary to help it fulfil its obligations. The use of any

consultants shall be reported in the annual report.

4.1.6. Establish the total reward approach for Executive Directors, incorporating;

- The approval of remuneration and terms of service, ensuring the Trust's culture is considered;
- The approval of the annual pay review increase;
- The approval and design of any performance related pay schemes, including determining targets and the budget pool available as well as ensuring that the range of possible values of rewards and other limits or discretions are identified and explained; to review such performance accordingly and approve the total annual payments made under such scheme;
- Establish the policy for, and scope of, the pension arrangements for the Executive Directors;
- Ensure that the terms of termination of the service of any Executive Director, and any payments made, are fair to the individual, and to the Trust;

4.1.7. Review wider workforce remuneration and in doing so, ensure that Executive Director pay is fair and proportionate when undertaking the Committee duties and responsibilities outlined in 4.1.5;

- Review the appropriateness and relevance of the overall remuneration policy of the Trust;
- Ensure that remuneration drives behaviours consistent with the Trust's charitable purpose, values and strategy, and is clearly linked to the delivery of the Trust's strategy and the Trust's long-term performance;
- Ensure that failure of an Executive to deliver is not rewarded.
- Review any proposed major changes in employee benefits structures throughout the Trust group.

5. ANNUAL REVIEW

5.1. The Committee Chair shall ensure that Committee members conduct an annual review of their work and these Terms of Reference and make any recommendations to the Trust.

6. MEMBERSHIP

6.1. The Committee shall normally comprise at least 3 Trustees, all of whom shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Chair of the Board of Trustees may attend but may not be a member of the Committee.

6.2. The Committee Chair shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

6.3. The quorum for meetings shall be set as one plus one third of the number of Committee members (rounded to the nearest number)[1].

6.4. The Committee Chair will ensure there will be an induction programme for new Committee members and that training takes place on an ongoing and timely basis for all members.

6.5. In accordance with paragraph 10.2.4, the Committee may co-opt an external non-Trustee with relevant experience to assist the Committee with its work.

6.6. If a regular member is unable to act due to absence, illness or any other cause, the Chair of the Trustees may appoint another member of the Board of Trustees to serve as an alternate member provided that at any time there is only one alternate member.

7. ATTENDANCE

7.1. The Chief Executive, People Director and Reward Manager may not be members of the Committee but may attend meetings at the standing invitation of the Committee.

7.2. Where any Executive Director member has a conflict of interest with an item on the agenda, the Committee Chair has the discretion to restrict circulation of that paper to the exclusion of that Executive Director(s) and may request the Executive Director(s) do not attend the meeting in part or in its entirety.

7.3. The Committee may invite other Trustees, other executive directors, staff or advisers to attend meetings when appropriate in accordance with paragraph 10.2.6.

7.4. The Executive Assistant for the People Director (or his/her nominee) shall act as the Secretary of the Committee.

7.5. In determining whether Committee members are participating in a Committee meeting, it is irrelevant where any Trustee is or how they communicate with each other provided that they communicate with one another simultaneously.

7.6. Professional advisers appointed under paragraph 10.2.5 may also attend meetings.

7.7. Except as outlined above, the meetings of the Committee shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust's Articles of Association governing the proceedings of the Board of Directors.

8. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

8.1. The Committee shall meet not less than twice in a financial year, and at such

[1] The quorum for Committees with 5, 6 or 7 members is therefore 3 and the quorum for Committees with 3 or 4 members is therefore 2.

other times as it considers necessary.

8.2. The frequency and timing of meetings are decided by the Committee Chair. Any member of the Committee, the Chief Executive, People Director or the Chair of the Trust Board may ask the Committee Chair to hold a meeting.

8.3. Notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda of items along with any pre read papers to be discussed shall be forwarded to each member of the Committee no less than 5 working days prior to the meeting.

9. RECORD OF MEETINGS AND DECISIONS

9.1. The Secretary shall minute the proceedings and recommendations of all meetings of the Committee and keep appropriate records. Minutes of the meetings shall be circulated to all Trustees.

9.2. If an urgent decision is required between meetings, the Committee Chair may deem it appropriate for such a decision to be ratified by email. Where this is the case, the Secretary shall record this as an addendum to the minutes of the previous meeting.

10. REPORTING

10.1. The Committee Chair shall report the proceedings of the Committee to the next following meeting of the Board of Trustees.

10.2. The Committee's duties and activities during the year shall be disclosed in the annual report of the Trust.

APPENDIX 1

11. DELEGATIONS

11.1. The Board of Trustees has formally delegated certain decisions to its Board Committee, via its approved Scheme of Delegation

11.2. All Board Committees have the power to:

11.2.1. Approve its own agenda (via the Committee Chair);

11.2.2. Investigate any activity within its Terms of Reference;

11.2.3. Seek information from any employee of the Trust;

11.2.4. Co-opt independent members from outside the Trust Board, provided that Trustees remain in a majority on the Committee. Independent members may serve for a maximum period of 3 years, with the ability to be re-appointed for a further period of one term;

11.2.5. Appoint independent professional advisers relevant to its Terms of Reference at the Trust's expense;

11.2.6. Require any member of the Executive, or any employee nominated by a member of the Executive to attend their meetings or ask them to not attend meetings.

11.3. The Board's Scheme of Delegation gives the following powers to the People & Remuneration Committee:

11.3.1. Determine the overall reward and remuneration strategy for the Trust, including for Executive Directors

11.3.2. Make the required annual or periodic decisions required to implement the overall reward and remuneration strategy, such as annual pay increases and performance related pay pools;

11.3.3. Approve the design of, and determine targets for, any performance related pay scheme operated by the Trust for any of the Executive Directors; to review performance accordingly and approve the total annual payments made under such a scheme;

11.3.4. Approve the terms of termination of service of any Executive Director, and any payments made;

11.3.5. Approve any major changes in employee benefits structures or people processes throughout the Trust group;

11.3.6. Approve severance costs of £80,000 or more for any member of staff below Director;

11.3.7. Determine appropriate succession plan for the Executive Team and key or critical roles to the Trust;

11.3.8. Approve overall performance rating distribution at performance year-end;

11.3.9. Retain oversight of Union Collective Bargaining Agreement, approving significant changes to the Agreement or to colleague contractual provisions.

Date of Approval: May 2025

CULTURAL HERITAGE ADVISORY GROUP – May 2025

NAME OF THE GROUP	CULTURAL HERITAGE ADVISORY GROUP (CHAG)
TRUST LEAD DIRECTOR	Heather Clarke, Strategy & Impact Director
TRUST LEAD MANAGER	Victoria Thomson, Head of Heritage & Collections
CHAIRED BY	Nigel Barker-Mills
MEMBERS	**AFFILIATION/BRIEF COMMENT FOR EACH**
Nigel Barker-Mills	Nigel is an architectural historian, with a lifelong interest in the built environment. From early visits to the historic buildings in the Wye Valley as a child he developed his interest into a career, listing buildings and then advising on their management and repair culminating in the role of Historic England Planning Director for London. Nigel is also a founder member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and in addition to contributing to publications on historic buildings he served on the IHBC Council and chaired the Editorial Board of Context, its journal. Nigel retired from Historic England in 2016 establishing his own conservation consultancy and when not repairing his listed house in Stroud, spends his time advising other owners on how to sustain their irreplaceable heritage assets.
David Rudlin	David is a director of urban design at BDP, formerly founder and director at URBED (Urbanism, Environment and Design), past Chair of the Academy of Urbanism and Honorary Professor at Manchester University. He was one of the principal authors of the UK's National Model Design Code published in January 2021 and, in 2014, was the winner of the Wolfson Economics Prize. He heads the BDP team which was appointed by Liverpool City Council in April to lead the development of the 'Liverpool Waterfront Plan'. His third book Climax City, written with Shruti Hemani, was published in 2019 and he writes a monthly column for Building Design Magazine. A planner by training, he spent his early career working on the on the redevelopment of Hulme in Manchester and has worked at URBED for 30 years leading their award-winning urban design and master planning work. This includes the Brentford Lock West masterplan for the Canal & River Trust.
Jennifer Hagan	Jennifer's career has centred around cultural heritage, straddling academia and the not-for-profit sector. She completed a PhD with Teesside University in 2014 on the sustainability of cultural heritage volunteering, which included ethnographic fieldwork for the RSPB, which led to appointment with Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, researching the wellbeing impacts of nature-based volunteering. This role developed and existed alongside a secondment to the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts focusing on nature-based wellbeing as part of a wider national movement, including strategy and partnership development, policy review and volunteer management. Jennifer's specialisms include Organisational Psychology, tourism and events,

	human resource management, innovation and sustainability. She is currently leading an academic group 'Creating Sustainable Organisations', a Mind Mental Health Champion and involved with the Tees Valley Nature Partnership Engagement Group.
Elizabeth Adams	Elizabeth holds a Diploma in Architecture from the Architectural Association (AADip) and is a registered architect with the Architects Registration Board (ARB). She is a chartered member of the RIBA with over 30 years' experience of working in architectural practice in London. Elizabeth is a founding director of the award-winning Adams & Sutherland Ltd, an architectural practice specializing in working on urban and regeneration projects across London and projects for the public sector. The practice has won awards including the London Mayors Planning Award 2004, RIBA Award 2012, RIBA Award 2020 (Shortlist), BD Architect of the Year Public Realm 2012 and a number of New London Architecture Awards. Elizabeth has been appointed Design Advisor to the GLA between 2003 and 2012, taught in schools of architecture throughout her career and was the design advisor to the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
Lizzie Glithero-West	Lizzie has been the Chief Executive of The Heritage Alliance since 2016. Her previous career has been mainly in the civil service and she has expert knowledge of a wide range of policy areas including archaeology, heritage protection, museums and tourism. Lizzie has also spent time as Private Secretary to Culture Ministers and the Permanent Secretary, as Head of Logistics at DCMS at the time of the General Election, and on secondment to English Heritage and to the National Museum Directors' Council. Lizzie's first love is heritage. She has a degree in Archaeology and Anthropology from Oxford, and an MA in History of Art from Birkbeck. In 2014 she was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Lizzie is a mummy of two energetic little women, writes about Cultural Education and tries to keep up with her academic interest in Egyptian Revival in her spare time. Lizzie has published on Belzoni and the Egyptian Hall and on Cartier's Egyptian Revival Jewellery in the Art Deco Period. She is a member of Royal Holloway's humanities advisory board and lectures at Oxford University on heritage.
Neil Redfern	Neil Redfern is the Executive Director of the Council for British Archaeology, an independent charity, that brings together members, supporters and partners to give archaeology a voice, champion participation and safeguard archaeology for future generations. He has previously worked for Historic England in York for 18 Years as Development Advice Team Leader and was responsible for the delivery of Historic England's statutory advice on planning, listed building and scheduled monument consent applications in Yorkshire. Neil has an M.Phil in Archaeological Heritage Management and Museums (University of Cambridge), a BA (Hons) in Geography and Archaeology (University of Manchester). He has over 22 years experience of cultural heritage management, archaeological fieldwork,

	survey and assessment and museum practice through working for English Heritage, the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and the Wordsworth Trust. He is particularly interested in the practical and philosophical challenges of how we value places, work with the wider public and help everyone participate.
Nigel Crowe	Dr Nigel Crowe holds qualifications in historic conservation and architectural history and has worked in the heritage field for over 30 years. After working for English Heritage in the 1980s, he joined British Waterways as its first Heritage Officer and became Head of Heritage both for British Waterways and then the Trust. He is still involved with waterways heritage and is supporting the securing of England's first nationwide Listed Building Consent Order, which he pioneered for the Trust. He is the author of the English Heritage Book of Canals, has published numerous articles relating to heritage management and conservation and is a member of the IHBC's Editorial Board. He has scripted and presented several waterway heritage films on YouTube including one about War on the Waterways.
Rebecca Madgin	Rebecca is the Professor of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow. Rebecca's work explores the emotional value of historic places in the context of urban redevelopment initiatives in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Rebecca works with a number of national and local heritage organisations, most notably as part of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation's Editorial Board for 'Context' and as a member of Historic England's Historic Places Panel and Expert Advisory Group.
Sandra Stancliffe	Sandra has worked in the field of heritage learning and community engagement for 30 years. She is currently working at Historic England, the Public Body which advises on the conservation and protection of the historic environment in England. She leads the Education, Inclusion and Community Engagement and her brief is to ensure that as many people as possible have a stake in looking after our built heritage.
UPDATE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS	The Trust's Cultural Heritage Advisory Group (CHAG) was established in April 2021 and is chaired by Nigel Barker-Mills. The CHAG supports the Trust in combining effective conservation and interpretation of the built and cultural heritage of the waterways with promoting their value for wellbeing and our strategic objective of increasing use and enjoyment of the waterways by a greater proportion of the communities who live and work alongside them. The first meeting of the year was used as an opportunity to revisit and refresh the purpose and activity of the Group. It was agreed to pursue three meetings a year in future (two online, plus a longer site-based meeting). The Group learned about the newly extended Heritage & Collections Team, and the Trust's progress with various initiatives, including the assessment and reporting of its impact, and the Trust's engagement with the Government's planning reform agenda. The Group also discussed the future form and content of the Trust's Heritage Report, with a particular focus on the intended audience, a clear and compelling narrative, and ensuring that the value of the

	Trust's heritage is properly valued. A further item explored work on the Collection, including the development of the Collections policy and related strategies, the completion of the security review, and early work to prepare for the renewal of the Trust's museum accreditation. Discussions later in the year introduced updates on the work of CHAG members, and its relevance to the Group's remit. Updates were provided on the Trust's progress with various initiatives, including the Impact Report and Climate Adaptation Report, and the development of the Trust's 10-year strategy. Updates were also provided on the Trust's Oral History and Heritage Survey projects, both of which increase understanding of the story of the network, and will be rolled out further over coming years. The first round of oral history interviews has been concluded, and volunteer teams are now making significant progress across the network in providing updated surveys of historic network assets. A significant discussion addressed the impact of current and proposed planning reforms, notably in relation to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, Devolution Bill, statutory consultee review, and policy changes. The Group agreed that the 2025 site visit would take place in July, and look at regeneration, community engagement and heritage in Birmingham, with a focus on the Icknield Port Loop development.

FISHERIES & ANGLING ADVISORY GROUP – APRIL 2025

NAME OF THE GROUP	FISHERIES & ANGLING ADVISORY GROUP
TRUST LEAD DIRECTOR	Julie Sharman, Chief Operating Officer
TRUST LEAD MANAGER	John Ellis, National Fisheries & Angling Manager and Matthew Symonds Head of Customer Service Support
CHAIRED BY	Mr Andrew Strickland
MEMBERS	AFFILIATION/BRIEF COMMENT FOR EACH
Andy Strickland	A retired chartered accountant, Andy is now the general secretary of Prince Albert Angling Society, the largest angling club in the UK with around 10,000 members and a healthy waiting list He manages a portfolio of over two hundred fisheries including over forty that are owned outright by the society and more than 20 SSSI's, including sections of the Montgomery Canal SSSI.
David Kent BEM	Former Board member of The Angling Trust and ex-Chairman of The Angling Trust Freshwater Group, David has volunteered in numerous capacities in fisheries and angling for over 50 years. David previously played a lead role in the organisation of joint Canal & River Trust and Angling Trust competitions. David is the fisheries & angling elected Canal & River Trust Council member having been returned unopposed at the last election.
Paul Coulson	Paul is the Chief Executive of the Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM). He has a background in education and training and was a lecturer in Fisheries Management before joining the IFM. He is also the Chairman of the East Yorkshire Rivers Trust as well as a member of the British Record Fish Committee. He has been an avid angler from the age of eight, when he was given an old glass fishing rod by a neighbour. His kit has improved since, and he now spends his fishing time on the canals and natural waters of Yorkshire, with a particular love of winter league fishing.
Dave Ottewell	Dave began angling for gudgeon on the Trent and Mersey Canal aged ten, eventually learning the necessary skills to tackle the rivers around his hometown of Burton upon Trent. He was fortunate enough to have had access to plentiful mixed stocks of coarse fish and benefitted from the coaching offered by a number of dedicated anglers from Burton Mutual Angling Association and the former Derby Angling Association. These factors combined enabled him to develop both his match and pleasure angling, forming a lifelong love of angling and our precious aquatic environments. This led to the academic study of freshwater ecology and professional roles held within the Environment Agency, British

	Waterways, consultancy and his current position of Senior Hydrologist for Natural England, which enables him to advise the group on the management of fish populations and their associated legislation within the protected sites held by the Trust.
Dennis Hunt	An active angling coach who has played a significant role in the Trust's Let's Fish Campaign, Dennis has fished the canals for over 50 years and served considerable time as a committee member, Treasurer and Chairman of Luton Angling Club. Dennis has a deep interest in the equitable use of shared on the waterway network.
Paul Edwards	Paul is a keen angler and current secretary of Shropshire based Hodnet Angling Club and a member of the Bay Malton Angling Club. Paul has a commercial background in sales and marketing following an extensive business career at director level in the food industry. He has driven the implementation of various modern systems for Hodnet AC, thus making administration of club activities much less time consuming. Paul actively volunteers for Canal & River Trust supporting the Canal Pairs championship and various Let's Fish celebration events on the Shropshire Union Canal.
Mike Heylin	Mike is an entrepreneur and business manager with a marketing, PR, advertising and sales background in consumer and b2b markets. He has wide European experience and is a starter by nature. He has proven ability as secretary and administrator to numerous fisheries, angling and voluntary community and social groups and has run club stillwater fisheries for 25 years plus. Mike is a life-long political and environmental activist. He grew up fishing the GUC at Boxmoor. Mike has previously chaired the Angling Trust and was vice chairman of the Angling Trades Association.
Sue Galloway BEM	Sue has been a Level 2 Coarse Angling Coach since 2010 who also volunteers as the Lead Coach for Northampton Nene Angling Club's junior development team. She is their lead coach on the Canal & River Trust's Let's Fish activities. Her goals and aspirations are to continue to provide angling opportunities for children and young people with disabilities as well as increasing the number of girls, women and BAME's participating in angling. Sue loves being around water and nature and passionately believes in using angling activities to support and maintain wellbeing. Sue received the "Distinguished Award for Services to Young People," from the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs in 2020 and her British Empire Medal in 2023. Sue, the first BAME female participant to attend a national angling championship, has greatly improved her canal fishing techniques, which in turn has helped to improve her canal coaching skills and attended the England ladies international team trials in April 2022.

Lee Woodhouse	A West Midlands based self-employed mechanical engineer, Lee has 30 plus years or experience of canal match fishing at a high level. A key committee official of the Hankat Angling Society, Lee run regular urban canal matches including the Black Country Championships which attracts over 150 participants annually. Lee will be the lead organiser of the Canal pairs final in October 2025. Lee has a deep interest in the impact of invasive non-native species on canals, with a particular emphasis on Azolla and supports the Trust with monitoring outcomes of the use of biological control agents
Rob Harris	Peterborough based Rob brings a wide range of experience of the fisheries and angling world. He has a keen interest in the issues of the currently poor recruitment and retention within the sport, predation, fisheries and angling crime, and the impacts of climate change on our fisheries. Rob has a deep understanding of angling administration and has significant experience of running medium and large angling competitions
UPDATE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS	The group was established in 2011 to advise the newly created Trust around its fisheries & angling functions. During 2024/25, they met face to face three times (July, November and March). Members also have an open invitation to attend the bimestrial Let's Fish coaches' meetings Current members are active customers or supporters and play a significant role as critical friends and sounding board for future ambitions. Chaired by Andy Strickland, members include a range of fisheries and angling stakeholders with canal, river and stillwater fisheries interests in both England & Wales. Conservation interests and the fishing tackle trade are also represented on the group. The group continued to help the Trust refine, develop and grow its Let's Fish participation programme including its ongoing funding challenges, development of the Let's Fish angling academies and Fishing for Families schools programme as well as the evolution of regional, national celebrations and Global Communities Celebrations During the year, the group has also provided advice and feedback on numerous issues including: • Challenges customers face regarding the equitable use of towpath space. • Re-release of invasive non-native fish species; position statement. • A strategic review of the Let's Fish programme • Close season regulations on canal SSSI's. • Vegetation management and its implications for angling customers • Development of the canal pairs angling championships. • National angling development participation strategy

	• Fisheries and angling social media and associated Trust website content. • Future proposals for an angling club customer survey. • Fish passage and screening.

NAME OF THE GROUP	NAVIGATION ADVISORY GROUP (OPERATIONS)
TRUST LEAD DIRECTOR	**Julie Sharman, Chief Operating Officer**
TRUST LEAD MANAGER	**Matthew Symonds, Head of Boating & Customer Service**
CHAIRED BY	**Mike Carter**
MEMBERS	**AFFILIATION/BRIEF COMMENT FOR EACH**
Mike Carter, Chair	Boat safety scheme examiner and boat surveyor, member of CBOA
Gareth Jones	Private Boater, Gareth is a member of the RBOA
Sue Cawson	Private Boater, North West representative for HNBC
Nigel Stevens	Proprietor Shire Cruisers and a Member of the North West Regional Advisory Board
Lee Wilshire	A member of London's Better Relationships Group and is working on a number of projects on the canal network, from affordable moorings to a recycling barge. Lee, who is a planner and urban designer, lives on his boat. He was previously a member of the Navigation Advisory Group Licensing & Mooring. Currently elected Chair of CBOA
Ian McCarthy	A very long-term boater who has in the past been active with the Peak Forest Canal Society (PFCS) in particular. He became a trustee of the PFCS and later a founding member of Waterway Recovery Group North West (WRG NW), and the Huddersfield Canal Society. He is an active volunteer for Canal & River Trust in the North West. North West representative for HNBC.
Nick Grundy	Private boater with extensive knowledge of the network. active Was active in waterway restoration in his youth and he is still a member of the Waterway Recovery Group. Navigation representative for HNBC
Hannah Rigley	Private boater since 2018 as a liveaboard boater on the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal and previous Continuous Cruiser.
UPDATE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS	The NAG has explored and advised the Trust on a number of issues over the last 12 months, this has included; -

Agenda items

- Engaged in a discussion on the use of different materials and methods in lock gate construction and how this could be communicated to the wider boating community.
- Received an overview of the Trusts welfare and support provision
- Advised on feedback received following the launch of the licence changes (from 1st April 2024)
- Reviewed the plans for vegetation management, highlighting areas of concern, and the reformation of the vegetation subgroup.
- Provided assistance in suggesting relevant contacts to support the 250th anniversary of Wigan to Liverpool canal section.
- Attended a site visit at Toddbrook reservoir to receive an update on the progress of works.
- Consulted on the results of the 2024 Annual Boater Survey and the initial plans on how to communicate these.
- Engaged with the plans to increase boater satisfaction, including attending facilitated workshops sessions which fed into the creation of the Better Boating Plan.
- Provided feedback on an initial presentation of the Grand Union canal transfer project.
- Supported the planned 2024 to 2034 fundraising strategy.
- Provided guidance for proposed towpath works on the Aire & Calder.
- Gave advice on concerns with the published dimension data for the Montgomery Canal and the possibility of changing this.
- Supported the changes in signage at Barnton & Saltersford Tunnels on the Trent & Mersey.
- Ongoing engagement with the changes to CSF sites that are required following the introduction of the governments Simpler Recycling legislation.
- Undertook a site visit to the Winter Works at Hatton, Lock 40, approval of the new ladder design.
- Consulted on the long-term closure of the Wendover Arm.
- Engaged with a feasibility study from Sustrans on behalf of Wakefield Council for Wakefield Waterfront, Calder towpath.
- Involved in exploring what is possible to assist leisure traffic to use the Manchester Ship Canal whilst other North / South routes (including the Anderton boat lift and Bridgewater Canal) are unavailable.
- Regular review of asset related injuries report.
- Regular review of updates from NAG Subgroups (Mooring, Vegetation, Dredging, Stoppages, Communications)

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP – MAY 2025

NAME OF THE GROUP	**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP**
TRUST LEAD DIRECTOR	**Heather Clarke, Strategy & Impact Director**
TRUST LEAD MANAGER	**Katrina Hull, Head of Participation & Learning Development**
CHAIRED BY	**Louis Howell**
MEMBERS	**AFFILIATION/BRIEF COMMENT FOR EACH**
Louis Howell	Louis is a dynamic and rounded professional with experience that spans the voluntary youth sector, education sector and the world of small business. Today, he runs a marketing transformation company, co-runs an educational social enterprise and is a trustee and volunteer at 2 small London-based charities. His work with the Canal & River Trust began when he worked on the Action Squad's programme, headed up by NCVYS, which engaged and supported young people in social action across the canal network. Louis has recently been appointed Co-opted Member for Youth of the Trust's Council and is a member of the Regional Advisory Board for London & South East.
Holly Notcutt	As Head of Partnerships and Impact at #iwill, Holly represents the #iwill movement, Volunteering Matters and UK Youth.
Kristen Stephenson	As Head of Volunteering at Sport England Kristen leads on managing the 38 projects across their Volunteering Fund and supporting the delivery of their strategy, 'Volunteering in an Active Nation'. The fund is focused on getting young people involved in making a difference through social action, sport and physical activity and creating opportunities to get people from economically disadvantaged areas involved in volunteering. She's passionate about creating opportunities for more people to experience the benefits of volunteering and getting active. She was previously Volunteering Development Manager at the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) which worked with over 12,000 different charities who were members of NCVO.
Vanessa Joseph	Vanessa works for Mind, the Mental Health charity as a Young Person Influence and Participation Manager. She has been with Mind since January 2019 and previously with The Children's Society for four years, as a Participation Manager specialising in serious youth violence and child sexual exploitation. Vanessa's current role is to provide young people between the ages of 11-24 with a plethora of opportunities to shape Mind's work nationally.
John Downes	John's career has been dedicated to supporting young people and enabling them to shape their own futures. At StreetGames John is Head of Youth and Sport and Area Director for the North East. He is responsible for creating their young volunteer and young advisors

	programmes which have gone on to work with over 20,000 young people in becoming local leaders. Currently John is a rugby league coach, governor of his local first school and recently joined the management group of the National Youth Safeguarding Forum. Previously John was a trustee of NCVYS and MACC, the community sector infrastructure organisation for Manchester.
Rosemary Mansfield	Policy & Advocacy Manager (tbc) at National Youth Agency
Michelle Hemmingfield	Senior Project Manager, Development & Networks, National Union of Students / SOS-UK (Students Organising Sustainability)
Sarah Atkins	Project Manager at the Youth United Foundation. Sarah has been working with young people in formal and informal education for nearly 20 years, combined with a background in the events industry. Before joining YUF, Sarah was the Event Manager for Girlguiding where she was responsible for the development and delivery of innovative youth events to members aged 4-25 across the UK.
UPDATE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS	Over the last 12 months the Trust's Youth Lead and YEAG Chair have liaised with members of the group to maintain relationships, exchange updates on Youth priorities and support with key priorities e.g. Power of Youth campaign. The group last met in March 2025 to share organisational updates, information on Youth Fellowship projects, input to a Trust funding bid and to explore the development journey for young people (from participant to leaders to ambassadors to local changemakers). Moving forward the group's terms of reference will be reviewed in line with the Trust new 2025-35 strategy. Supporting the Trust's strategic focus around 'positive experiences for children and young people' the expertise of the YEAG will serve to drive partnerships and participation, to improve engagement and outcomes for young people.

Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water

INFORMATION REPORT
TEXT IN RED CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM TO THE BOARD

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT – May 2025

1. HEADLINES

1.1 The Spring/Summer leisure boating season has been affected by several navigation closures and restrictions, due to critical arising repairs. Notable ongoing stoppages include those at Anderton Boat Lift (now confirmed to be out of service for the whole summer), an emergency breach repair on the Macclesfield Canal and lock failures on the Tardebigge and Wilmcote flights, both south of Birmingham – in addition to the closure (due to storm damage) until late summer on the Huddersfield Canal at Stalybridge and the ongoing disruption of the long-term Bridgewater Canal closure (owned by Peel Holdings but a key link in our network).

1.2 Additionally, low rainfall is having a significant effect on water supply with disturbing predictions of drought ahead. This is currently affecting the Leeds & Liverpool Canal which will have to close later in the month without immediate rainfall. As dry period continues other Canals will also be impacted. The EA has convened the National Drought Group and the Trust has mobilised our own plans with a Drought co-ordinator appointed. The impact of restricted water supply on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, also exacerbated by the dry weather, is covered in a separate paper.

1.3 The major renovation of the Anderton Boat Lift – the subject of a major Lottery Fund bid - is being re-evaluated in light of the feedback received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF. Redacted

1.4 As part of our ongoing commitment to boaters and to enhance transparency, we successfully launched the Better Boating Plan public dashboards on our website on 1st April, reporting our progress on paddle repairs, vegetation management, planned preventative maintenance (PPM), and customer service facilities. Initial reports indicate good progress and we have received some positive feedback from boating customers.

1.5 The National Boat Count has confirmed an increase in boat licence evasion to almost 10% and in the number of boats without a home mooring, up by 12%, see Appendix 4 for the full report.

1.6 Redacted

1.7 Our 2025 brand campaign was launched last month to raise awareness / support for the Trust featuring striking imagery and impactful messaging across social media, TV, outdoor billboards and radio/podcast advertising. Our local Give fundraising campaigns also roll out over the next few months.

1.8 The annual colleague engagement survey conducted in March achieved an overall average engagement score of 7.9 (out of 10), in line with last year's results, a positive outcome that consolidates the improvements recorded in recent years.

1.9 Given rising societal trends in anti-social behaviour, we have launched a Threatening and Aggressive Behaviour toolkit to provide additional support to colleagues in 'frontline' roles.

2. PERFORMANCE

2.1. Appendix 1 sets out our final results for the key performance indicators for year end 2024/25.

- We have not achieved our target on several KPIs this year, largely as anticipated in previous reports, with some coming close to target (indicated with an 'amber' shading in the Appendix).
- Visit numbers reached 791 million, falling well short of the annual target and 8% down on a year ago. This remains well above the level of visits prior to 2020 (pre-Covid 19) and suggests that, after the peak year in 2022/23, the long-term visits number may be reverting to a slightly lower level as public behaviour normalises. The aggregate number of visitors remains high at 10.3m, just slightly below target and in line with the 2023/24 result. Towpath user satisfaction remains high at 90%, meeting the target.
- As previously identified, the number of reported public infrastructure injuries has exceeded the annual target by a wide margin (albeit at very low levels compared with the millions of visitors) and this in part explains the focus in the coming months on clearing the backlog of safety-related 'notifications' on the network. Conversely, the internal Accident Frequency Rate has improved during the year and has beaten the target. We also met the Critical Assets target.
- Recorded Volunteer hours rallied towards the year end and has landed just below target for the year, up 2% on 23/24 - a very creditable outcome given the major systems changes introduced earlier in the year and the declining trend in volunteering across the sector.
- Supporter numbers and 'Friends' both exceeded the annual target, and brand awareness has risen during the year to reach the 52% target. Fundraising income fell short of target due to the under-performance of philanthropic fundraising.
- Our main diversity target, the proportion of employees who identify as non-white, reached its highest level ever (5.88%) although the proportion of new recruits fell slightly below the 10% target.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS

3.1 The Health & Safety Report is at Appendix 2. The summary headlines from the other Director Reports are set out below; the Directors' full reports are available for background reading in the Resources section.

OPERATIONS / CUSTOMER SERVICE

Positives:

- The Operations team achieved an engagement score of 7.7, a commendable result for a team of 850 colleagues, especially considering two reorganisations affecting 100 colleagues (12% of the team). Four Area Operations Managers (11% of this key group) scored above 9, and we are celebrating their achievements with 'Thank You' awards.
- We have published the first update on the Better Boating Plan, showing positive progress on paddles, grass, and planned maintenance. This progress was reviewed by the Boating Committee on 6th May. Anecdotal feedback from customers has been positive, and the changes have been noticed.
- The new updated navigation advice system for stoppages went live on 6th May, replacing obsolete technology and introducing enhancements customers have been seeking.
- The end-of-year volunteering outturn of 747k hours reflects strong team effort, strong numbers maintained despite introduction of volunteering management system, Assemble.
- 739 miles of waterways have been re-submitted for Green Flag accreditation this year, with results expected in July/August. The Liverpool Royal Albert Dock/Salthouse Dock Blue Flag award has been reconfirmed.
- The Northwest Destination & Attraction Team (who manage the Boat Lift and the Museum) won the 'Team of the Year' award at the Marketing Cheshire Tourism Awards
- The annual volunteer keeper and bridge keeper safety retraining is being delivered to 1,212 volunteers, with in-person sessions that bring novice and experienced volunteers together to strengthen our safety culture.
- The Trust hosted the Annual Restoration Conference at National Waterways Museum jointly with the IWA and launched a consultation on the new restoration process which is aimed at setting out a clear process for volunteer construction activities on Trust land.

Challenges:

- Multiple closures (including Anderton Boat Lift), coupled with water resources challenges, are impacting navigation as we enter the busiest boating period. Closures to two routes south of Birmingham (at Tardebigge on the Worcester & Birmingham, and at Wilmcote on the Stratford Canal) are restricting boaters' options – and in the North West the long-term closure of the Bridgewater Canal is exacerbated by the closure of the Macclesfield Canal.
- Redacted
- Redacted
- IWA's Cavalcade in London on 3-5 May was impacted by asset failures at City Road Lock (Regents Canal) and Dobbs Weir Lock on the River Lea, compounded by a third party fire at a National Power Network sub-station which forced the closure of the Maida Hill Tunnel and kept more than 20 boats from attending the event.
- The Walsall 'cyanide pollution' incident required spot dredging to remove contaminated silt, with the reopening of the canal dependent on post-dredging test results.

INFRASTRUCTURE & PROGRAMMES

Positives:

- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted

Challenges:

- Redacted.
- Redacted.
- Redacted
- Redacted.
- Redacted

INVESTMENT & COMMERCIAL

Positives:

- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted

Challenges:

- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted

COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Positives:

- The Trust received favourable mentions in Parliament from Lucy Powell MP, Daniel Zeichner MP, and Wendy Morton MP with eight additional MP regional visits.
- We submitted a detailed paper to inform the government's Ten-Year Infrastructure strategy, highlighting how our network can contribute to the growth mission, and also submitted a response to the Cuncliffe Commission into the water sector and its

regulation. The final report of the 'Corry Review' into environmental regulation (and the Trust's response) was published on the Defra website on 2 April.

- The first draft of the text for the Annual Report & Accounts has been completed, with design work underway and everything on track for timely delivery. We have also drafted a 'Wales Report' that consolidates our work in Wales into a standalone publication to support all stakeholder work in Wales.
- As part of the Better Boating Plan, we continue to evolve content and test new ways to increase audience 'open rates' of Boaters' Update from the current open rate of 45%, with click-through rates at 11% (not-for-profit industry averages are 40% and 3%, respectively). Resending 'unopened' Updates has driven open rates to 58% and click rates to 15%.
- An external review of Q1 2025 showed that our national social media channels are outperforming others within the sector, with our overall engagement rate almost double the non-profit average. Year-on-year, our core national social media channels have grown by 9%, our boating channels by 6%, and our fisheries & angling channels by 10%. New followers to the Trust's LinkedIn channel have grown by 23%. We will soon launch the Trust's TikTok channel to reach new audiences.
- Widespread media coverage included winter works stories in national print/online media, such as the inspection of Standedge Tunnel and the volunteer-led clean-up of Tuel Lane Lock on the Rochdale Canal. Regional coverage included the dredging operation to clean up the site of last year's cyanide spill on the Walsall Canal. There has also been media interest in the Commission looking at boat licensing, with a Times article and an interview with Richard on Radio 4's Broadcasting House.

Challenges:

- The political campaign to address the water supply issues affecting the Mon & Brec canal has gained momentum with cross-party support and questions raised in both the Senedd and Westminster. The Senedd petition has quickly passed the threshold for a debate. Redacted. Key meeting with stakeholders on 23 May. Local businesses have been understandably expressing concern about the impact of the campaign on future bookings, we have responded with promotional press notices.

STRATEGY & IMPACT

Positives:

- Progress in getting agreement on proposed KPIs, targets and warning/breach thresholds with Defra for the proposed Post 2027 Grant Agreement.
- Our annual Planning Statutory Consultee performance for the year achieved 98.7% response to all planning application consultations in England & Wales within agreed period.
- 'We're the Charity for Canals,' our new brand-building campaign went live on 8 April 2025. In the first four weeks we saw 30 million opportunities to see our advertising.
- Narrow Escapes season 2 aired on 5th May, with increased profile for the Trust's work to build awareness on daytime TV.

- We have commissioned Brand Dufour – a sector-leading charity brand strategy agency to lead development of our 'brand position' including engagement with members of our Fundraising Committee.
- As part of the project to add 'charity 'stickers' to our existing signage, we commissioned a YouGov to assess its impact with 85% of respondents agreeing the stickered sign communicated our charitable status more clearly.
- During 2024/25, our filming income nearly doubled to £363k and there were nearly 2,500 events hosted on our network, generating £127k income and half a million visitors.
- Our website has been shortlisted for *'stand out public sector / not-for-profit / charity website of the year'* at the UK Digital Excellence Awards.
- Work on the Grand Union Canal Water Transfer (GUCWT) project included production of canalside design principles; input into the formal Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion and the Planning Inspectorate consultation (in our capacity as a prescribed consultee in the DCO process); and development of the Total Social Value Framework.
- The Impact Report for Wales 2023/24 has been published.
- On the Montgomery Canal Restoration Project, planning permission secured for a new offline nature reserve at Wern and planning application submitted for new Williams Bridge.
- National partnership with the Ministry of Justice / HMPPS has seen significant growth over the last year with 72,521 hours achieved, a 30% increase, involving 5,914 People on Probation (20% increase); and 36 area teams (45% increase).
- We formally responded to DEFRA Land Use Framework consultation - making the case for any forthcoming national framework to properly recognise the value of blue space, connectivity and maximise the value of existing infrastructure, building upon our submission in response to Cunliffe Water Commission's Call for Evidence.

Challenges

- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted.

PEOPLE

Positives:

- Phase one implementation of the new people system dayforce is well underway with the introduction of core HR, colleague and manager self-service and recruitment all due to go live on the 23rd of June.
- The annual pay review for those colleagues covered under the collective bargaining agreement was effective from the 1st of April 2025 and paid in April payroll. This review also reflected the new National Minimum Wage and Real Living wage rates.

- Overall engagement score for the Trust is 7.9 with a response rate of 72%; three key areas of focus have been identified as Wellbeing and Belonging, Leadership and Inspiration, and Colleague Voice and Resources.
- The trustee recruitment shortlisting process has been completed, with 11 candidates advancing to the first stage of interviews for the three available roles. These interviews are scheduled to take place in early May.
- After an unsuccessful first attempt, we have appointed a new Wales & South West Regional Director and the employment details and start date are being confirmed.
- We are continuing our collaboration with IEMA and their Green Careers hub. Three videos featuring the Trust have been produced for their careers launch this May.

Challenges:

- Recent global events have led to a period of volatility in global financial markets; communications have been issued in conjunction with our pension scheme administrators Standard Life to reassure colleagues and signpost to Standard Life's resources and customer support team.
- The increased Employers National Insurance is adding significantly (c.£1.5m) to the Trust's costs. These cost increases are reflected in our B25 Business Plan.
- Redacted

FUNDRAISING

Positives:

- At the end of B24, the Individual Giving and Legacy Team (IG&L) successfully demonstrated excellent performance by concluding the year:
  - Redacted
  - Redacted
  - Redacted
- The establishment of the new Fundraising Operations Team, to focus on addressing attrition, supporter loyalty and care, data management, and compliance issues with Jackie Taylor joining as Head of Fundraising Operations..
- A comprehensive review of Fundraising Compliance provided the Audit and Risk Committee with confidence in the rigorous manner in which fundraising compliance issues are managed.
- Our Gifts in Wills team received recognition by winning two prestigious categories at the Legacy Giving Awards, competing against sector leading organisations.
- Redacted

Challenges:

- Redacted

- There is a possibility that a significant legacy included in the B25 Business Plan may need to be recognised in actual results for 2024/25. While this does not pose a financial issue, it may impact the B25 results.
- The Philanthropy and Partnerships team continues to discuss how to identify budget-relieving projects and commitments effectively.
- Effective data transfer and analysis remain challenging. Despite progress in B24, further work is needed, including developing new processes and systems for importing data from new data sources, such as Give.

Chief Executive,
May 2025

APPENDIX 1: KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES & TARGETS 2024/25

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS (KPIs) FOR NATIONAL & REGIONAL REPORTING			Year-end Mar 2025	Full year target	Prior year actual Full year
			2024/25	2024/25	2023/24
Growing the numbers & satisfaction of users & visitors	Visitor Volume	No. of visitors to waterways in typical two-week period	10.3m	10.4m	10.3m
		Total No. of visits	791m	900m	858.8m
	Satisfaction Rating - user & visitor experience	Towpath User Satisfaction	90%	90%	91%
		Boater Satisfaction	55%	54%	54%
Improving our public safety and health & safety of our colleagues	Public Safety	No. of reported incidents due to infrastructure	55	< 35	37
	Safety of our Colleagues	Combined RIDDOR accident frequency rate	0.11	< 0.15	0.16
Improving condition of our assets	Asset Resilience	No. of critical assets (Category 1)	133	< 138	139
Being inclusive - Growing the number of local users	Local Users (1km)	% of local people (living within 1km) using our waterways regularly	51%	53%	50%
Being relevant & valued locally	Value of Waterways (1km)	% of people living within 1km corridor recognise the value of waterways	77%	80%	80%
	Feel Safe by Water	Proportion of visitors rating their personal security as excellent or good	84%	85%	84%

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS (KPIs) FOR NATIONAL & REGIONAL REPORTING			Year-end Mar 2025	Full year target	Prior year actual Full year
Growing our brand awareness, particularly those living within 1km	Brand Awareness (All & 1km)	% of prompted awareness of the Trust among total population & local people	52% (all)	52% (all)	50% (all)
			65% (1km)	67% (1km)	65% (1km)
Building a strong and broad supporter base	Supporter Growth	№ of Supporters (active & passive)	1,756,011	1.75m	1,600,536
		№ of active Friends & other regular individual donors	32,086	31,000	27,263
Improving colleague engagement & diversity of those working & volunteering for C&RT	Diversity	% of colleagues' people of colour	5.88%	5.4%	4.98%
		D&I - % of recent hires people of colour	9.27%	10.0%	8.53%
	Colleague Engagement (Employee/ Volunteers)	Colleague engagement	7.9	8.0	7.9
		Volunteer engagement	8.5	8.3	8.1
Expanding our volunteer base/impact	Active Volunteers	No. of volunteer hours	747,518	762,000	739,443
		No. of active Trust volunteers	5,473	4,800	4,566
Grow our charitable income	Fundraising Income	Income from all sources of fundraising	£6.7m	£8.5m	£6.3m

Note that Amber designation is given to those measures that were within 2% of the target.

APPENDIX 2: HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

By Anne Gardner-Aston, Director of Health & Safety

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This paper provides a review of Health and Safety performance for the period of February and March 2025 unless otherwise indicated.

1.2 The paper also provides a statistical breakdown of the final measurable metrics, analysis and detailed explanation to enable provision of Health and Safety assurance to the Board and to highlight areas for further discussion or action. Redacted

2. PERFORMANCE REPORT

AFR (Rolling 12-month figure)	Year to March 2024	Year to Jan 2024	Year to March 2025	24/25 Target
Colleagues	0.16	0.16	0.16	
Volunteers	0.27	0.00	0.00	
Contractors	0.08	0.00	0.00	
Trust Overall	**0.16**	0.11	0.11	**0.15**

RIDDOR Incidents	Year to March 2024	Dec & Jan 2024	February & March 2025	B24 FINAL
Colleagues	6	1	1	6
Volunteers	2	0	0	0
Contractors	1	0	0	0
Dangerous Occurrence	0	1	0	2*
Totals	**9**	**2**	**1**	**8**

**not counted in AFR as did not result in an injury*

Fatalities (Public)	Year to March 2024	Dec & Jan 2024	February & March 2025	B24 FINAL
Canal	30	9	7	33
River	**14**	1	0	10
Reservoir	2	2	1	3
Dock, Marina, Boat, Towpath	**12**	1	3	9
Totals	58	**13**	**11**	**55**

Public Infrastructure Related Injuries	Year to March 2024	Dec & Jan 2024	February & March 2025	B24 FINAL
Numbers of Incidents Reported to the Trust	37	4	10	**55**

Safety Improvement Opportunities	Year to March 2024	Dec & Jan 2024	February & March 2025	B24 FINAL
Numbers of Reported Hazards, Near Miss & Positive Interventions	6835	1293	1166	**7379**

3.

Summary

Accidents to Employees, Volunteers and Contractors

3.1 The headline safety performance in relation to accidents has seen the Accident Frequency Rate (AFR) remain at 0.11 against a KPI of 0.15.

3.2 There was one reportable notification where a colleague injured their back whilst manual handling clay bags, resulting in an over 7-day absence. A deep dive investigation has been conducted.

3.3 Appendix 1 to this paper details the year end summary of H&S performance for B24.

Redacted.

Safety Improvement Opportunities (Hazard Spots, Near Misses, Positive Interventions)

3.4 The number of Safety Improvement Opportunities recorded for February and March has decreased slightly when compared to the previous period. The figure of 1166 in the table in Section 2 is made up of 249 hazard observations and near miss reports, and 917 positive interventions. We aim to increase the number of Positive Intervention reports by 5% each year – at the end of March 2025 we achieved an 12% increase.

Fatalities

3.5 There were eleven fatalities reported across the Trust network during this period. Ten of the fatalities were male, with one female. All were adults. A new interactive dashboard is now available that allows us to analyse the trends as well as locations that we need to target, including mapping technology. A copy of these maps can be found within the resources paper.

Redacted

Infrastructure Safety

3.6 Ten incidents have been recorded in this period, all of which have been subject to investigation and action where appropriate. A deep dive into infrastructure visitor injuries, including an analysis of the injury types and causation, was presented at the January meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

3.7 The number of infrastructure visitor injuries has unfortunately exceeded the KPI for B24. A number of initiatives in Infrastructure & Programmes and Operations directorates are planned for B25 to tackle the increase in these types of injuries.

Redacted

3.8 A total of 126 visitor risk assessments (VRA) were due to be carried out by the end of B24. At the end of March 2024, 124 assessments have been carried out at 28 out of 37 high risk visitor sites and 96 out of 89 assets (additional assessments were carried out in the Yorkshire/North East region). The remaining high risk assessments are scheduled to be done as soon as possible into B25. (Redacted)

4. Colleague Safety

4.1 The Trust has launched the new 'Threatening and Aggressive Behaviour toolkit to enable colleagues and volunteers better manage the risk and consequences of threats and aggressive behaviour towards them. The number of reports of this type of behaviour remains concerning and the new one-stop-shop toolkit, including a refresh of existing training and guidance, support and help with assessing the threat, and a valuable video of colleagues' experiences of threatening behaviour, has been launched to coincide with the anniversary of the murder of our colleague, Clive Porter, in 2021.

4.2 Health & Safety Week is running from 28th April -2nd May and there are a number of events planned, including the launch of the new H&S strategic plan for B25-28 and some explanatory sessions relating to the objectives and drivers for improvement.

5. Public/Water Safety

5.1 The PSHE Association schools pack on inland water safety to teenagers will be launched at the end of April via an email from PSHE directly to 60,000+ teachers. This will allow us to reach a captive audience who are actively looking for ways to explain water safety to their students. Our next steps with Claremont, the behaviour change communications agency we've been working with on this project to reach teenagers with water safety messages, is to create visuals to launch this summer as posters and social media assets.

5.2 There will be a number of water safety topics being covered during Health and Safety Week. Ross McLeod from RNLI will be presenting on the 'Float to Live' campaign and Dr Jill Nash from Bournemouth University will be talking through her research on water safety communications, decision making in the water and understanding emotional responses of young men to water safety advertising.

5.3 Redacted

5.4 Redacted.

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE FOR B24



Safety Improvement Opportunities (Hazard Spots, Near Misses and Positive Interventions)

APPENDIX 4: NATIONAL BOAT COUNT 2025

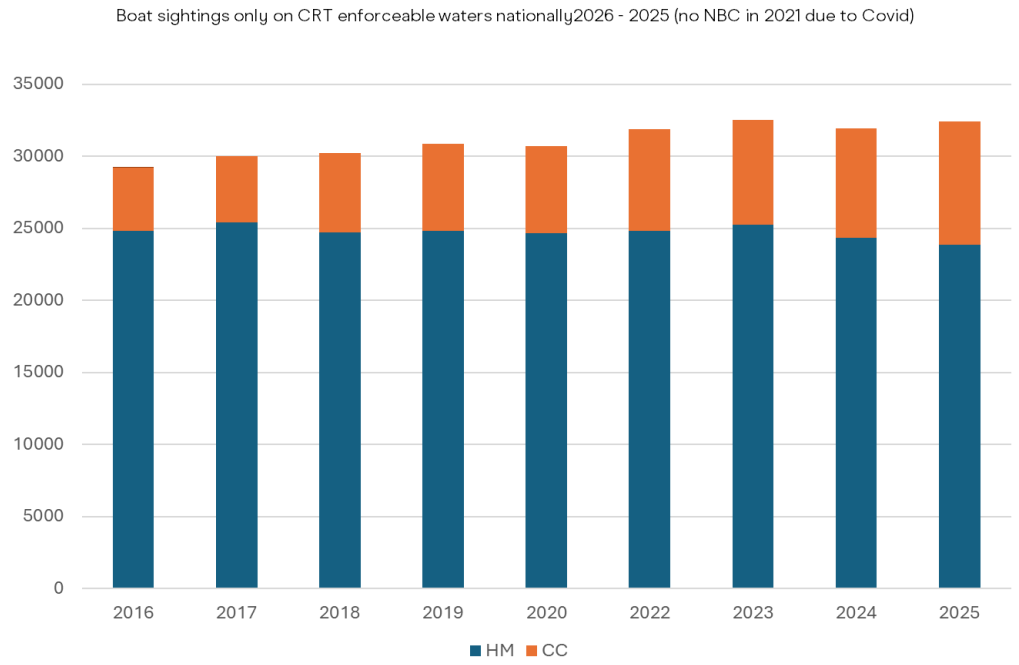
1. PURPOSE

a. To update the Board on the Spring 2025 annual national boat count results and the licence compliance rate derived from it.

2. KEY POINTS

a. The 2025 National Boat Count indicates a licence evasion rate of 9.9% across the network; a 1.7% (622 boats) increase in licence evasion year on year (2024 - 8.2%)

b. Total boat numbers remain stable with 35,247 boats sighted (an increase of 24 boats or less than 0.1%) sighted on all parts of the network however 478 more boats were sighted on enforceable waters[1] . This leaves a net 33,080 boats requiring a licence. The chart below shows the trend since 2016.



c. There has been a significant increase (1,099) in the number of boats without a home mooring, up c.12%to 8,723.

d. Conversely, there has been a decline in boats with a home mooring by around 2%.

e. Approximately 8% of boats with a home mooring are unlicensed, whereas 16% of boats without a home mooring are unlicensed (CCers).

[1] Enforceable waters are where we own the or manage the water space – there are some areas where, due to historic connections to the network, the Trust cannot require boats to be licensed provided they do not move onto the navigation.

f. Despite the overall increase in evasion, we have seen a reduction in London & South East (LSE) evasion where the highest evasion rates occur.

3. DETAILED ANALYSIS

a. Headline licence evasion continues to rise, following the steady trend since the covid pandemic. Figure 1

b. LSE saw a reduction in licence evasion, from 17.9% to 15.5%, the first such reduction since 2018, This, however, was the only region that saw a decrease in evasion. Figure 2

c. The reduction of evasion on LSE has been driven by a better distribution of case load across the Trust's licensing teams following last year's re-organisation, see section 6.

d. Yorkshire/North East saw the largest increase in % evasion but has the lowest number of boats, and it has a higher proportion of wide beam vessels on its larger commercial waterways so this may be a factor given the increased wide-beam surcharge levied. North West and West Midlands saw the largest increase in the number of unlicensed boats.

Figure 2 and Table 1 (Appendix)

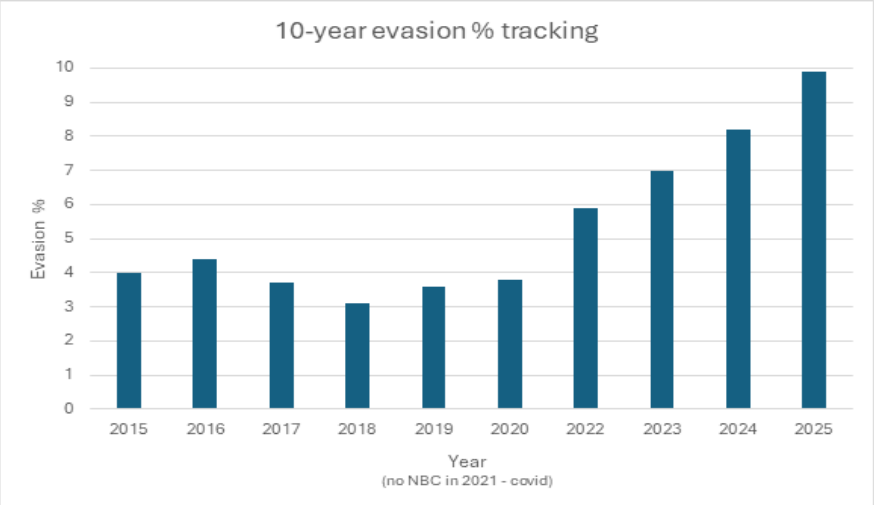


Figure 1

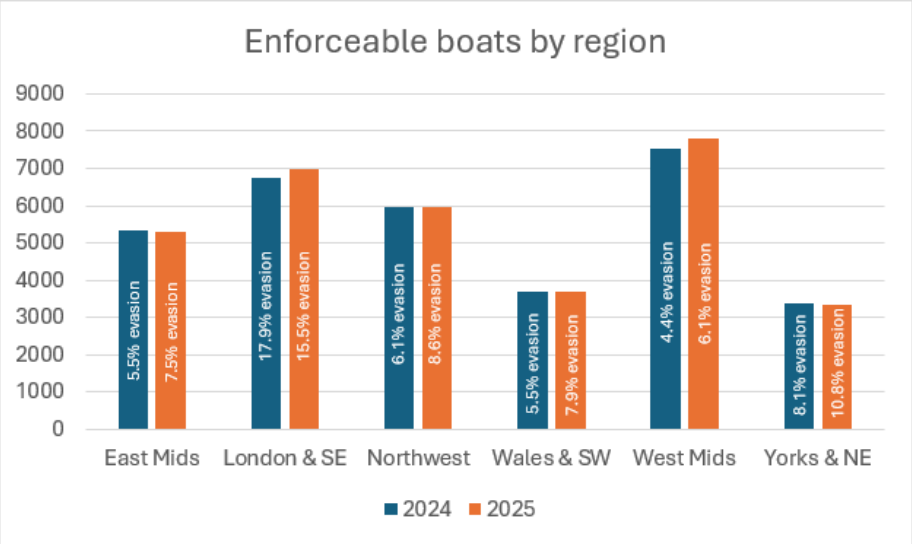


Figure 2

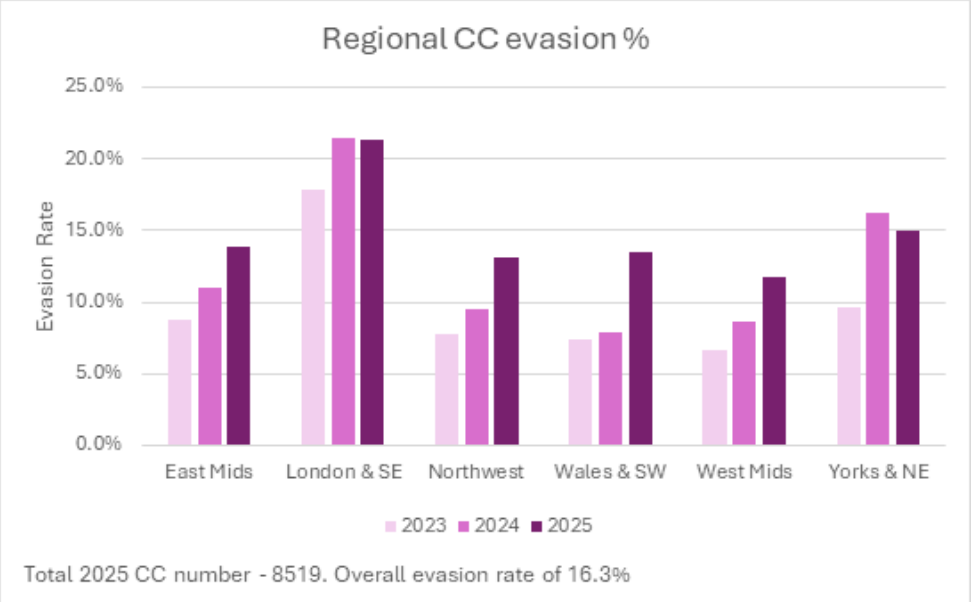


Figure 3

4. EXTERNAL FACTORS

a. Over the past few years (post covid) we have seen an increase in evasion which we believe is very likely to be due to socioeconomic impacts. There is anecdotal feedback which is supported by the NBC that people coming to live on the water as a cheaper way of living. In these cases, the unplanned financial and unanticipated lifestyle challenges of boating often see boats becoming non-compliant and adding to evasion rates.

b. More boaters are turning to continuous cruising. Although it may in part be a correction to the base data as the new validation of home moorings process introduced as part of the differential licence fee for CCers introduced in 2024 has possibly 'flushed out' those existing boaters who were inaccurately declaring their mooring status.

c. The continued under resourcing of local authority support for those with mental health conditions – a growing contingent of our customer base – also means that those who could engage with the licensing process (and benefit claims, BSC booking, etc.) if appropriate support was in place, can't unless our welfare team become involved. Despite increasing our welfare team, demand is exceeding resource.

d. Redacted.

5. INTERNAL FACTORS

Redacted.

a. Redacted

b. Redacted

c. Redacted

d. Redacted

6. PROPOSED ACTIONS TO ADDRESS RISING EVASION

a. Secure additional resource in the legal team to address the delays within the current legal process

b. Accelerate targeted removal of abandoned unlicenced boats with additional resource to target key areas

c. Additional resource for licensing advisor team to improve case management to allow resolution of cases currently held in backlog.

d. Engage and work with Money Advice Trust/Citizens Advice to offer early advice to boaters who may be facing financial difficulties

e. Re-run the national boat count in September to monitor progress and ensure evasion rises outside of L&SE are controlled.

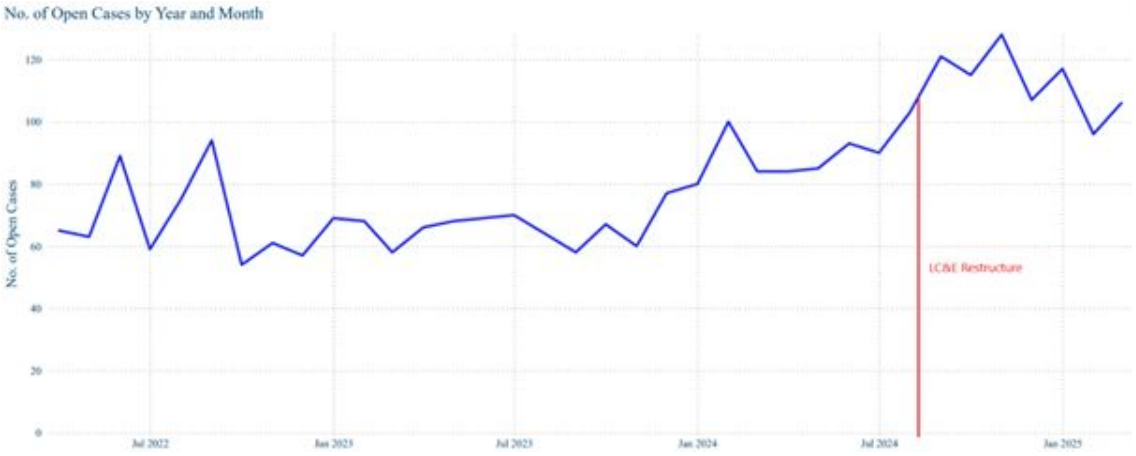
ANNEX A

Table 1– 2025 National Boat Count data

2025	All Boats		All Enforceable Boats		Unidentified		Unlicensed		Caseload		% Evasion Rate	
	2024	2025	2024	2,025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
EM	6,275	6,123	5,321	5,295	28	32	262	427	290	459	5.50%	7.50%
Lon & SE	6,770	7,035	6,727	6,962	240	143	963	945	1,203	1,088	17.90%	15.47%
NW	6,091	6,053	5,979	5,976	33	70	330	451	363	521	6.10%	8.61%
SW&W	4,438	4,240	3,680	3,694	15	22	189	314	204	336	5.50%	7.92%
WM	8,258	8,428	7,531	7,801	9	33	320	483	329	516	4.40%	6.12%
Y&NE	3,391	3,368	3,364	3,352	36	52	238	313	274	365	8.10%	10.84%
Grand Total	35,223	35,247	32,602	33,080	361	352	2,302	2,933	2,663	3,285	8.20%	9.93%
		24		478		-9		631		622		1.73%

Evasion is calculated based on unlicensed boats on enforceable waters plus those boats which were unidentifiable

Legal Case Load



Board Meeting
15th May 2025
Information Report
Trust xxx
Text in red confidential

OPERATIONS REPORT

Julie Sharman - Chief Operating Officer

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This paper provides an update on waterway operations and customer service team activities.

2. OPERATIONS

2.1 Operational incidents/Emergency response

2.1.1 A significant environmental incident occurred on 29th April at Maida Hill Tunnel in LSE due to a fire overnight at the St John's Wood substation - causing extensive oil leakage into and closure of the Regent's canal. The National Power Network equipment sits directly on top of the Tunnel. NPN responded swiftly, appointing their emergency response oil spill contractors to clean up the canal pollution however the operation was extensive, causing the canal to be closed until lunchtime on Saturday 4th May, disrupting the movements of the commercial trip boats and 27 private boats which were trying to join the IWA Cavalcade event at Little Venice. The Trust is following up with a claim for resource costs and unplanned canal closure. In this same week we also had 2 unplanned stoppages at City and Dobbs Weir locks in London, see below.

2.2 Operational Incidents (other)

2.2.1 Multiple closures coupled with water resources challenges (2.4.2) are impacting the cruising season and navigation – see map of all current closures:



Figure 1 - Map of network closures 1/5/25

2.2.1.1 LSE City Road Lock, gate deterioration and suspected boat damage have resulted in closure whilst temporary repairs are effected (this is the 2nd temporary repair in 12 months). The gate will require replacement in-season as it can only be operated with assisted passage.

2.2.1.2 LSE Dobbs Weir Lock (River Lea) collar failure repaired by reactive team.

2.2.1.3 WMS Lock 58 Tardebigge, Worcester Birmingham Canal (Kier)– current expectations are that it can reopen in August.

2.2.1.4 WMS Lock 40 Wilmcote, South Stratford Canal (Kier) – is likely to be reopen by the end of June.

2.2.1.5 NW Anderton Boat Lift remains closed due to safety issues relating to the caisson gate operations, a design review is in progress.

2.2.1.6 NW Lock 11 Huddersfield Narrow Canal remains closed until 31st August for reconstruction following New Years Day flooding damage.

2.2.1.7 WMS Walsall Canal Pollution - incident dredging undertaken and we are awaiting the outcome of silt sampling to reopen the canal, which is expected end of May.

2.2.1.8 WMS Trent and Mersey Canal: Hoo Mill Lock - bywash culvert has collapsed requiring restricted passage, with the lock open 9am to 3pm, so we can manage water levels overnight and allow the pound to refill. Permanent repair to be delivered by contractors.

2.2.1.9 WMS Stone – we have experienced water loss in Stone over recent weeks, caused by misuse of paddles. The problem has been compounded by the dry weather. The reactive team is undertaking repairs.

2.2.1.10 WMS Rushall canal redundant sluice failure – A previously blocked off sluice chamber failed leading to an urgent response from the Wolverhampton team, quickly supported by the reactive response team who used a plastic sheet to reduce the leak until contractors could grout the chamber. The navigation had to be closed until repaired, but quick reactions reduced water loss and the impact on moored boats at Longwood Boat Yard.

2.3 Operations – other

2.3.1 739 miles of our waterways have been re-submitted for Green Flag accreditation this year – results expected in July.

2.3.2 Redacted)

2.3.3 The updated navigation advice system went live on 6th May. Preparatory works by all of our regional teams has meant that the cut-over from one system to the other has gone well. The new system replaces obsolete technology while introducing the enhancements customers have been seeking. Development will continue and we expect to be able to add photographs of navigational issues in future.

2.4 Operations Risks

2.4.1 Monmouthshire & Brecon canal

2.4.1.1 A significant focus has been mitigating the impact of the Brecon abstraction licence conditions which limit the primary water supply to the Monmouthshire & Brecon canal. From mid-March, with prolonged dry weather and receding River Usk flows, the reduced abstraction allowable led to serious risks of the canal running out of water.

2.4.1.2 Given the potential impact we have secured a temporary water supply from Welsh Water. This addresses the current shortfall but is at a cost in April c.70k, based on a supply of around 100 mgl. Alternative medium-term options for the canal are being reviewed.

2.4.1.3 There's been extensive media interest and CEO and director WSW engaged with Welsh Government ministers and UK Government MPs. Huw Irranca-Davies, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs was contacted in January but has not replied directly to the Trust. On 25th and 26th

February, customers and businesses were communicated to; similarly local council leaders, councillors, ward members and the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority were contacted and followed up with user meetings. On 11th March, colleagues met Catherine Mealing-Jones CEO and Gareth Jones from Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority. David Chadwich MP has also been in touch. They are supportive of our position and value both the canal and the Usk.

2.4.1.4 The petition for the matter to be debated in the Senedd passed the 10,000 signatories required (13,544 signatories as of 27th April).

2.4.2 Water Supply (other) - teams in all parts of the network are focused on water management with the ongoing long dry period early in the season.

2.4.2.1 YNE - The Leeds Liverpool Canal is at risk of closure by the end of May due to low rainfall, works to reservoirs and leaks. We have reduced demand to a minimum.

2.4.2.2 YNE - the Rochdale and Huddersfield Narrow canals are also struggling for water. At present time the canals are closed to navigation because pumping is not keeping up with demand. The HNC also remains closed at lock 11 following the January flooding repairs currently don't have an end date.

2.5 Water Management

2.5.1 The Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) Inspector decisions on the two remaining Welsh licence abstraction appeals have been received for Penarth and Tanat. The Inspector concluded that the abstraction licences, which have now been varied by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), each have conditions allowing the Trust until 31 October to submit 10mm fish screening designs for approval, and for the Trust to install these within five months of receiving written approval.

3. PORTS & HARBOURS

3.1 The Harbour Management Board met on 14th April with the new Designated Person, ABP*mer*, Captain Rod Lewis. Items to update on are:

- **PMSC Compliance:** On 15th April, the new 'Ports & Marine Facilities Safety Code' (DfT, 2025) and 'A guide to good practice on port and marine facilities' (MCA, 2025a) was published.
- **MSP Action Plan:** will be reviewed now the new PMSC has been published.
- **Succession Planning:** we currently have a full team of Harbour Masters. Succession is still in need of development as the ability to recruit externally is difficult because demand for these skills exceeds supply.
- **Risk Register Review:** Risks were reviewed. Concern raised regarding asset condition on lock gates in West India Docks, which may impede the potential commercial income growth.
- **LSE Docklands Scout Project:** Tenancy at will still outstanding
- **LSE Heritage vessels:** to be regularised following DSP TaW.
- **Scenario Planning:** Emergency response plans should include relevant scenarios based on specific activities and risks of each harbour. Additional resource required to support the updating of emergency response plans.
- **Annual P&H Day:** To be scheduled and involve leading in arranging practical sessions and discussions on specific topics.

4. BETTER BOATING PLAN (BBP) AND O&M IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

4.1 Our BBP measures were published on 1 April, with progress updates due monthly. Data reports and dashboards are key to our tracking progress and supporting our Regional Operations Managers (ROMs) monitoring against key metrics. External versions of these reports have been published on our website for customers to see (examples below):





4.2 The first Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) visit to locks and moving bridges commenced in March and April. 1,734 PPM visits were completed in the 2-month window which was a 96% completion rate, against a target of 95%; our volunteers supported the delivery of 22% of the PPM.

4.3 The Simpler Recycling roll-out of new bins and stickers has commenced and is proving to be a difficult task for our contractors, and in turn our regional colleagues, due to the scale of the nationwide implementation. We remain confident this will be complete over the summer.

4.4 The lock paddle repair programme has commenced with 16 paddles repaired in April, details below:

- 9 paddles repaired from the backlog of 141 broke paddles, leaving 132 remaining.
- 13 new paddle faults have been reported with 7 repaired within the 4-week service level agreement. (None have gone over the 4-week period so far).

4.5 The grass cutting programme has commenced in all regions based on the new specification and frequency. The West Midlands and Wales & South West grass cutting contract was awarded to Mitie and mobilisation is complete. Mobilisation challenges for Mitie have resulted in them being behind programme and they have developed a recovery plan which we are monitoring.

4.6 Leaders in all Operations and IPD Teams have received training in Lean techniques that are the basis for the problem-solving tools that are in development/being promoted. Some colleagues had already begun practices such as daily team huddles and more routine use of performance information. The training has been very well received and created an enthusiasm to tackle issues. We want to bring these initiatives to a standardised approach and are acting quickly to make sure that enthusiasm is maintained.

4.6.1 There has been focus on agreeing measures which address our key issues – now largely complete.

4.6.2 There has been a deep dive of the winter stoppages programme to learn lessons about how to be more efficient and mitigate customer impacts.

4.6.3 Over the next 2 month there will be a focus on establishing standards and operating procedures to support the boating improvement plan. The new standard for vegetation management is in development.

5. ORGANISATION

5.1 Management Team.

5.1.1 Mark Evans WSW director left the Trust on 30th April. Final interviews for director WSW have taken place. An offer has been made and has been verbally accepted. In the interim, the Head of Boating and Customer Service is providing leadership cover.

5.1.2 Our Head of Volunteering has now taken the lead for Safeguarding across the Trust, becoming Head of Volunteering and Safeguarding.

5.2 Advisory Boards

5.2.1 The Regional Advisory Board (RAB) chairs for WMS, EMS and NW wrote recently to the Chair to highlight the potential of the advisory boards and the seek clarification on purpose. A response and set of actions has been drafted.

5.2.2 LSE RAB met to discuss ongoing support for the Trust's fundraising objectives alongside reviewing communication messaging around the extended closure of the Wendover Arm due to the persistent leaks. The repairs are not currently within the Trust's programme of work which means this section of canal will remain dewatered until funding can be secured.

5.2.3 Following the March Trustee reception and the new EMS RAB Chair brought contacts from the East Midlands Institute of Technology (IoT) and Institute of Asset Management. We are now planning a joint meeting with representatives of local universities, business and the IoT to discuss how we can work together to support the skills and sustainability agenda.

5.2.4 WMS RAB met on 29th April. Strategy Director Heather Clarke joined part of the meeting. The RAB were keen to discuss ways in which they can best use their combined skills and connections to drive forward improvements and make maximum impact for the benefit of the region's canal network and the Trust as a whole.

6. PERFORMANCE – REGIONS

6.1 End of year performance - the regional teams ended the year with a strong performance, having:

- 14,395 notifications completed, ahead of target;
- Repaired and replaced 461 paddles and spindles, ahead of target;
- Generated 747,518 volunteer hours (target 762,000 hrs); including 172,334 Partner Hours.
- Generated 70,593 Community payback hours by People on Probation; ahead of target 40,000 hours
- Engaged 103, 401 school aged children in water safety activities, which is ahead of target 100,000 hours.
- Performed 15 Emergency response tests on high-risk assets, ahead of target 12 tests.

7. LONDON & SOUTH EAST REGION

7.1 Colleagues remembered Clive Porter on the 3rd anniversary of his death in April. The team have installed a bench next to his memorial tree. His family were very pleased and thankful for the addition to enable them to sit by the canal.

7.2 Engagement includes: with directors of Westminster Council regarding the significant capital investment the council is seeking, to improve the public realm along the canal; with Environment Agency and Natural England directors.

7.3 We held our customer forum in London, at St Pancras Cruising Club, with approximately 20 attendees, as well as our quarterly meeting with the Chairs of the IWA London Branches and attendance at the MK IWA branch meeting. We continue to work closely with the IWA regarding the annual Cavalcade event in Little Venice. The National Bargee Travellers Association are continued their campaign of leafleting at such events.

7.4 Redacted

7.5 Internal recruitment and retention remains a concern, with the churn of colleagues in the operations teams continuing. We continue to address performance related issues as we introduce many of the LEAN training principles across the teams. Daily operational 'huddles' in particular are working very well, helping teams to be clear on priorities.

8. WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

8.1 Following abstraction concerns being made public, we continue to update customers and liaise with commercial operators, a number of whom have complained to the Trust on the basis that their businesses have suffered due to a loss of custom.

8.2 Trees: The full year cost of reactive tree management will be more than £300,000 for B24 with the M&B suffering the worst of winter storm damage closely followed by the K&A. The region is due an H&S tree survey in B25.

8.3 Brecon 225 anniversary celebrations have engaged with a wide range of partners including Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, Brecon Town Council, Theatre Brycheiniog, Y Gaer and canal side community councils. Trust volunteers are supporting several events.

8.4 Community Roots Torfaen: Colleagues have been busy in anticipation of the spring. Over four miles of offside vegetation management was accomplished by volunteers, and lots of planting from last year led to a fantastic display this spring with enthused feedback from visitors/participants. School sessions are in full swing with canoeing added as an option this year which has been well received. A new nature art mural project is underway, with contributions from every school in Torfaen.

8.5 Community Roots Gloucester: We've been reviewing the first full year of delivery of the additional funding received from Sports England; we delivered over 160 sessions, generating 1348 engagements in physical activity on our waterway. With our new Community Paddling Hub now ready to use, we are expanding our public paddling and continuing to support the training and skills development of the team of 16 volunteers delivering activity on the water.

9. WEST MIDLANDS REGION



9.1 Walsall Pollution incident - In April, spot dredging has been completed over the 800m affected section, funded by the polluter's insurer. Removing the cyanide contaminated silt is an essential step in the recovery of the canal and a prerequisite to reopening the waterway to boats. BBC Midlands featured the dredging, including an interview with the Trust's spokespeople. We await the results of the post-dredging tests. If these show sufficiently low levels of contamination, the canal can be reopened. We will invite the media to mark the reopening of the canal, some nine months after the pollution occurred.



9.2 A visit with Veterans Minister Al Carns was held on 2nd May to the canals in his constituency of Birmingham, Selly Oak. The visit included a boat trip with several veteran Trust colleagues and a session with local volunteers helping to remove litter from the canal.



9.3 Lapworth piling and towpath failure – our reactive response team responded to the failure and collapse of a large stretch of the towpath in Lapworth, which required the replacement and backfilling of piling due to water egress. This popular stretch of towpath was unfortunately closed over Easter but is now in good condition again for the future.

10. EAST MIDLANDS REGION





10.1 The region welcomed the Trust's Board and Council to Leicester in March. The day culminated in a reception at the National Space Centre which brought together key contacts from local authorities, partner organisations, businesses and community groups.

10.2 The Trust's 'Swim Sista Swim' programme, which aims to help black women in Nottingham feel more confident in and around water, has played a leading role in the 10-year anniversary of This Girl Can. The programme featured in the This Girl Can social media campaign and the regional Wellbeing Coordinator was invited to attend a parliamentary reception to talk about how to work effectively and creatively with underserved communities in a way that brings joy and builds confidence.



10.3 New towpath artwork has been installed on the Nottingham & Beeston Canal. The artwork brings some colour to the towpath and helps people to find their way around the city using the canal.

10.4 Partner group, the Braunston Canal Society, have repaired damage caused to the steps and towpath near the entrance to Braunston Tunnel which had made them dangerous. Funding has been secured from West Northants Council to complete design phase works for improvements to access, both down the steps and along the towpath. A £45k grant will progress this work in B25 with the hope of delivery funding to follow.



11. NORTH WEST REGION

11.1 The Lancaster Canal has been reopened following the repair of Hollowforth Aqueduct and the refurbishment of the Ribble Link sea gate. This follows a substantial closure over last summer and the winter following the breach of the aqueduct and unrelated failure of the seagate. Contractors have mobilised to repair the breach on the Macclesfield Canal and a full repair is expected by the end of June. The Huddersfield Narrow Canal remains closed at Lock 11, with substantial repairs likely to take us to the end of the Summer.

11.2 As previously reported, in January whilst conducting PPM at Anderton Boat Lift the wire on the East Aqueduct Gates snapped causing the gates to fall sharply down. A complete review of the gate lifting mechanism and failure analysis has now been completed. We await the advice of the supply chain specialist to develop options for short- and medium-term repairs which will be reviewed in early May. We are still proceeding with a full programme of events throughout the summer which is also the boat lift's 150th year.

11.3 Trust colleagues met with national and regional representatives of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to discuss the most effective way forward with bid proposals for the lift. Options remain open for both a regional or national bid. Our strategy will be agreed shortly following a further meeting on 25th April.

11.4 Director NW attended the Jenkins and Richie inquest to give evidence, in front of a jury and the outcome is a narrative verdict. It states that both died by drowning and the circumstances leading to the drowning are uncertain. There is no PFD order for the Trust. HM Coroner was complimentary about the Trust's approach to water safety. Furthermore, he has asked that we keep him updated with our progress and activity regarding Water Safety.

12. YORKSHIRE & NORTH EAST REGION

12.1 We have secured funds that will enable refurbishment on the side-weirs on the Rochdale canal between Todmorden and Hebden Bridge. Works will include installation of new walkway, which replace the existing narrow planks. This will make this section of the canal accessible to people using wheelchairs or pushchairs.

12.2 We have secured funding allocations for towpath upgrades between Bingley Five Rise and Three Rise on the Leeds & Liverpool and between Todmorden and Walsden on the Rochdale Canal. These are due to be delivered by the end of March 2026; we are currently working towards signing funding agreements.

12.3 We have also secured funding from DRAX to carry out a Floating Pennywort removal project to help target the problem on the Selby Canal. The funding will include

additional contractor treatments and purchasing a pontoon that volunteers can use to help tackle the floating pennywort as well as carry out other activities on the offside.

12.4 The Community Roots programme has continued to deliver successful walks as part of the People's Postcode funded Let's programme. From 14th February to 22nd April, we delivered 18 activities engaging with 500 people. We have also supported 1 externally delivered event, engaging directly with 311 people and indirectly with 1,500 people. We have 3 new partner groups - Baildon Glen Primary School, University of Bradford and 50 Things to Do (Bradford).



12.5 Let's Bushcraft sessions have taken place on the bank of the Leeds &Liverpool in Hirst Wood, Shipley, an area with higher levels of deprivation than the neighbouring area of Saltaire. They have attracted families who are looking for a different experience in the local area but also by adults looking to try out something new. Another successful activity to encourage people to visit our waterways was the Let's Sketch Walk, kindly hosted by South Pennine Boat Club.



13. BOATING AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

13.1 Boating & Mooring

13.1.1 Winter moorings – sales for winter 24/25 broadly in line with 23/24. Redacted.

13.2 Licensing

13.2.1 National Boat Count has been completed showing licence evasion has increased to just under 10%. Licence evasion has decreased by 2.4% in London and South East but increased in every other region. The overall number of boats has remained constant (+24) but there has been an increase in CC boats (+1099), Redacted.

13.3 Boater satisfaction

13.3.1 Boater Survey Results - Headline KPI of overall satisfaction has seen a significant increase to 55% [+9%, 46% in 2024]; now broadly in line with 2021-2023 results.

13.3.2 Licence commission - The engagement survey has concluded. A total of 4,678 responses, redacted:

- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted

13.3.3 Redacted:

- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted

13.4 Boat Licensing Customer Support

Monthly Summary							
Enforcement Region	Evasion Cases	Continuous Cruisers Open	Extended Stays Open	Approved Equality Adjustments (inc Review)	Approved Equality Adjustments (inc Review) With AES	Equality Adjustments	Equality Adjustments With AES
EM	516 (1)	105 (12)	45 (-1)	49 (4)	1 (-2)	53 (-2)	2 (-3)
Lon & SE	1774 (71)	806 (12)	185 (-24)	230 (7)	16 (-3)	273 (4)	22 (-1)
NW	687 (30)	112 (-3)	49 (0)	62 (4)	4 (-2)	73 (3)	6 (0)
UNKNOWN	8 (4)	0 (0)	1 (0)	3 (0)	0 (-1)	4 (0)	0 (-1)
W&SW	433 (36)	194 (3)	80 (-8)	275 (3)	28 (1)	287 (-1)	30 (2)
WM	600 (30)	128 (4)	53 (-17)	61 (5)	4 (2)	73 (6)	5 (0)
Y&NE	482 (72)	65 (7)	26 (2)	35 (3)	2 (1)	40 (-1)	2 (-1)
Total	**4500 (244)**	**1410 (35)**	**439 (-48)**	**715 (26)**	**55 (-4)**	**803 (9)**	**67 (-4)**

13.5 Customer Service

13.5.1 Chat Bot – 'Lockie' is starting to show a rise in interactions with a reduction in handoffs to people. The live chat-bot function is now on the boating web pages as well as the contact us page. The next step is to launch the chat-bot avatar and publicise the chat-bot function more widely.

14. VOLUNTEERING

14.1 Volunteering - Reporting to the end March 2025– Q4

	Hours/Number
Total hours	747,518
Overall number of Active Trust Volunteers	5,484
Overall number of Active Partner Organisations	236

14.2 Additional statistics for insight with year-on-year position:

Year end	Hours	No. of Volunteers	Engagement score
2024/25	747,518 ⇧	5,581 ⇧	8.5/10 ⇧
2023/24	739,443 ⇧	4566 ⇧	8.1/10 ⇩
2022/23	677,419 ⇧	4306 ⇧	8.5/10 ⇧
2021/22	636,122 ⇧	3748 ⇧	85% ⇧
2020/21	236,803	2214	74%

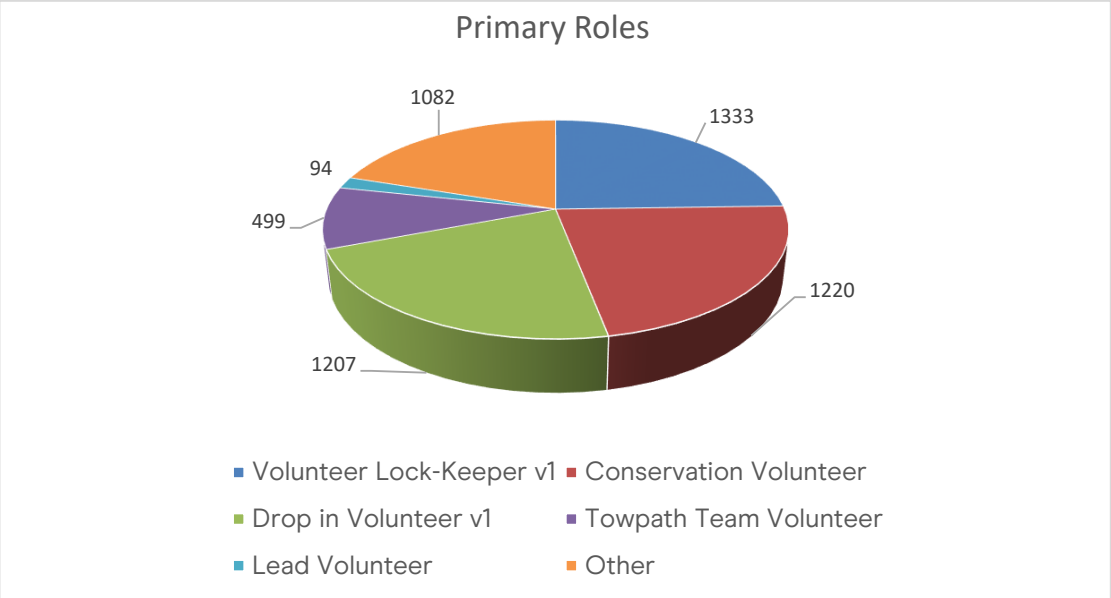
14.3 The final end-of-year figures are just under 750k; 98% of target. In the volunteering sector there is a national challenging position which recognises that volunteering is culturally decreasing. This year we have achieved a higher level of individual volunteer give with a reduction of hours from partner organisations. This recognises that we are broadening the breadth of our volunteering offer, having numerous taster welcome sessions, enabling volunteers to 'have a go' and see the flexible and varied opportunities whilst getting 'stuck in' to a taskforce type activity, making a difference in their local canal community.

14.4 We recognise that we did not reach our full potential this year due to a hold on 'volunteering leader' roles impacting 11FTE roles due to financial constraints in Operations to meet efficiency targets.

14.5 Time recorded by Partner Organisations (POs) has decreased, with 25k fewer hours than in B23. There have been 77 fewer partners with time recorded them against them this year. The Volunteering team continues to work directly with task managers to review all POs providing data to teams on past partners the time recorded by current partners.

14.6 PO contribution has been impacted by the strategic decision taken by regions to take advantage of their relationship with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) community pay back offer, where there has been a 25k increase in hours given. The relationship with the MOJ is not a volunteering relationship, but illustrates the demonstrable offer of consistent, regular, planned activity that requires less supervision/oversight than many of our volunteering partner organisations.

14.7 The engagement score for our volunteers continues to improve and has increased by to 8.5 (0.4 points up) to exceed our target (8.3). Over 9.1 volunteers say that they see themselves volunteering for the Trust in 2 years' time. Our retention rate at the Trust is also encouraging, with the average length of relationship with our volunteers being 4 years. For our Lead Volunteers this is just over 6 years.



14.8 Role breakdown - 30% of our volunteers are in our main practical focused roles (Conservation and Towpath Team volunteers). 24% are in a volunteer lock keeper role and 22% are in a Drop-in role. Those in the Drop-in role are either purely volunteering on a one-off basis or are using it as a step into the Trust to see which other roles appeal

14.9 Trust Milestone Recognition Awards - A new award for volunteers launches very soon; the Platinum Badge which recognises 5,000 volunteering hours. This is in addition to the Mug (100 hours); Bronze (500 hours); Silver (1,000 hours) and Gold (2,000 hours). Bulk deliveries have been fulfilled and disseminated to all regions, with 80 volunteers due the new Platinum award. We also have introduced a strengthened inventory management process, meaning we have national oversight of stock levels which





streamlines ordering, supply resilience and budget forecasting.

15. BRAND, SUPPORTERS & INFLUENCE

15.1 LSE Following the region's letter to the Mayor of London regarding air pollution and boats we wrote to all London MPs taking the opportunity to highlight the Trust's position and seek further engagement. Visits are now planned with James Aster, MP West Ham & Beckton (Labour) and Uma Kumaran, MP Stratford & Bow (Labour). All MPs will be invited to the London Reception in July.

15.2 WSW Extensive MP/MS engagement has been conducted regarding the M&B abstraction issue. Engagements include, but are not limited to: Lord Mike German, David Chadwick MP, James Gibson-Watt, Leader of Powys County Council, Julie Morgan MS, Catherine Fookes MP, Peter Fox MS, Natasha Asghar MS, Jayne Bryant MS (cabinet secretary), Jane Dodds MS, Delyth Jewell MS, Lynne Neagle MS, Nick Thomas Symonds MP, and Anthony Hunt (leader of Torfaen Council.

15.3 WMS hosted the philanthropy event with Steven Knight - On 4th March, some 50 stakeholders joined us at The Bond in Digbeth for lunch and an opportunity to hear from Steven Knight, David Orr, Richard Parry and members of the regional team about the importance of canals and the role of the Canal and River Trust. The event was organised by the national fundraising team and supported by the region.

15.4 The regional director was invited to the West Midlands Labour Conference dinner with the West Midlands Mayor. It was an excellent opportunity to meet many West Midlands MPs again and raise the profile of the Canal and River Trust. Those met include DEFRA Minister Mary Creagh MP, who had visited the Coventry Canal with the regional team earlier this year and who is particularly interested in the canal as a habitat for wildlife.

15.5 EMS Colleagues attended a meeting with Rushcliffe Labour MP, James Naish, to help support a multi-agency approach to localised flooding issues. Representatives attended from Severn Trent, the Environment Agency, Inland Drainage Board and flood wardens representing three parish council areas. Discussions took place around the challenges of maintaining the waterway and the aspiration of local communities to see more of a restoration approach. It was agreed that a further meeting would be arranged.



15.6 EMS colleagues have also attended site visits and public drop ins in the aftermath of the severe flooding across Leicestershire in January this year. We continue to meet with the Lead Local Flood Authorities, Leicestershire County Council and the Environment Agency to investigate the flooding incidents and potential mitigations in areas such as Loughborough.

15.7 YNE colleagues met with Robbie Moore MP at the site of the towpath project in Silsden on Friday 11th April.



15.8 NW MP for Tatton, Esther McVey visited Anderton to meet colleagues and volunteers. This meeting gave Esther the opportunity to see both the current challenges we face and the proposals for our lottery fund bid. She has offered to support conversations where required/advised. Both Tim Roca MP and Sarah Russell MP have taken an active interest in the Macclesfield breach and have been kept updated.

15.9 YNE regional director and colleague met Jo White MP in Worksop on 16th April. Jo requested this meeting to talk, amongst other things, about flooding. She was supportive of the Trust's position and is very keen to encourage future projects and funding opportunities along the canal.



Trust Board Meeting
15 May 2025
Information Report
Appendix 3 to Chief Executive's Report
Text in red confidential

APPENDIX 3: INFRASTRUCTURE & PROGRAMMES REPORT
Chief Infrastructure & Programmes Officer

1. PURPOSE

This appendix provides the Board with an update on the activities of the Infrastructure & Programmes directorate.

2. ASSET MANAGEMENT

Principal Asset condition has got slightly worse, with grades D&E increasing from 13.56% to 13.77%. Towpath condition has improved slightly to 81.27% in grades A, B & C.

Relevant Standard	Measure	Warning Threshold	02/04/2024	01/05/2024	03/06/2024	01/07/2024	01/08/2024	30/08/2024	01/10/2024	01/11/2024	02/12/2024	02/01/2025	03/02/2025	03/03/2025	01/04/2025
1a. Safe Waterways (measured monthly)	Principal Assets in Grades D&E	23%	13.05%	13.11%	13.18%	13.23%	13.24%	13.27%	13.33%	13.41%	13.43%	13.60%	13.56%	13.71%	13.77%
2. Towpath Condition (measured quarterly)	Towpaths in Grades A, B, C	60%	81.29%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	81.05%	81.05%	81.05%	81.05%	81.27%	81.27%
3. Flood Management (measured quarterly)	>£2m breach damage D&E culverts and embankments	4%	0.58%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

2.1 Redacted

2.1.1 Redacted

2.1.2 Redacted

2.1.3 Redacted

2.1.4 Redacted

2.2 Redacted

2.2.1 Redacted.

2.3 Arising Issues on the wider canal network

2.3.1 The table below shows the number of arising issues for 2025/26 by region. These are issues which have required significant engineering input, or which have a potential to require investment this financial year.

Region	Arising in April 2025	Arising in April 2025 cost £'000 (cost x probability)	B25 YTD (no. of issues)	B25 YTD cost £'000 (cost x probability)
Y & NE	1	3	1	3
NW	0	0	0	0
L & SE	2	25	2	25
W & SW	4	123	4	123
EM	3	107	3	107
WM	5	85	5	85
Total	**15**	**343**	**15**	**343**

2.3.2 These are a selection of the issues:

- **March Haigh and Redbrook Reservoirs moorland fire**: A significant area of land was on fire around the Huddersfield Narrow Canal reservoir group. The photo below from the BBC news shows March Haigh in the foreground and Redbrook in the smoke behind. Our teams visited after the fire and thankfully there was no damage to reservoir valves or instruments.



- **Hardwick Lock 28, Bypass Culvert Collapse (Oxford canal):** The bypass culvert has sustained partial collapse leading to operational issues managing water control downstream at the Banbury pound. The little rainfall over the past few weeks has also exacerbated the problem as there is less incoming flow from the Hanwell Brook. Operations are currently running a feed through the lock to maintain the pound levels. The asset and reactive teams are reviewing the access and repair to dislodge the blockage, although access agreement will need to be approved by the landowner (EA) as the alignment of culvert is outside the Trust's boundary.

- Redacted

- **Breach above Culvert 45 (Macclesfield Canal) -** on Thursday 27 March, the Trust were alerted to increased leakage through the embankment, and the following day a whirlpool appeared in the canal. The decision was taken to put planks in at Bridge 51 and 53, however this required removal of circa 25 boats from within the area. Planks were finally installed on the evening of 28 March. Later that evening a sinkhole opened up in the canal and water drained via a hole overnight into the next morning (29 March). An emergency project has been initiated and JNBentley are in mobilisation phase. Thankfully the breach caused limited damage. The main concern currently is water resources / transfer, as the 'breach' isolates Bosley Reservoir from the rest of the Macclesfield/ Peak Forest summit. The focus is initially getting dams insitu and reducing the length of dewatering (initially 1km), so over pumping or fluming can be achieved. Direct Services are also going to undertake works to washwalls whilst the canal is dewatered. These works commenced on 8 April 2025.





- Redacted

- **Bridge 5, Gittins Bridge (Montgomery Canal).** Direct Services are currently undertaking repairs to both parapets and have reported that the bridge is being continually clipped

- **Landslip between River Stour & Staffs & Worcester Canal:** During March 2024, a landslip occurred at one of the pinch points between the River Stour and the Staffordshire & Worcestershire canal. We've been monitoring the slip since and whilst we detected a secondary minor slip, the condition hasn't significantly worsened. We received communication, through enquiries, that the towpath had been reduced to 1m width, but this proved to be inaccurate. Redacted

3. FINANCE

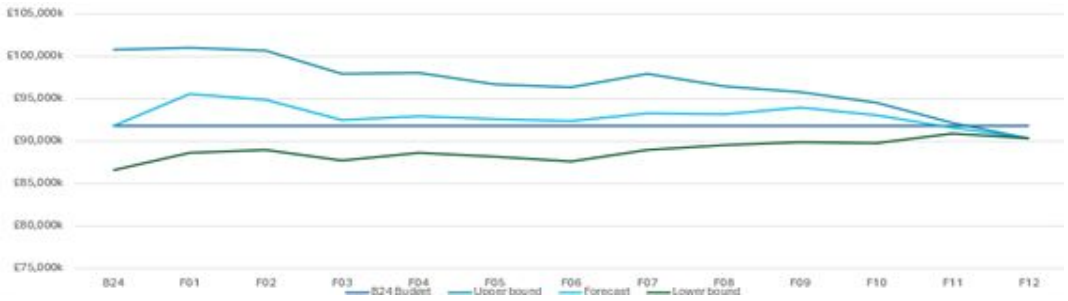
3.1 YTD £2.8m underspent (at 2024/25 year end) v F10 forecast:

- The main variance at year end was Project Delivery (spend with our supply chain) where spend was c£2.7m below plan. This was mainly due to reservoir and dredging projects, where activity was delayed.
- All of the emergency / urgent arising budget was spent in the year. £7.55m was allocated against an original budget of £6.9m.

- Many of the movements relate to budgets being reallocated (e.g the emergency budget being allocated to the teams who deliver the work.

Contribution	Month			Year to Date					Full Year					
	Actual	F10	Variance Actual vs F10	Actual	B24	Variance	F10	Variance Actual vs F10	B24	F10	Variance F10 vs B24	F6	Variance F10 vs F6	Variance B24 vs F6
Project Delivery	(9,232)	(11,024)	1,792	(53,573)	(48,599)	(4,975)	(56,253)	2,680	(48,599)	(56,253)	(7,654)	(54,297)	1,956	(5,698)
Direct Services	(3,013)	(2,446)	(567)	(26,093)	(25,551)	(542)	(25,882)	(211)	(25,551)	(25,882)	(330)	(26,249)	(367)	(698)
Asset Management	(791)	(988)	197	(8,443)	(9,172)	729	(8,700)	257	(9,172)	(8,700)	472	(8,984)	(284)	188
Bridge Strikes (CRISP)	(32)	(11)	(22)	(318)	(95)	(224)	(297)	(21)	(95)	(297)	(203)	(301)	(4)	(206)
Non PP Income Projects	103	11	92	(1)	-	(1)	(0)	(1)	-	-	-	(0)	(0)	(0)
Infrastructure and Programmes	(42)	(107)	65	(410)	312	(722)	(470)	60	312	(470)	(782)	63	532	(250)
I&P Emergency, Urgent & Arising	-	-	-	-	(6,900)	6,900	-	-	(6,900)	-	6,900	(1,117)	(1,117)	5,783
External Project Delivery	48	31	17	(109)	(199)	90	(113)	4	(199)	(113)	86	(53)	61	146
Programme Management Office	(123)	(137)	14	(1,407)	(1,537)	130	(1,420)	13	(1,537)	(1,420)	116	(1,531)	(111)	6
Total Contribution	(13,083)	(14,670)	1,588	(90,356)	(91,740)	1,384	(93,136)	2,780	(91,740)	(93,136)	(1,395)	(92,469)	667	(728)

3.2 The graph below was used through the year to forecast our likely year end position.



4. PRIORITY PROJECTS PROGRAMME

4.1 Redacted

4.2 Other reservoir projects of note

4.2.1 **Wilstone Reservoir:** Kier mobilised and commenced works on 22 April 2025. Second (and final) access and working area has been agreed with the landowner. A significant road closure is required to undertake work to the northwest embankment (due to commence August 2025). Detailed review of road closure related works has resulted in reducing closure duration from five months to approximately six weeks. Formal agreement with Local Authority remains a key project risk.

4.2.2 **Sparth Wave-wall:** the wall moved during the recent footpath replacement project and has now been repaired. A 10m length of wall moved 160mm into the reservoir over a 1m height. The works are now complete. The section was taken down and reinstated well in a very short time period. The photo to the right shows the wave-wall under repair.



4.2.3 **Welford Siphon**: The newly installed siphon is working well and a training day has been completed for local operations. The reservoir is now feeding the canal and an emergency drawdown system is in place.

4.2.4 **Knypersely Reservoir:** All works completed on 14 April 2025, with demobilisation planned by 18 April. The QCE signed off the MIOS on 10 April 25.

4.2.5 **Harthill Reservoir**: the reservoir is now in operation and was filled and spilled for the first time on 13 March 2025. The inspection confirmed that all was in good working order.



4.3 **Embankments, cuttings, culverts and bridges**

4.3.1 **Canal Leak at Culvert 45 (Macclesfield Canal):** The embankment breached at the end of March resulting in a navigational closure. The area has been made safe and our framework contractor has nearly negotiated access over the farmer's land; access tracks were expected to commence on 22 April. A CCTV survey has been completed on Culvert 45 which runs underneath the embankment. The liner which was installed in 2020 is intact; we are hopeful that no significant works will be required on the culvert. Initial designs have been provided to enable the team to develop a programme of work, with a plan to update the next stoppage notice with a target opening date.

4.3.2 **Birmingham Canal Navigations Bridges:** Works to Smith's Bridge are complete and both canal and towpath have re-opened. Works at Wright's Bridge are largely complete with canal and towpath re-opened, with the resurfacing of the bridge to start w/c 14 June and brickwork repairs are at approx. 90% completion, aiming for completion at the end of April 2025.

4.3.3 **Reeds Bridge Replacement (Grand Union Canal Slough Arm):** The Affinity Water leak which has been fixed is no longer causing a saturation risk. The BT diversion is also fully complete; electric cable realignment (required with the new bridge position due to land encroachment) is being agreed with S&S, and is expected to be completed by the end of May. An unknown fibre optic cable has recently been installed at the site. This appears to be unauthorised and is being investigated by the 3rd party works team. This should not impact on the main works, which are now planned to start in June 2025.

4.4 **Mechanical and electrical projects**

4.4.1 **Anderton Boat Lift:** Design review of the gate lifting mechanism is due to begin and the lift is expected to remain closed for at least six months. Additional costs have been forecast for design and optioneering.

4.4.2 **Ribble Sea Gate (Ribble Link):** The sea gate was reinstalled w/c 14 April, and was one week behind plan as additional works were required. The link was operational before the first booked boat passage.

4.4.3 **Tees Barrage Stop Planks**: Redacted. Works are planned on gate pivots, delayed from summer 2025 to Feb 2026, to allow time to procure the new planks. Updated budget approvals and capital request have been progressed.

4.4.4 Redacted

4.4.5 **Hunts sluices:** The area around the sluice was cleared to enable the region to install stop planks in the sluice opening. The region are now working to clear the debris.

4.5 **Locks, canal banks and dredging projects**

4.5.1 **Wilmcote Top Lock (Stratford Canal):** An urgent arising project following rotation of the gate quoin, causing the gate to foul on the lock invert and prevent closure of the lock gate. The navigation is closed. The works are progressing well and an instruction for Kier to accelerate the programme has given, with navigation currently planned to re-open on 16 June 2025. Redacted.

4.5.2 **Tardebigge Top Lock (Worcester and Birmingham Canal):** An urgent arising project following the bulging of the lock wall which was being monitored but accelerated in the new year. Kier have begun taking down the lock chamber wall. The archaeologist was on site to complete the watching brief. Draft drawings for the project were completed on 9 April and discussed with the Conservation Officer. The designs will be finalised and submitted along with the formal Listed Building Consent Application. A boating business site visit was held to talk customers through the work. The access track and compound are in place. Two pontoons have been installed to allow towpath users to cross the canal and communication boards are in place to inform the public. The current estimate is to be able to reopen the canal in August and this will be updated once the wall is fully removed and the extent of the rebuild works known.

4.5.3 **Bridge 36 Underwalk repairs (River Soar – Leicester Section):** The urgent arising works started on site in January 2025. Following dewatering, an additional 8m section of wall collapsed. The stoppage was extended to 21 March 2025 to repair the additional section of collapsed wall and works are now completed. An additional section of wall further upstream has sunk (it has no foundation) and is at risk of collapse. Work to repair this section starting w/c 14 April under a restriction and towpath closure.

4.5.4 Redacted

5. DIRECT SERVICES PROGRAMME

5.1 There have been 28 projects completed in the month against a plan of 31. Six of these are arising works. There have been 312 packages of work completed in 2024/25 and there are 26 projects on site.

Total DS Outputs Planned Vs Actual (calculated automatically)	UoM	Year		
		Planned	Actual	% change
Bank Protection	m	3513.6	3040.6	-13
Towpath Improvements	m	1151	2002	74
Gate Replacements. Number of locks.	No	36	45	25
Gates Replacements. Number of Leaves fitted.	No	125	117	-6
Gate Repairs – to include relines and Cill/Quoin repairs and any works to conserve water	No	33	39	18
Other Leak Repairs – km length, Aqueducts, embankments	m	143	170	19
Boundary/Retaining Wall Repairs	m	71	45	-37
Fencing	m	0	0	0
Access Improvements	No	9	12	33
Bridge Repairs	No	41	45	10
Other Asset Repairs (Culverts, Weirs, Aqueducts etc.)	No	55	96	75
Total number of notifications	No	198	214	8

5.2 **Lock gate production:** All new lock gates, including gate refurbishments, for 2024/25 have been completed. The 2025/26 programme has commenced. There were 12 lock

gate leaves manufactured in March, three more than the F10 plan. The team are confident of completing the programme for next year, albeit some leaves planned for manufacture in 2024/25 will move into 2025/26.

5.3 **Workboat Capital Programme:** 93.7% of purchase orders for our capital programme have been raised. Six craft are complete and are currently undergoing commissioning and testing (Clifton, Prestonian, Innovation and replacements for Berkswell, Wigan, and Wendover). Craneboat Beal has been moved to Heck so we can get it lifted and transported to Aqueduct. Craneboat Rotherham has had its new crane fitted and is currently being inspected for handing back to the team by the end of April. Swinton has had the new crane delivered and is awaiting installation. Craneboat Thorne is now on dry dock and works have commenced to cabin and crane base. Work on one of the Weaver hoppers has been completed.

5.4 **Workboat PPM:** PPM completion rate for the year increased slightly to 85% at year end. There are 241 outstanding defect notifications for workboats. 1,126 defect and breakdown notifications have been completed YTD. The hull surveys are also being recorded and all the B24 planned hull surveys have been completed by February 2025. This is our best ever completion rate for planned hull surveys.

Board Meeting
May 2025
Information Report
Text in red font to be treated as confidential.

PEOPLE UPDATE

Karen Seth, People Director

1. PURPOSE

This report provides a full activity update on the work in the People Directorate over the preceding 2 months.

This report is being made available in Diligent in respect of the next Board Meeting and is for background reading purposes.

2. KEY POINTS

2.1 Phase 1 implementation of the new People System – Dayforce – is well underway with the introduction of Core HR, Colleague & Manager Self Service, and Recruitment all due to go live on June 23rd.

2.2 The annual pay review for those grades covered under collective bargaining (colour grades Orange – Violet) was effective from 1st April and was paid in April payroll. The review also reflected the new National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates – we are seeing the effects of compression in salaries at our lower levels as NMW rates continue to increase and which is further compounded by how some of our pay elements are treated for both pensionable pay and NMW purposes. We plan to review this in preparation for the next cycle of pay negotiations.

2.3 We are delighted that two colleagues have come forward to start our first disability network. The name is still to be confirmed but will cover disability and chronic health conditions. Cath Tomlin has met with the co-leads to support them, help develop their ideas and support the launch shortly.

2.4 Director Wales & Southwest – New search progressed at pace following fail to successfully appoint in February. Final stage candidate meetings in progress. Expected to conclude end April/early May with 3 strong candidates at final interview stage. Verbal offer made to preferred candidate.

2.5 **Welsh Bwrdd chair recruitment in progress**. Continues to prove a challenging recruitment activity. Nurole appointed to support the search. Despite wide search and very limited candidates coming through, currently a couple of potential candidate conversations ongoing.

2.6 2025 Trustee recruitment – Longlisting and initial Perrett Laver interviews complete. Appointments Committee Shortlisting Meeting 28/4. First stage candidate interviews 7, 12 & 13 May. Final meetings expected early June.

2.7 Co-optee Audit & Risk Committee – Successful recruitment to this volunteer position with Nurole support. Nick Boden selected and appointed following April Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

2.8 Engagement Score – Overall engagement score for the Trust is 7.9 with a response rate of 72%. We are focussing on three key areas: Wellbeing and Belonging, Leadership and Inspiration, and Colleague voice and Resources. Senior Managers have been briefed and will move into action planning with their teams around these three key drivers alongside a Trust wide plan.

2.9 We have created our internal leadership development programme working with Franklin Covey for the material content, we are now ready to launch our first cohort entitled Excelling in Leadership, twelve Senior managers will be part of the pilot. We then plan to roll this out to all colleagues in a leadership role.

3. People Operations

3.1 Phase 1 implementation of the new People System – Dayforce – is well underway with the introduction of Core HR, Colleague. Manager Self Service and Recruitment all due to go live on 23rd June. Superusers from across all Directorates in the Trust have been engaged in initial training to support the roll out of wider training amongst their peers across the organisation. A robust comms plan is also underway with key messaging being cascaded at pivotal points. We will soon begin the Discovery phase of the payroll module which is due to be released in Phase 2, later in the year.

3.2 Redacted

3.3 A delivery team is now in place combining the People/Finance and Legal Directorates to develop a process regarding our contactor/self-employed people that may or may not fall under the IR35 Tax regulations. A cleanup of current potential issues has been completed, and we are now embedding a process for managers wishing to embark on contractor support

4. Reward & Wellbeing

4.1 The annual pay review for those grades covered under collective bargaining (colour grades Orange – Violet) was effective from 1st April and was paid in April payroll. The review also reflected the new National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates – we are seeing the effects of compression in salaries at our lower levels as NMW rates continue to increase and which is further compounded by how some of our pay elements are treated for both pensionable pay and NMW purposes. We plan to review this in preparation for the next cycle of pay negotiations.

4.2 The effective date for our manager pay review remains 1st October. Planning will commence shortly with initial proposals presented at the next Remuneration Committee meeting on 29th July.

4.3 The work to map our jobs into the new framework designed in Dayforce continues and where the focus is on establishing an effective system of record for the existing structure.

4.4 As global events have led to a period of volatility in global financial markets, communications have been issued in conjunction with our pension scheme administrators, Standard Life. These intend to reassure colleagues and signpost Standard Life's resources and customer support team. Our programme of free financial and retirement planning seminars as well as further information webinars have been rolled out to support colleague's financial wellbeing and education.

5. Employee Relations

Redacted

5.1 Redacted

6. Inclusion & Diversity

6.1 Inclusion and Diversity Strategy Delivery Programme - At the end of April, the Inclusion & Diversity Manager facilitated a workshop with business leads to identify tasks for delivery in B25, the third and final year of the Stronger Together Programme. The workshop also started to identify our priorities for the longer term to inform the next version of our Inclusion & Diversity Strategy.

6.2 Inclusion Circles

6.2.1 We are delighted that two colleagues have come forward to start our first disability network. The name is still to be confirmed, but will cover disability and chronic health conditions. Cath Tomlin has met with the co-leads to support them, help develop their ideas and support the launch shortly.

6.2.2 We have a new lead for our Multi-faith inclusion circle, and have promoted the circle through timely internal communications on various faith celebrations that occurred, including Ramadan, Vaisakhi, and Lent/Easter.

6.2.3 We celebrated **International Women's Day** in March via a webinar organised by the Women's Network.

6.3 I&D Awareness - Planning for Pride season is well underway, with our first Pride being Birmingham in May.

7. People & Talent

7.1 Engagement Score – Overall engagement score for the Trust is 7.9 with a response rate of 72%. we are focussing on three key areas: Wellbeing and Belonging, Leadership and Inspiration and Colleague voice and Resources. Senior Managers have been briefed and will move into action planning with their teams around these three key drivers.

7.2 We are continuing to work on the training audit actions. Managers are in the process of completing TNAs for all roles within their teams this will ensure that we know exactly what training is needed for each role and how often it should be refreshed. A standard has been developed and is currently in draft format.

7.3 We have developed our internal leadership development programme working with Franklin Covey for the material content, we are now ready to launch our first cohort entitled Excelling in Leadership, twelve Senior managers will be part of the pilot. We then plan to roll this out to all colleagues in a leadership role.

7.4 Peopleways continues to be delivered, with three more courses mandated for all managers to complete; Inclusive leadership, Performance Management, and Understanding the importance of people management responsibilities. Uptake is good with 61%, 62% and 63% management engagement. Overall engagement with the Peopleways programme remains high at 78%

7.5 We have launched our internal growth development programme, this programme is to complement Peopleways technical skills, as it provides the soft skills and behaviours required for managers, e.g. coaching, delivering feedback, being aware of personal brand etc. This programme is optional for all aspiring and current line managers and forms an important part of our development offer

7.6 We are now approaching End of year performance reviews; managers are currently calibrating team members scores and conversations will be held in May. During these conversations managers will also review career outcomes and ambitions with their colleagues in order to tailor their development plans. At the half year review we had 98% completion of colleague reviews.

7.7 Our next induction will take place May 20th in Birmingham with 47 colleagues attending.

7.8 In January 2025 we launched our 'new' colleague listening sessions. These will take place monthly and are facilitated by Richard Parry. Colleagues with c.12 months tenure are invited. Overall feedback is positive, and any local actions have been completed. 16 colleagues have so far attended and found them worthwhile, appreciating the opportunity to verbally provide feedback on experiences of their first 12 months.

7.9 Training records and the catalogue of courses continue to be cleansed in order to prepare for upload into Dayforce ready for dayforce learning.

8. Recruitment

8.1 **Director Wales & Southwest** – a new search has progressed at pace following failure to successfully appoint in February. Final stage candidate meetings are in progress. We expect to conclude end April/early May with 3 strong candidates at final interview stage. A verbal offer has been made to preferred candidate.

8.2 **Head of Philanthropy & Partnerships (Maternity leave cover) vacancy –** appointed and commenced on 22 April 2025.

8.3 **Welsh Bwrdd chair recruitment is in progress**. This continues to prove a challenging recruitment activity. Nurole were appointed to support the search. Despite a wide search and very limited candidates coming through, there are currently a couple of potential candidate conversations ongoing.

8.4 **2025 Trustee recruitment** – Longlisting and initial Perrett Laver interviews are now complete. The Appointments Committee Shortlisting Meeting took place on 28/4, with first stage candidate interviews scheduled for 7, 12 & 13 May. Final meetings are expected early June.

8.5 **Co-optee Audit & Risk Committee** – Successful recruitment to this volunteer position with Nurole support. Nick Boden selected and appointed following April Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

8.6 **Inclusive Recruitment Strategy 2025** – Inclusive Recruitment Mandatory training commenced March 2025 as planned with positive feedback so far. Mandatory training will continue through to end September 2025 with focus on those most active hiring managers or those with most immediate need.

8.7 **Apprentice recruitment** – team working with future careers specialist to manage an effective apprentice recruitment exercise for 2025. Candidates shortlisted

from video interviews by future careers specialist & hiring managers, with face-to-face interviews taking place from late April through to mid-May. Strong response to campaign.

8.8 Successful appointment to the Head of Fundraising Operations post, which reports directly to the Fundraising Director. The colleague commenced employment on 7th April, as part of the creation of a new team within the Directorate to focus on delivering transformative fundraising. This team will lead on supporter retention and stewardship and also strengthening insights and data within existing audiences alongside new revenue streams and products.

9. People Business Partnering & Future Talent

9.1 We currently have 58 individuals on Future Talent Programmes broken down into 23 Apprentices, 2 Trainees, 3 Graduates, and 30 Upskilling in their current role. We had 19 new starters enrolled during April.

9.2 We have several colleagues finishing and offboarding – 1 due to finish in September 25 and 7 due to finish in March 26. Two have already moved to permanent roles, and we have roles confirmed for 4 of 6 M&E Technicians across Ops & I&P.

9.3 Recruitment of the New Future Talent roles closed, and we have recruited 9 construction apprentices and 2 graduates. We had over 1000 applications for apprenticeship roles and over 150 for graduate roles.

9.4 We launched the pilot 'Empower' programme through Raise the Bar provider as part of the Developing & Empowering women at the Trust workstream.

9.5 We have also explored further opportunities to maximise the levy and have converted a headcount Operative role to an apprenticeship opportunity within West Midlands and converted a headcount Surveyor role within Utilities to a degree apprenticeship, with a development opportunity for an internal colleague. We are hopeful to create more of these opportunities in difficult to fill vacancies or to support career progression for colleagues.

9.6 We set up a Youth Engagement delivery group to create clear guidance on programmes the Trust can engage with and how to successfully deliver these programmes. This includes a work experience programme, and we will pilot our first cohort in the summer.

9.7 One of the People Business Partners has attended a Neurodiversity Conference and some additional training sessions to look at how we can improve our recruitment processes and our attraction strategy to reach a more diverse pool of candidates. We are working with this material to produce some supporting documentation for hiring managers in order to support neuro diverse candidates and colleagues.

9.8 We attended Leeds Beckett University Job Fair, showcasing the brilliant work of the Trust and raising our profile within the community by discussing job opportunities with candidates and students.

Board Meeting
15 May 2025
Background Report to Chief Executive Board Report
Text in Red Font to be treated as Confidential.

STRATEGY & IMPACT REPORT

Heather Clarke, Strategy & Impact Director

1. Purpose & Overview

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on the following key areas of activity:

- **Strategic Insight, Direction & Planning**
- **Significant Campaigns, Initiatives & Programmes**
- **Strategic Engagement - Growing Our Influence & Partnerships**
- **Strategic & Performance Reporting, Reviews, Tools & Guidance**
- **Other Key Activities**

1.2. The Board Deep Dive on Our Transition to Net Zero work, includes a presentation on the trajectories and pathway options. The Department for Transport (DfT) has published its Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy with the goal of UK domestic maritime achieving zero fuel lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. To further develop the policies in the strategy DfT is also seeking evidence on Decarbonising smaller vessels and Net Zero Ports.

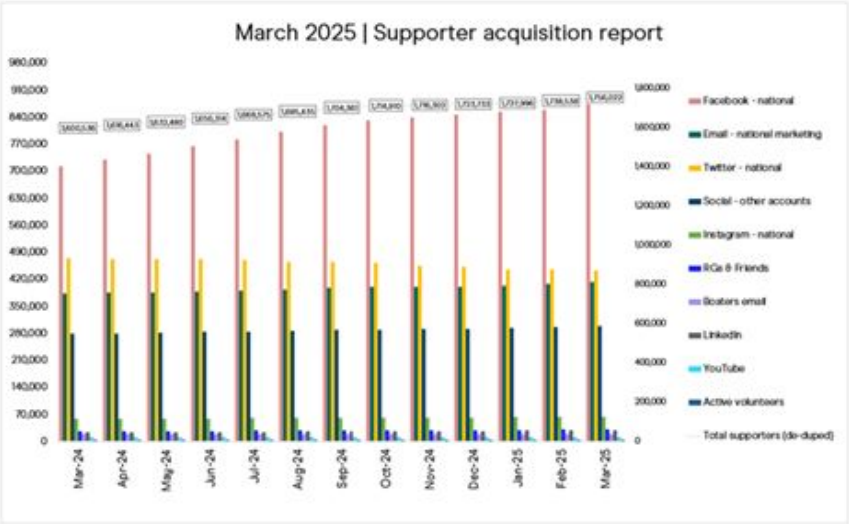
1.3. There is also a separate Board Report covering the water resourcing issues related to the Monmouthshire and Brecon (M&B) canal water abstraction licence conditions. M&B canal water abstraction cost-benefit analysis work has been undertaken in-house. The estimates on the economic activity and social value delivered by the M&B Canal and the extent to which the benefits of receiving a public subsidy to maintain it open all year round compensate for the costs are now being subject to external quality assurance.

2. Strategic Insight, Direction & Planning

2.1. Redacted

Growing our Supporter Base

2.2. Across the financial year 2024/25 we were delighted to reach our target of 1.75m total passive and active supporters, despite some losses on our social media following on X, and more hefty spam filters introduced across email platforms.



Redacted

2.3. Redacted.

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2.4. Redacted

2.5. **Redacted**

2.6. Redacted

Annual Boater Survey – Headline Results

2.7. Both waves of the existing annual boater survey have now been completed. Overall satisfaction has increased from 46% in 2024 to 55% in 2025 (and is now broadly in line with 2021-2023 results). There has been a decline in negative views relating to the general upkeep of waterways (-6%), vegetation management (-17%) and engagement with boaters (-6%). However, lack of dredging, boating costs and stoppages continue to be relatively strong negative drivers in 2025.

Planning System Reforms & Statutory Consultee review

2.8. We have made a submission following a further request for evidence to inform the MHCLG work on the development of a new statutory consultee performance framework.

2.9. A number of amendments to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill have been tabled including reduced consultation at the pre-application stage for major infrastructure projects (NSIP's) which will affect all prescribed consultees including the Trust.

2.10. We formally responded to DEFRA Land Use Framework consultation - making the case for any forthcoming national framework to properly recognise the value of existing blue

infrastructure and spaces, building upon our submission in response to Cunliffe Commission (Water Commission) – Call for Evidence.

Propositions Development Work - Our Heritage Standards Review

2.11. Redacted

3. Strategic Campaigns, Initiatives & Programmes

'We're the Charity for Canals' – Brand Building Campaign

3.1. We went live with our new brand building campaign on 8 April. In the first four weeks of the campaign, there were 30 million opportunities to see our advertising, which included billboard posters, on-demand TV slots on ITV X and Sky, Podcast advertising, digital advertising and social media advertising as well as utilising our own channels. We also saw 200k views of our film. Redacted









Narrow Escapes Season 2: building awareness of our work on daytime TV

3.2. Narrow Escapes season 2 aired on Channel 4 on Monday 5 May. Taking learnings from our recent market research with Humankind stating that we need to build our charitable comprehension, we have worked closely with the production team to profile our people alongside the story of our boaters. This approach to product placement is a step change for us, and gives us a cost-effective route to feature on daytime TV.

3.3. Episode 1 sees Simon Turner and our team at Bradely Workshop, Episode 2 shows a fish rescue with John Ellis in Wolverhampton, and Episode 3 features Laura Mullholland, one of our ecologists.

Charity sticker for signage project – Brand awareness & charity comprehension

3.4. As part of the project to add yellow charity stickers to our existing signage, we commissioned a nationally representative YouGov survey to assess whether it will improve awareness and improve understanding that we are a charity. Redacted

3.5. GIVE Campaign (Fundraising)

3.6. We have been working with Fundraising colleagues on the 12 selected sites as part of GIVE Campaign signage, with the first planning application submitted for six signs at five locations across the Foxton Locks site. In addition, a number of signs are proposed to be installed at the site which do not require an application for signage consent, benefiting from what is called 'deemed consent'.

3.7. Redacted. This project has involved a significant level of collaboration between a number of colleagues from the Planning, Design & Placemaking, Heritage & Collections, Marketing & Brand and Fundraising teams.

GUC Water Transfer Project (GUCT)

3.8. Significant work is ongoing with project partners, Affinity Water and Severn Trent on the project which is externally funded.

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3.17. Redacted

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3.18. Redacted

4. Strategic Engagement - Growing Our Influence & Partnerships

Ministry of Justice Partnership – Community Rehabilitation Programmes

4.1. The national partnership with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and waterway improvement programme with HM Prison & Probation Service has seen significant growth over the last financial year Redacted.

4.2. Redacted

Redacted

4.3. Redacted.

Permanent International Association of Navigation Congresses (PIANC)

4.4. We presented to The World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure, "permanent floating houses along the inland waterway banks and infrastructure group", as part of their visit to London Waterways. We shared our approach to waterspace planning and zoning, and emerging proposals for innovative floating developments.

Presenting to UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum

4.5. In May we will be presenting at panel events at UK REiiF in Leeds, on three topics, namely: water transfer, the importance of infrastructure to placemaking and on the role of canals in active travel. This is an annual three-day event bringing together government, investors, developers to drive sustainable and inclusive investment and regeneration in the UK.

5. Strategic & Performance Reporting, Reviews, Tools & Guidance

Our Statutory Consultee Performance

5.1. We received 2204 consultations in England & Wales to which a response was due in the period 1 April to 31 March 2025. Of these we responded to 98.7 % within 21 days or an agreed extension period (98.7 % in England and 100% in Wales).

Redacted

5.2. Redacted.

5.3. Redacted.

Wales Impact Report 2023 – 2024

5.4. The Impact Report for Wales 2023/24 has now been published. Welsh Impact Report | Canal & River Trust. The report covers the same period as the overarching Trust Impact Report 2023/24 and in future it is intended that both reports will be written and released at approximately the same time.

6. Other Key Activities

Filming, Events & Website

6.1. **Filming -** During 2024/25, our filming income nearly doubled from the previous year to £363k. Filming applications for major TV dramas and feature films, included Peaky Blinders, House of Guinness, two Guy Ritchie productions and a sixth series of Slow Horses filming on our canals, contributed to this large increase in income. Alongside this, documentaries such as Canal Boat Diaries and Narrow Escapes were recommissioned, both of which are due to air again this May and feature many Trust people.

6.2. **Events -** For the financial year 2024/25, we hosted 2,492 events on our network with an estimated attendance of 520k. Redacted

6.3. **Website -** Our website has been shortlisted for *'stand out public sector / not-for-profit / charity website of the year'* at the UK Digital Excellence Awards.

Planning, Placemaking, Heritage & Environment Related Initiatives

6.4. **Liverpool Waterfront Plan -** We have attended design workshops, site visits and meetings to influence the development of Liverpool City Council's (LCC) Waterfront Plan "Reclaiming Liverpool's Waterfront - a people first vision for the banks for the Mersey". Through our work with the LCC design team we have ensured the Waterfront Plan strongly aligns the Trust's vision for our waterspace and will support our floating development ambitions for Liverpool. LCC's increasingly supportive political and planning position provides an opportunity to develop and test floating developments.

6.5. **Montgomery Canal Restoration Project -** Planning permission was secured on 3 April for the new offline reserve at Wern required to enable restoration following on from the planning permission secured for the new bridge at Carreghofa Lane in February. A planning application was submitted on 15 of April for a new bridge at Williams Bridge and a planning application is being prepared for a further nature reserve required to enable restoration (Vyrnwy Reserve).

6.6. **Listed Building Consent Order (LBCO) -** With the Government's current focus on planning reform, and emphasis on efficiencies as well as delivery, we are working with Historic England to finalise the paperwork to support the LBCO, in the hope that the requisite parliamentary time can be found. We continue to promote the benefits of the LBCO and are very much supported by the heritage sector and DCMS.

6.7. **Heritage Survey** - The purpose of the initiative is to update the original 1988-1993 Architectural Heritage Survey, and provide up-to-date, digitised information for use internally and, ultimately, externally. We currently have about 20 volunteers undertaking heritage surveys and to date, around 450 surveys have been undertaken, with around 1,000 photographs uploaded.

6.8. Redacted

6.9. Redacted

Redacted

6.10. Redacted

6.11. Redacted.

Heather Clarke, Strategy & Impact Director, May 2025

Board Meeting
May 2025
Background Report to Chief Executive Board Report

FUNDRAISING DIRECTORATE REPORT

Maggie Gardner, Fundraising Director

1. Purpose & Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on key activities since the last board (March – April 25)

2. Overall

2.1. As with all sectors of the economy, fundraising will be impacted by the uncertainty caused by the evolving tariff landscape, political rhetoric from President Trump, and the higher costs of employing people following the Autumn budget, plus the ongoing cost of living crisis. Uncertainty reduces confidence and can, therefore, affect charitable giving. However, research during previous recessions demonstrated investment in fundraising during periods of difficulty positions the investing organisations to better weather the challenge and enhances their competitive advantage as the country emerges from financially constrained times. We still believe that we are well positioned to deliver on the Fundraising Strategy even though the market conditions have worsened.

2.2. The sector press is reporting that some charities are laying off substantial numbers of staff due to tightening finances. For example, nearly 200 jobs are at risk at Save the Children, likely due to government aid cuts, and Scope has put 124 jobs at risk as it looks to close most of its charity shops. English Heritage is also closing several properties with some job losses (while internal contacts are reporting the organisation is in serious difficulty).

2.3. To date our own public fundraising is holding strong with 16% year-on-year growth in individual giving. This is testament to the quality and dedication of the team as well as our low starting point and significant opportunity.

2.4. Redacted.

2.5. The Gifts in Wills team won two National Legacy Giving Awards, competing against contenders such as the National Trust and highly emotional charities including children's hospices. This is important for recognition, morale and even more importantly, it benchmarks our work against that of our peers. The only other organisation to win more than one award was the National Trust.

2.6. We completed a Deep Dive on Fundraising Compliance for ARC which was well received (slides attached at the end of this report).

2.7. Keeping Fundraising in the mind of colleagues and securing their support remains a priority for the team. At the start of March, we released an all-staff version of the Fundraising Strategy, we are also now working regularly with Internal Communication colleagues to keep all staff aware of the progress of fundraising activities.

3. Individual Giving and Legacy (IG&L)

3.1. We ended the year with B24 income of £3.65 million, slightly below the target of £3.74 million due to delays in raffle registration and issues with bench installation. However, this represents a 16% growth from B23. The team delivered £138k more net income than the strategy target, showcasing strong performance as we implement the new Fundraising Strategy.

3.2. Looking at some of the results in more detail:

- Redacted

3.3. In the second half of B24, the new Fundraising Strategy was implemented, resulting in test and learn activities within the team.

4. Regular Giving (Friends) & Face to Face (F2F) Fundraising

4.1 Redacted

4.2 Redacted

4.3 Redacted

5. Contactless Giving

5.1. Redacted

5.2. Redacted.

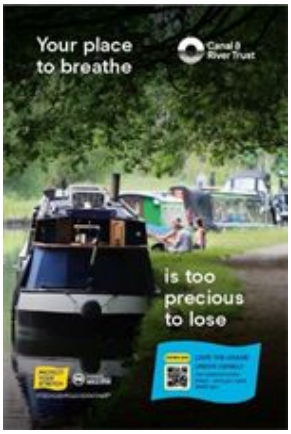
5.3. Redacted

5.4. Our first fundraising volunteers have joined the directorate. Led by contactless giving team leaders, they will focus on establishing efficient collaboration with local teams and promoting the charity daily and everywhere.

6. Appeals, In-Memory & Digital Fundraising

6.1. The 'Protect Your Stretch' test cash acquisition campaign has been officially launched. This hyperlocal Redacted will enable us to assess the effectiveness of a highly localised message across various channels and engagement strategies.





If the test is successful, we plan to implement a version across other postcodes that closely align with our target demographic or have demonstrated significant engagement with contactless giving, during periods without a major appeal or campaign focus.

6.2. In-Memory fundraising did not meet the target for B24, falling short by £52k compared to strategy target. However, it did achieve a 100% growth from B23, reaching £67k. Some issues related to internal challenges involving the design of in-mem benches and installation.

7. Legacies (Gifts in Wills – GIW)

7.1 GIW met and marginally exceed their YE target for B24 £338k vs £330k.

7.2 They exceeded their pledge acquisition target of 45, securing 52 additional pledges. The total pledge pipeline is now 213. Redacted

7.3 Redacted

7.4 With the investment in Gifts in Wills fundraising ramping up in B25, we aim to understand what prompts legacy giving among the Canal & River Trust prospective audience. This included HumanKind focus group research, now being further real life tested with our agency Catsnake.

7.5 The project with Catsnake utilised an adaptive acquisition approach (on Facebook) that adapts to audience needs. The IG&L team turned this project around in just 2 weeks, and working together with the Marketing and Communication colleagues we tested over 40 propositions and messages across a variety of audiences segmented by demographic and interest.

We established three key goals for this project:

- Firstly, we wanted to gather as much insight specific to Gifts in Wills messaging as possible to help inform our DRTV campaign concept development
- Secondly, we aimed to generate 1,500 leads (legacy enquiry pack downloads)
- Thirdly, we wanted to achieve this at a maximum cost per lead of £30

The work was highly successful and has generated further refinements and confirmation of the already researched messages. In particular, it highlighted once again that people are unfamiliar with our work and that stories which present simple case studies illustrating both Canal & River Trust's activity and impact are vital, that near time jeopardy is important and that our audience wants us to be 'straight talking' using both emotional and rational language. Redacted

7.6 The team won two national awards at the Legacy Giving Awards, competing against significant UK charities like the National Trust, English Heritage, and Oxfam. We secured 2 out of our 3 nominations. A humorous moment occurred when the comedian host remarked that the Canal and River Trust received more cheers than the Cats Protection League, joking, "when did canals get more popular than cats!"





7.7 We have made it easier for people to include gifts in their wills. A codicil form, agreed upon with our legal team, is now available on our website. This form will be shared in future communications with prospective supporters.









7.8. In early April, we partnered with Octopus Legacy, a new company launched by the Octopus brand after acquiring Guardian Angel in 2024. We received over 100 enquiries and 23 pledges within the first 3 weeks.

8. Fundraising Operations (previously Supporter Care, Stewardship & Fundraising Data and Innovation)

8.1. Our new Fundraising Strategy created two distinct teams: IG&L for acquisition and income, and Fundraising Operations focused on donor engagement, loyalty, data, processes, targeted communications, and compliance. The team launched in April.

8.2. Jackie Taylor, with extensive experience most recently from VSO, joined as Head of Fundraising Operations on 7 April.

8.3. The team achieved top KPIs while part of IG&L, and Jackie will develop more comprehensive measures in the coming months.



8.4. Benchmarking our performance helps identify areas for improvement in fundraising. In B24, we participated in the About Loyalty benchmark survey for the first time. The results were disappointing. This low starting point however presents an opportunity to grow and enhance relationships, as even small increases in loyalty can significantly impact donations.

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8.5. We presented a Deep Dive on Fundraising Compliance to ARC which was well received.

9. Philanthropy and Partnerships

9.1. Jon Collins is now in post covering maternity leave as Head of Philanthropy & Partnerships.

9.2. Redacted

9.3. The delay on NLHF funding for the Anderton Boat Lift is problematic for the team as they were in numerous conversations with donors around matched funding.

10. Philanthropy

10.1. Following the successful event with Steven Knight in early March the team are following up and cultivating major donor prospects. Redacted

10.2. Other notable highlights from the TSL team this month include:

- Meeting with the Head of Environment at the National Lottery Community Fund to explore funding and partnership opportunities
- Providing support and co-ordination for the Trust
- Response to a new funding stream from 'English's £15m 'heritage at risk' funding, part of an 'Arts Everywhere' stream. Work with Ian Lane to identify and submit applications which must be spent within 2025/26
- Managing messaging and communication with the Wolfson Foundation, etc. who are primed to support the Anderton Boat Lift project

11. Corporates & People's Postcode Lottery

11.1. Following on from the Digbeth event, we received just under £5k from a new partner Straight Forward Design. They are a design agency based in London with an interesting network of partners, including Skittles, Starburst and Extra Chewing Gum. This donation is a precursor to a long-term funding partnership, which we anticipate will be formalised during Q1.

11.2. Further long-term partnerships are being discussed with Solus (also as a result of the Digbeth event), Inigo (a specialist insurer part of the Lloyds Group) and Daiwa (manufacturers of fishing equipment).

11.3. We were unsuccessful in our PPL Dream Fund and L&G Health Equity Fund bids.

11.4. We are still awaiting the £108k in Enforcement Undertaking funding we solicited in B24.

Maggie Gardner, Fundraising Director, April 2025

Board of Trustees Meeting
15th May 2025
Background Information Report

COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS UPDATE
Susie Mather
Director of Communications and External Relations

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This paper provides the Board with an update on recent communications and external relations activity.

1.2 It contains more detail on highlights and challenges set out in the Communications and External Relations section of the Chief Executive's Report to the May 2025 Board meeting and forms part of the background papers for that meeting.

2. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Current activity

- **Mon & Brec campaign**. The ongoing campaign to raise awareness and support following the restrictions on water abstractions from the River Usk and its tributaries has been the major focus of political effort in the last two months. A full update on the political and media campaign to support the Mon & Brec is included in this pack as a separate agenda item.
- **Party Conference planning:** We have secured a boat on Salthouse dock for our interactions at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool in September 2025, and are working up planned activities including meetings with key stakeholders, a panel-type discussion and evening reception.
- **Parliamentary Dinner:** We are planning a dinner discussion at the House of Lords for 7th July with MPs and peers on the current challenges and opportunities for the Trust, particularly with regards to funding.

2.2 MP meetings, visits and briefings

- Richard and Susie met **Andrew Cooper MP** (Lab, Mid Cheshire) to discuss NBTA's concerns around boat licensing and their response to the Boating Commission. Andrew Cooper is one of many MPs approached by NBTA.
- **Toby Perkins MP** (Lab, Chesterfield; Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee) – site visit to Lea Bridge Sluices and Three Mills Lock with Richard and Susie along with

Charles Baker (Trust senior engineer), 10th March. The aim was to provide background information for the EAC's consultation on flood resilience by demonstrating some of our flood management structures in SE London.

- On 1st April, Minister for Nature **Mary Creagh** joined a litter pick with Defra officials and Keep Britain Tidy, cleaning part of the Regent's Canal in partnership with the Trust, following up on her own social media.
- We are planning a media visit with **Mayor Tracy Brabin (West Yorkshire)** and **Mayor David Skaith (York & North Yorkshire)** for a new towpath scheme, on 16th July.
- **James Naish MP** (Lab, Rushcliffe), East Midlands visit, 24th March.
- **Esther McVey MP** (Con, Tatton), North West visit, 4th April. McVey subsequently wrote a supportive column in the local paper about the importance of securing money for Anderton.
- **Robbie Moore MP** (Con, Keighley and Ilkley), Yorkshire & North East visit, 11th April.
- **Jo White MP** (Lab, Bassetlaw), Yorkshire & North East visit, 16th April.
- **Alistair Carns MP** (Lab, Birmingham Selly Oak and Veterans Minister), West Midlands visit, 2nd May.
- **Paul Davies MP** (Lab, Colne Valley), Yorkshire & North East visit, 9th May.
- A letter to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Gambling and Heritage, **Baroness Twycross**, was sent on 6th May to provide relevant information on the inclusion of heritage in her portfolio. This repeated our messaging on the Listed Building Consent Order (LBCO).

2.3 Parliamentary mentions

- The Trust was mentioned during Business Questions to the Leader of the House, Lucy Powell (Lab, Manchester Central), by Jo Platt MP (Lab, Leigh and Atherton), on 13th March, following her constituency visit to the NW region on 10th March. Platt highlighted the confusion about ownership and funding of waterways and asked for a debate. In her response the Leader of the House also praised the work of the Trust.
- Lord Roborough (Con) asked three PQs on 3rd April relating to the Trust on funding, bin provision and litter.
- Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs, Daniel Zeichner MP, praised the work of the Trust in a Westminster Hall debate on 8th April on the impact of fly-tipping on West Midlands communities. We wrote to thank him. Wendy Morton MP (Con, Aldridge – Brownhills) also praised the Trust.

2.4 Policy Engagement

- Spending Review 2025: the Government has confirmed that it will set out its plans for spending and key public sector reforms in the Spending Review which will conclude on 11 June 2025. The Spending Review will set out plans for day-to-day spending for three years from 2026-27 to 2028-29, and for capital spending for five years to 2029-30. Redacted
- Ten-Year Infrastructure Strategy: we submitted a detailed briefing paper to inform the Ten-Year Infrastructure strategy informal consultation, repeating several of the messages from our representation to the Spending Review, but with a greater focus on growth anticipated from infrastructure investment. The Strategy is due to be published in June 2025.
- Independent Water Commission: we submitted a consultation response as part of the independent commission into the water sector and its regulation, chaired by Sir Jon

Cunliffe. This call for evidence will inform the recommendations the Commission makes to the UK and Welsh governments in June 2025.
- The 'Corry Review', which examined environmental regulation and to which we contributed, was published on 2nd April. The review makes 29 recommendations to streamline and modernise regulations. The Trust response to the review was published on the Defra website.
- On behalf of the Trust, Richard signed an open letter calling on Government to protect all public-facing workers from abuse and harassment, orchestrated by the Institute of Customer Services.

3 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

3.1 Boater Comms

- Working with IT and the data governance team to ensure compliance with GDPR, we are hoping to have authorisation to increase the recipient list of Boaters' Update by up to 40% (to around 30k). This is a result of migrating Boaters' Update onto SugarCRM – combining data in Sugar with the database currently held in MailChimp. This should improve audience insight and will give us the opportunity to tailor content e.g. targeted pitching of articles on volunteering and fundraising.
- As part of the Better Boating Plan we're continuing to evolve content and testing new ways to increase audience penetration. Current open rates of Boaters' Update are around 45% with click-through rates around 11% (compared to not-for-profit industry averages of 40% and 3%). We have tested resending 'unopened' Updates the following week which encouragingly has driven open rates to 58% and click rates to 15%.

3.2 Social media

- Year-on-year, our core national social media channels have grown by 9%. We have seen similar percentage growth in our boating channels (6%) and fisheries & angling channels (10%). The Trust's LinkedIn channel has gained a significant number of new followers with a growth rate of 23%.
- We will shortly be launching the Trust's TikTok channel to reach new audiences not served by our more traditional channels. The increased investment in producing in-house, shortform video content for TikTok will also benefit our overall content strategy.
- The wider social media landscape is currently relatively stable, with most of our charity comparators retaining their numbers of active accounts (with the exception of Twitter/X which continues to show a decline in use). Twitter is still performing well for our charity both in terms of customer service, regional story sharing and engagement where our boating audience is concerned.
- In a recent external review looking at the first quarter of 2025, our national social media channels were found to be out-performing others within the industry. Our overall engagement rate is almost double the non-profit average, and page impressions (60m) are more than 9,000 times the figure that other charities have achieved.

3.3 Media relations:

- The water restrictions on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, with its potentially alarming implications for boating, tourism and wildlife, have generated regional and national media coverage, including on the BBC website and radio (Jeremy Vine Show), ITV, Channel 5, The Times and others.
- Some photo-led winter works stories generated widespread media coverage across the national print/online media, including the inspection of Standedge Tunnel and the volunteer-led clean up of Tuel Lane Lock on the Rochdale Canal. There were many other regional print and broadcast interviews about Trust maintenance and repair works as well as regional broadcasts about the dredging operation to clean-up the site of last year's cyanide spill on the Walsall Canal.
- The Fund Britain's Waterways campaign cruise set off from Lincolnshire to Westminster generating some initial media interest on regional BBC. It will hold its 'flotilla' on the Thames outside the Houses of Parliament on 7th May, with Ros Daniels and Richard Parry representing the Trust.
- There has been media interest in the Commission looking at boat licensing. The Times ran an article and Richard Parry spoke to BBC Radio 4's Broadcasting House. It has also been mentioned as one of the subjects to be discussed when the political magazine, The House, interviews Richard Parry in early May.

4 INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 We continue the development of our two-way comms with another All Trust Call in April, which reached 500+ colleagues. Other highlights in this period included the support to the Talent team in connection with the Engagement Survey in order to maximise response rate, and supporting the launch of the Brand Campaign to obtain maximum internal reach.