



Thank you to all our Friends and supporters
for helping us care for canals in 2025

Ripple Effects Report

“It’s so inspiring to see the difference your support makes”

In my first year with our charity, it’s been a joy to meet Friends and supporters like you, who share our passion for canals. My appreciation for canals has only grown by meeting inspiring engineers, hydrologists, heritage experts, and volunteers.

My own connection runs deep. My grandparents and great-grandparents were boaters, a heritage I’m immensely proud of. That’s why the work we’ve done in Braunston, my grandmother’s birthplace, is so fantastic. I love that your gifts have helped the bridge live on.

This report celebrates the impact of your generosity, and I hope you take great pride in that. We truly couldn’t do it without you. Your support repairs and strengthens canals, refurbishes locks and bridges, upgrades towpaths and reservoirs, raises green flags over our beautiful canals and protects boating heritage. These aren’t just projects; they’re lifelines for history, nature and communities.

Your generosity, belief and commitment make all the difference, offering hope, even as we face rising costs, falling government funding, and the challenges of extreme weather.

There is still much to do, but together we are giving canals a future. Thanks to you, I’m sure it will be as rich and exciting as their past.



Jackie Taylor,
Head of Fundraising Operations

A warm
welcome and
thank you



Our community of
Friends has grown to
32,086

Here's what we achieved together in 2024/25

The unwavering support of Friends and supporters like you helped power everything our charity did last year to keep canals open, working, and alive.

As you can see from these amazing facts and figures, your support has kept millions of people coming back to canals to enjoy the nature, heritage, and green spaces we care for together.

Your gifts reach along rich green corridors full of wildlife across England and Wales. They protect thousands of examples of our precious past and help give them a safer and more secure future. They help keep our tranquil towpaths clean, beautiful, and open to everyone to enjoy.

Yet none of this happens without many hours of hard work from our engineers, operatives, and volunteers, rain or shine, every single day of the year.

Hundreds of wet and muddy winter works delve deep into the bricks and mortar of our locks, bridges, and aqueducts to keep them strong and more resilient for the future. Over 747,000 hours of volunteer work helped keep our canals open, clean, freshly painted and well-maintained. Many tonnes of dredging keep our waters free and flowing up and down the network.

Your donations lie behind the huge scale of our work and the tremendous expertise of our engineers, hydrologists, ecologists, and heritage experts. Thanks to you, canals remain busier and more popular than ever. And without you, none of this would be possible.

Your impact in numbers

**Over
2,700**

heritage structures protected and cared for thanks to supporters and Friends like you

**791
million
visits**

to our canals, from over 10 million individual visitors. People keep coming back for more!

**3,184
km**

of interconnected watercourse habitats maintained and protected for wildlife

80% of network

kept open and the water cooled cities and towns by 1-2 °C during summer 2025 droughts

**135
lock gates**

handcrafted in our workshops and installed to keep our 2,000 miles of navigation open and accessible for boaters

747,518 hours

of active work were delivered on our canals and rivers, thanks to the efforts of 5,473 volunteers giving their time and skills to keep canals alive

**60,000
tonnes**

of material dredged from our waterways, helping to improve navigation along 40 miles of waterways

**741
miles**

of canals awarded a Green Flag for the quality of the outdoor space they provide

**Over
200**

winter works projects delivered to make canals more resilient for the future

Thank you for donating £3.15m to canals last year

Where your money goes

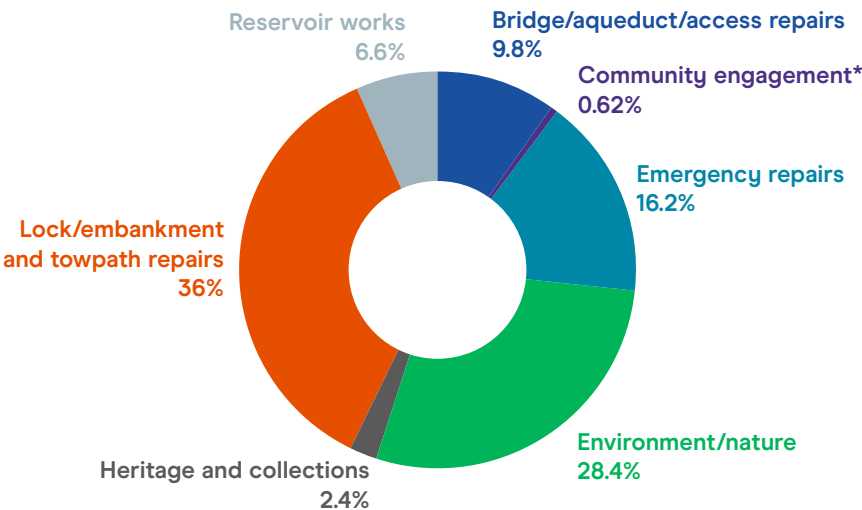
Whether you support us regularly as a Friend, or generously donate to our appeals, your gifts make a huge difference. Incredibly, you gave £3.15m to canals last year. At a time when the cost-of-living bit hard for many, we're so grateful for your determination to keep our canals alive.

Clearly, the past 12 months have been challenging for canals. Against a background of rising costs, falling government support and the gathering storm of climate change, we faced both droughts and floods, storms and water shortages, but we've worked every day to keep the network open and accessible. We faced dramatic emergencies, yet still repaired hundreds of locks, bridges, towpaths, reservoirs and aqueducts for the future.

As you can see, the gifts you so kindly gave us made a vital contribution, helping us keep on top of all these challenges. At the same time, you helped preserve the canal heritage you love and protect the wildlife that depends on our waterways for survival.

Over the following pages, we highlight just a few examples of the vast amount of work you supported last year. And with our new Chief Executive, Campbell Robb, joining us, we're ready for an exciting 2026. Inspired by what we've achieved and energised by opportunities to come.

Allocation of £3.15m donations in 2024/25



*Our Community Engagement work is mostly funded by the generosity of the players of People's Postcode Lottery. Friends donations of £3.15m were received and allocated to specific works as outlined in the report and pie chart above. A further £1.05m was received from other donors and will be put to future use fixing, repairing and restoring our waterways; helping keep canals alive, open and working for us all to enjoy. In addition, we received £2.5m from our special partner the People's Postcode Lottery, again allocated to works specifically across the network.

You're keeping canals alive

Restoring our infrastructure
See page 5

Keeping canals open and accessible
See page 6

Building climate resilience into canals
See page 7

Giving canals a future
See page 8

Repairing storm damage
See page 9

Meet Meryl and Pam
See page 10

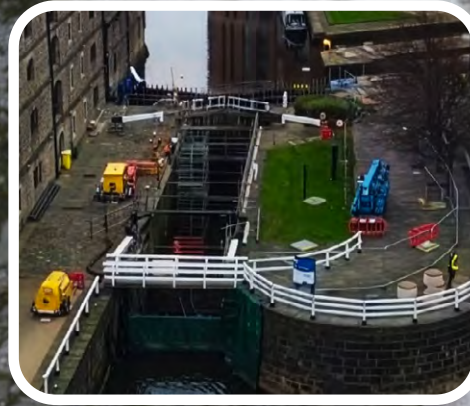
Every pound kept Leeds River Lock working

On Granary Wharf in the heart of the city, lies Leeds River Lock. Built in the mid-1770s at the end of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, it marks the gateway to the River Aire. This was once where coal arrived to power the textile mills, and where finished cloth set off for Hull or Liverpool.

Today, it's still a vital junction for boaters crossing the Pennines, and now, I want to thank you for helping to give it another lease of life. Your generous donations helped fund the repairs my team carried out last winter. Before we began, the lock leaked badly through its paddles, downstream cill, and lock gates, making it hard to keep water in the canal above.

Yet finding leaks is difficult unless we can empty the lock chamber. Your support helped us de-water the lock by installing dams upstream and downstream. We had to create a bespoke dam downstream to protect the lock from the river. Once we repaired the gates, fixed the leak we discovered under the lock floor, and upgraded the paddles, all the problems disappeared.

The pound above the lock held water well, even enabling this canal section to be used during recent droughts, and our operations team hasn't had a single call-out here since. So, thanks again for a great job well done.



Restoring our
infrastructure

£160,000

of your donations helped to repair
this vital lock connecting the canal
and river in the heart of Leeds.



Dan Timbers,
Senior Project
Manager

Keeping canals open and accessible



You've dug deep to keep our canals moving

I'm Richard Clarke, dredging asset manager, and it's great to know our Friends and supporters are helping us tackle some of our most urgent tasks. Although we plan our network-wide dredging programme five years ahead, we also prioritise boater reports and respond with urgent works.

Earlier this year, your support was put to good use on the River Kennett, just west of Reading where flooding had deposited tonnes of gravel and pebbles below a vital mooring wharf. Thanks to boater alerts we were able to react swiftly, digging it all onto hoppers and floating it to a nearby fish pond site where it could be repurposed to build access tracks. So we saved on transport and disposal costs but helped our neighbours too.

Right now, our dredgers are busy across the network keeping our canals flowing. On the Coventry Canal we have been clearing reeds and opening sight lines and, over the last year, we've cleaned out silted-up winding holes on the Shropshire Union. We've also opened narrow bridge passages on the Macclesfield Canal, keeping boaters moving around the Cheshire Ring. Looking ahead, we plan to tackle many more hotspots, starting by clearing the approach to Tottenham Lock on the River Lea.

Thanks to your continued support, we can be ready to respond to keep our canals open, clear, and accessible all year round.



Richard Clarke,
Asset Manager,
Dredging

£200,000
of your donations helped us respond swiftly to dredge silted-up canals and keep boaters moving

And kept canals safe for years to come

The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal is celebrated as one of the most scenic in our network, especially at Llanfoist wharf near Abergavenny. Here the canal sits high on an embankment carved into a steep hillside within Blaenavon World Heritage site. In the 19th century the wharf was a hive of industry as iron ore was loaded onto barges and taken down to Newport.

Today this embankment may be charmingly picturesque, it is also classified as a 'critical asset' that we constantly assess and monitor. Earlier this year, your donations helped fund vital preventative maintenance to safeguard the canal against the impacts of heavy rainfall, rising groundwater, and potential landslides.

With your help our team drilled 20-metre-deep boreholes into the narrow, mountainous land on the offside of the canal. This allowed them to install remote monitoring piezometers, which detect significant changes in water pressure deep underground in the soil and rock.

These now serve as an early warning system, alerting our analysts, engineers, and hydrologists to any notable shifts in the landscape, via the Canal & River Trust's SCADA system, which monitors water levels and ground conditions network-wide.

It was a vital, yet challenging and costly task – but thanks to you, we're now ready to take early action whenever required to keep this beautiful spot safe for everyone to enjoy.

£229,389

of your donations helped us to take early action to keep this beautiful spot safe for everyone to enjoy

Building climate resilience into canals



Birgit Schaffarra,
Principal Engineer,
Design Development

Your kindness protected Peter's Bridge at Braunston

If you know Braunston Marina, near to where the Grand Union Canal and Oxford Canal meet, you might remember the striking iron bridge guarding its entrance. Thanks to your donations and a generous legacy from a much-loved local resident, it has now been fully restored, and renamed 'Peter's Bridge'.

My team worked with some wonderful volunteers and contractors to breathe new life into the charming black-and-white footbridge built in the 1790s.

Volunteers trained in historic building techniques shared their knowledge and passed their skills on to many others in the group. Then, the whole team united to rebuild the bridge using reclaimed bricks and traditional lime mortar to match the original materials and honour its heritage.

£27,990 of your donations, together with a £165,000 gift left in the Will of Peter Andrews, were essential to complete the trickier task of restoring the brickwork on the canal, and giving the beautiful ironwork a fresh coat of paint. A specialist resin-bonded, anti-slip surface is scheduled to be laid in Spring 2026 when the weather is dryer and warmer, but in the meantime the towpath and the bridge are now open to the public.

Fittingly, the bridge now bears a plaque inscribed with: '91A Peter's Bridge'; serving as a lasting tribute to Peter's generous gift.

But through every brick and iron railing, your generosity is also remembered.

£27,990

of Friends donations helped our volunteers and staff to give an iconic bridge new life, in memory of a much-loved friend and neighbour

Giving canals a future



Paul Kelly,
Project Manager



You helped us recover after the storms

Thanks to your incredible response to our 'Perfect Storm' Appeal last winter and to your generous donations throughout the year, my team has spent much of 2025 repairing extensive damage to the Oxford Canal at Easenhall Cutting.

Weeks of torrential rain led to massive landslides at this remote site, completely blocking the canal with 4,000 tonnes of mud. I remember it looking like a disaster movie. This was a huge problem, as this stretch of canal is one of the busiest in the country, so the priority was to reopen it for navigation.

We needed to use 80 tonne excavating machines, so it was quite a logistical challenge to manoeuvre them down the steep slope, and it took an incredible effort to get them safely in place and clear debris. Yet, remarkably we managed to reopen the canal to boaters in May.

Thanks to your support we've since rebuilt the bank with a gentler gradient, installed drainage to prevent future slips, and removed trees at risk of falling. We're also restoring native plants by spraying the slope with a green foam or 'soup of seeds' which will add even more stability when they grow back, and adding the finishing touches by upgrading the towpath below.

It's wonderful that your support is making Easenhall stronger and safer for the future.



Inset: By spraying the slope with a 'soup of seeds' native plants will grow back and help bind the slope together

Repairing storm damage

£100,100

of your donations helped to repair and restore Easenhall Cutting on the Oxford Canal



David Fern,
Principal Engineer

“We’re so proud to be Friends of canals”

Meryl and Pam have been friends since their children were small. And they’ve been Friends of our charity for many years too, as they enjoy regular canal walks together across the southern Birmingham navigations and beyond. They both love exploring the rich array of wildlife and nature that thrives in and around their local canals.

“My canals connection comes from my dad,” says Pam. “He saw the potential to restore them back in the 60s when we took narrowboat holidays. I love being by the water because it makes me feel like I’m in a different world. You wouldn’t believe you’re in the middle of the city.

Like so many of us, Meryl says she’s loves our waterways simply because they make her feel better. “If you’re feeling a bit down, go down to the canal,” she says. “They are a lifeline. Even if you can’t get out, just watching videos or programmes about them, or imagining the calm they bring really helps. Canals are my go-to place for my mental health.”

One of the things Pam says she enjoys most about being a Friend is keeping up to date with all the work our charity does.

“It does open your eyes to where our contributions go. It’s so good to hear about amazing projects like the Canal Orchard between Worcester and Wolverhampton.”

“We’re so proud to be Friends, because you can see the nature you’re protecting, the towpaths you’re repairing and the difference you’re making. Canals are our shared passion, so we’re glad to help them as best we can.”

Meryl



Thank you for your continued support for canals from Beckie and all of the Supporter Care Team

With supporters like you we keep caring for canals.

Thank you for all your donations and pledges in 2025 -
you've helped protect miles of waterways for people and nature.

Email: supportercare@canalrivertrust.org.uk Visit: canalrivertrust.org.uk

