



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 08.45am on 19th March 2025, Novotel Hotel, 2 Great Central St, Leicester, LE1 4JS

Present:

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

In attendance:

Richard Parry	-	Chief Executive
Heather Clarke	-	Strategy & Impact Director
Steve Dainty	-	Chief Financial Officer
Tom Deards	-	Legal & Governance Director
Malcolm Horne	-	Chief Infrastructure & Programmes Officer
Stuart Mills	-	Chief Investment Officer

24/104 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Tim Reeve and Janet Hogben.

24/105 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Board received and noted the Register of Interests report.

24/106 MINUTES AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22 January 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.

24/107 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION

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

These included current progress on finalising the B25 business plan and ongoing work to identify a comprehensive package of transformative projects to make use

of the Designated Investment Fund (DIF).

RP also shared the encouraging headline news from the second wave of the boater satisfaction survey results, which showed a score of 56%, an improvement compared to last year.

24/108 B25 BUSINESS PLAN

The paper presented for approval included the final adjustments to the B25 Business Plan previously presented to the Board in January, along with an update on non-financial KPIs.

SD emphasised that while the business plan is affordable for years 1 and 2, additional efforts will be necessary to achieve year-on-year improvements and address the £6m liquidity gap in year 3. The Board was also reminded that the proposed 2025/26 budget is backed by a £10m one-time withdraw from the DIF.

The key points discussed included:

- **Redacted**
- A request to see further detail on the risks and opportunities, particularly around fundraising income.
- Concerns raised by the assumptions regarding year 3 of the plan, where financial pressures will be greatest, particularly increases in fundraising income, rising operational costs and the £6m liquidity gap to be filled.
- Rising payroll costs and the use of vacancy factors.
- The risks of using the DIF as a fall-back option to fill operational deficits and to avoid making hard decisions elsewhere.
- The pause in the funding bid for the refurbishment works to the Anderton Boat Life following feedback from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the revised timeline the Trust is currently working on to resubmit an amended bid in 2026.

Actions: **Redacted**

Redacted

TD to add a deep dive on fundraising income onto the Board Forward Plan.

The Board APPROVED the Business Plan as presented, subject to the above actions.

Non-Financial KPIs

The Board received an update on KPIs, which included insights into the performance framework, new measures and the proposed targets for B25. The end-of year performance report for 2024/25 will be presented to the Board in May.

HC then shared an update on discussions with Defra regarding the KPIs proposed for the post-2027 grant agreement, indicating discussion now focussed on 3 main KPIs: number of critical assets, towpath condition and principal asset condition. The Board welcomed this significant progress and requested regular updates on the progress of the negotiation of the post-2027 grant agreement with Defra.

24/109 DESIGNATED INVESTMENT FUND & STRATEGIC OPTIONS

The paper presented provided an update on identifying suitable projects for investment using the DIF, for further consideration by the Board.

The key points discussed included:

- The nature the projects currently identified, although all commendable and worthwhile, were not sufficiently transformative, noting that several of the ideas proposed in the long list included with the report may be more so
- The question of capacity within Executive and wider Trust and the need to consider whether external resource could be used to assist with strategic planning and delivery.
- The need to focus on the delivery of a smaller number of bigger projects each year, rather than a larger number of activities with less impact.

The Board APPROVED the use of the DIF for all the projects presented

Action: Executive to revise the list of proposals considering Trustee comments for future consideration at the May Board meeting.

24/110 GOVERNANCE REPORT

TD summarised the Governance report which had been previously circulated.

The Board:

- (a) **APPROVED** the proposed changes to the Waterways Pension Fund and authorised T. Deards and S. Dainty to execute the relevant documents in the forms included with the Board materials, subject to any non-material amendments.
- (b) **APPROVED** the submission of an application by the Trust for an operating license with the Gambling Commission and approved the Lotteries Policy Statement. It was noted that fundraising compliance and risks was the subject of the next Audit & Risk Committee deep dive, which could pick up compliance with Gambling Commission operating licence conditions.
- (c) **APPROVED** the disposal of the Trust’s interest in the Royal Armouries site in Leeds.
- (d) **APPROVED** the updated authorised signatories to the Trust’s group bank

mandate.

- (e) **APPROVED** the updated list of authorised signatories to attest the Trust's company seal.
- (f) **APPROVED** the updated policy statement on Preventing Bribery, Fraud, Corruption & Tax Avoidance and the Equality Policy Statement for Customer Service Delivery
- (g) **APPROVED** the appointment of Joelle Davis to the East Midlands Regional Advisory Board.
- (h) **NOTED** the update on the Trust's ONS public sector classification.
- (i) **NOTED** the update on the Boat Licensing Commission.
- (j) **NOTED** the updated Governance and Council Handbooks.
- (k) **NOTED** the annual Trustee identification and proof of address requirements.
- (l) **NOTED** the recent Board Committee Minutes.

24/111 FORWARD PLAN

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

24/112 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

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

- The increasing risk to water supply on the Mon & Brec canal, following the application of restrictions to its water supply. RP shared the largely supportive political response to our engagement campaign with a series of critical meetings diarised over the next few weeks.
- With year-end approaching, the good progress on many KPIs. These include the number of 'Friends,' where the target of 31,000 has already been achieved and colleague diversity, which continues to show good progress.

24/113 FINANCE REPORT

S. Dainty briefly summarised the financial performance in the year to date.

24/114 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business conducted.

24/115 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15th May 2025, venue tbc



Trust Board Meeting
19th March 2025
Information & Decision Report
Trust
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 changes to the Waterways Pension Fund
- 2.2 **APPROVE** the submission of an application by the Trust for an operating licence with the Gambling Commission
- 2.3 **APPROVE** the disposal of the Royal Armouries site in Leeds
- 2.4 **APPROVE** the updated authorised signatories to the Trust's bank mandates
- 2.5 **APPROVE** the updated list of authorised signatories to attest the Trust's company seal
- 2.6 **APPROVE** the updated policy statements
- 2.7 **APPROVE** the appointment of Regional Advisory Board members
- 2.8 **NOTE** the update on the ONS public sector classification
- 2.9 **NOTE** the update on the Boat Licensing Commission
- 2.10 **NOTE** the updated Governance and Council Handbooks
- 2.11 **NOTE** the annual Trustee identification and proof of address requirements.
- 2.12 **NOTE** the recent Board Committee Minutes

3. CHANGES TO THE WATERWAYS PENSION FUND

Redacted

4. SUBMISSION OF OPERATING LICENCE APPLICATION TO THE GAMBLING COMMISSION

The Trust is in the process of applying to the Gambling Commission for an operating licence to allow the Fundraising team to organise lotteries to raise funds from members of the public for the benefit of the Trust.

An operating licence from the Gambling Commission is required for any lottery that has proceeds that exceed £20,000 for a single draw or where the aggregate proceeds from lotteries is in excess of £250,000 in any one year. The lotteries will be operated on behalf of the Trust by a third-party External Lottery Manager, Woods Valldata, who have been advising the Fundraising team on the process of applying for the operating licence.

In order to comply with the Gambling Commission's Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice (LCCP), the Trust is required to have in place specific policies and procedures relating to the operation of the lotteries. The Fundraising team, with support from the Legal & Governance team, has prepared a Lotteries Policy Statement, which is based on a document prepared by Woods Valldata, as contained in the Resources section of Diligent.

The Lotteries Policy Statement has been drafted to address the mandatory requirements of the LCCP and the Gambling Act 2005. This Lotteries Policy Statement, if approved, will need to be submitted as part of the application to the Gambling Commission for the operating licence.

In addition to the application for an operating licence, the Trust can apply for an exemption to the requirement for individuals to hold a Personal Management Licence on that basis that the Trust will be a "small scale operator". This requires the Trust to have no more than three named individuals in "qualifying management positions". The named individuals are required to personally submit an 'Annex A' application to the Gambling Commission at the same time as the Trust's application for the operating licence is submitted,

The Trust is seeking to benefit from this exemption by having 3 Annex A applicants which cover the qualifying management positions: Steve Dainty, Chief Financial Officer, Tom Deards, Legal & Governance Director, and Hamish Shilliday, Head of Individual & Legacy Giving.

Board approval is sought to authorise the Legal & Governance Director and the other Annex A applicants to submit the relevant application forms to the Gambling Commission and to approve the Lotteries Policy Statement which is contained in the Resources section of Diligent.

5. ROYAL ARMOURIES DISPOSAL

Redacted

6. BANKING MANDATES

Approval is sought under the Trust's Scheme of Delegation to update the signatories to the Trust's NatWest Bank Group Mandate.

Redacted

7. SEALING AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES

Board approval is required (also under the Trust's Scheme of Delegation) to update the list of signatories authorised to attest the Trust's corporate seal.

Redacted

8. POLICY STATEMENTS

Board approval is sought to approve (and authorise signature by the Chair on behalf of the Board) the following Trust policy statements (copies of which are included in the Resources section of Diligent)

- Policy Statement on Preventing Bribery, Fraud, Corruption & Facilitation of Tax Evasion – this policy statement brings together a number of previous Trust policy documents
- Equality Policy Statement on Customer Services Delivery – this is a re-statement and re-dating of an existing Trust policy.

9. REGIONAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Board ratification is sought for the appointment of Joelle Davis to the East Midlands Regional Advisory Board for a 1st term of up to 3 years.

Joelle has worked within Nottinghamshire for over 15 years in three different local authorities, in planning, economic development and regeneration teams and is currently leading the economic growth and regeneration teams for Nottinghamshire County Council.

10. ONS PUBLIC SECTOR CLASSIFICATION UPDATE

The Office of National Statistics consideration of the Trust's public sector classification following the amendments to the Trust's foundation documents in 2023 remains ongoing.

Redacted

11. BOAT LICENCE REVIEW COMMISSION UPDATE

The Board-appointed Boat Licence Review Commission has launched an engagement survey, to run for 6 weeks from 3 March, to seek views on the Trust's boat licence framework and ideas for possible change.

The survey was widely publicised via the Trust's various communications channels, including Boaters Updates, with over 1,000 responses in the first 24 hours.

The Commission provided an update of their work to the Boating Committee on 11 March and the Commission's review is also an agenda item at the Council meeting on 19 March.

More information on the Commission's work and a link to the survey is available on the Trust's website [here](#).

12. GOVERNANCE AND COUNCIL MEMBER HANDBOOKS

The Trust's Governance Handbook and Council Members Handbook have been recently updated, with the latter now containing a section advising Council members on how best to communicate with the Trust, including how to raise matters with Trustees.

Copies of the revised handbooks are included in the **Resources** section of Diligent.

13. TRUSTEE ID AND ADDRESS DOCUMENTS

The Trust requires annual updates of Trustee identification and proof of address.

Trustees are asked to bring the following to the Board meeting for certification by the Legal & Governance Director.

Identification documents – in the form of a current passport or driving licence where the previous ID document provided has since lapsed. The Governance team **will** confirm with individual Trustee prior to the meeting whether this is required (i.e. whether the Trust already have certified copies of current ID documents)

Proof of address – in the form of a utility bill addressed to the Trustee dated within

the last 3 months. This can be a print-out of an online statement provided it contains the name and address of the Trustee.

Further details of ID and address requirements, as well as an explanation of how the Trustee processes this information are contained in the guidance document contained in the Resources section of Diligent.

14. BOARD COMMITTEE MINUTES

Redacted

MEMORANDUM TO THE BOARD

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT – March 2025

1. HEADLINES

- 1.1 The period since the January Board has seen a welcome absence of severe weather events with no additional major disruption to the network. Preparation for the major repair on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal at Lock 11 (Stalybridge) continues to prove challenging with the prospect of re-opening the canal during the summer diminishing. Unstable lock walls at Tardebigge (Worcester & Birmingham) and Wilmcote (Stratford Canal) will mean long closures on those Canals whilst repairs are planned and delivered.
- 1.2 Awareness of the risk to the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal following the application of restrictions to its water supply (after our failed appeal) has risen dramatically with considerable political activity and growing concern amongst local boating businesses and other local stakeholders. A series of key meetings are scheduled over the next month.
Redacted
- 1.3 **Redacted**
- 1.4 **Redacted**
- 1.5 **Redacted**
- 1.6 We held two successful 'Open Day' events at Caen Hill and Hatton Locks in February with excellent Trust representation although poor weather affected public attendance somewhat; engagement events with local VIPs and a 'Legacy' fundraising event were successful and there was good local media coverage. We also hosted a successful fundraising event with film-maker Steven Knight in Birmingham.
- 1.7 **Redacted**
- 1.8 Our 'Volunteer by Water' recruitment campaign generated significant interest although conversion rates were lower than anticipated, falling short of our target (1000 new contacts) and little progress in reaching a wider demographic. We achieved some positive media coverage notably the Yorkshire volunteer group clearing the deep Tuel Lock in Yorkshire.
- 1.9 **Redacted.**
- 1.10 **Redacted**

2. PERFORMANCE

- 2.1. Appendix 1 sets out our key performance indicators up to the end of January.
 - Monthly visit numbers have stabilised but will now almost uncertainly come in well below the year's target (and hence have been declared 'Red') and may be below 800 million visits

for the year, down more than 10% from the peak achieved in 22/23. Towpath user satisfaction remains high and above target.

- As reported previously Public Infrastructure injuries has already exceeded the year's target (although the number reported to date is back in line with the result achieved in 22/23 and previous years).
- We have reached our 'Friends' target of 31,000 two months early.
- Colleague diversity continues to show good progress, ahead of target.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS

3.1 The Health & Safety Report is at Appendix 2. The Accident Frequency Rate (AFR) has continued on a downward trend, and at 0.11, we are well below the target for the year.

3.2 The summary headlines from the other Director Reports is set out below; the Director's full reports are available for background reading in the Resources section.

OPERATIONS / CUSTOMER SERVICE

Positives:

- Operations teams co-ordinated positive Open Day events at Caen Hill Locks and Hatton.
- 'Operations Ready' workshops have been held with all Area Managers, in preparation for the boating season and delivery of the Better Boating plan.
- We have retendered and appointed ABP *mer* to undertake the Designated Person role for the Port Marine Safety Code (to support the Harbour Management Board), which will serve as useful confirmation of the advice received from Marico Marine since 2022.
- Implementation of the automated authorised extended stay (AES) process for boaters has seen a reduction of over 70% in AES requests by phone/email.
- Our new Chat Bot – 'Lockie' is going 'live' for limited periods, increasing the duration of its use over the coming weeks, with a view to be live 24/7 by the end of March.
- Our partnership with Marsh Charitable Trust for our Volunteer Awards is to continue for the 10th year and we have successfully negotiated enhanced support for 4 new awards (for national volunteer roles) taking us to 28 awards in total.
- The Trust will be launching the new works process for Restoration groups at the annual Restoration Conference in April at the National Waterways Museum, emphasising the challenge that the Trust faces in supporting restoration works with limited resources

Challenges:

- Anderton Boat Lift has been closed since early January following a gate rope failure during testing. Investigations are ongoing into the root cause of failure. It's expected the lift will remain closed until Easter.
- The Government's new Simpler Recycling legislation comes into effect in April and will have significant implications for the Trusts boater waste facilities. The new requirements for recycling at source involves additional collection bins, and some compound rebuilds to accommodate the larger multiple bins with some sites too small to accommodate this

- Our East Midlands Director is representing the Trust in multiple multi-agency 'Section 19' meetings relating to the review of the impact of floods on the River Soar in Leicestershire a year ago which were repeated this January.
- Issues with unstable lock walls at Tardebigge and Wilmcote will impact boating in the West Midlands, in addition to the impacts in the North West of the Bridgewater Canal closure and our own repairs on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal Lock 11.
- Recruitment of Mechanical & Engineering engineers and technicians continues to be particularly challenging.

INFRASTRUCTURE & PROGRAMMES

Positives:

- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted
- Increases in volunteering, with over 400 hours given by volunteer Asset Inspectors and the three volunteer leads in Direct Services mobilising volunteers to move boats, set up sites, undertake admin tasks and help to clear out locks at the start of stoppages.
- Redacted

Challenges:

- A number of stoppages have overrun the 14 March target date for re-opening canals for navigation with insufficient notice to customers. Whilst we lost time due to flooding and freezing conditions over the winter, and had staffing issues at points, we plan to address this for the next intensive maintenance period.
- Redacted
- Redacted

INVESTMENT & COMMERCIAL

Positives:

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

Challenges:

- Redacted
- Redacted.

- Redacted
- Redacted

COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Positives:

- Our total social media following has increased by 13% in the past year with engagement rates (critical for breaking through the 'noise') increased by almost 17%. Facebook and Instagram follower numbers have grown by almost 25% to offset decline in followers on Twitter/X. We are considering when to launch on BlueSky and/or Threads. Our LinkedIn presence now has c.30k followers, up 27% year on year.
- Trust ambassador Ranvir Singh gave compelling media interviews to numerous regional radio stations to support our Volunteer by Water campaign and we secured positive national press coverage of our volunteers at Tuel Lane Lock, including coverage in The Guardian, Times and Daily Telegraph, and various photographs illustrating our work.
- We made a submission to the 2025 Govt Spending Review outlining our case for funding and what more we could do with additional funding.
- We hosted a visit to the River Lea with Environment Audit Committee Chair, Toby Perkins MP, on 10 March, to show some of the significant flood management structures we manage following recent engagement with the Committee's current inquiry.
- We submitted evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee inquiry on protecting built heritage, setting out the Trust's role as a custodian of heritage assets, the limitations of current funding models and to press again for the national Listed Building Consent Order.
- We secured a meeting with the Clerk of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee, to discuss our possible future contribution to the Water Sector Inquiry, following our written submission to the EFRA priorities consultation. Stuart attended the launch of the public call for evidence by the Cunliffe Water Commission.
- We continue to support the Boat Licensing Commission which launched an engagement survey on 3 March. Comms have included a press release, content in Boaters Update, direct mailing to boaters and social media posting.
- Since its relaunch last month, our boating Facebook page has generated nearly 30k impressions and has grown by 4%.

Challenges:

- We have launched our Mon & Brec engagement campaign to highlight the threat from the new water supply restrictions. Initial engagement with MPs and MSs has generated interest, requests for further information and meetings. Redacted
- Reactive reputational issues include GLA calls for improved air quality around canals.
- Redacted

STRATEGY & IMPACT

Positives:

- During January and February, we created 19.7 million opportunities to see our acquisition-led marketing and created over 23.7k new connections.
- After a competitive bid against other charities for national outdoor billboard company, Ocean Outdoor, 'Drops in the Ocean' Fund 2025, we were successfully chosen as one of their key partner charities redacted
- A national report published by HM Inspectorate (February 2025) into the Probation Service, positively highlighted the partnership with the Trust and its impact.
- We responded to 98% of third-party planning application consultations within 21 days or otherwise agreed extension this year to date.
- We secured planning permission to extend and remodel the visitor centre building as part of a wider proposals to improve the visitor offer at the Anderton Boat Lift site.
- Redacted
- We hosted a site visit and design workshop with Active Travel England and the Department for Transport, with Office for Environmental Protection Board also visiting on 12 March.

Challenges

- Redacted
- Issues with HS2 Ltd include Redacted

PEOPLE

Positives:

- 2024 pay gap reporting is complete and for gender pay, the Trust continues to have a positive gap in favour of women working at the Trust.
- Our 2025 pay talks have concluded, with an offer being accepted and taken to ballot by the Trade Unions as recommended.
- Our colleague annual Engagement Survey goes live on 11 March 2025.
- Working together with our fundraising team, we are now testing through our Yulife app, the opportunity to donate to the Trust, and we will roll this out to Yulife's customer base later this year.
- We have appointed Perret Laver to support with Trustee recruitment. The roles went live at the end of February and will close at the end of March, interviews to be held in May.

Challenges:

- Redacted
- Work continues with the Training audit action plan. Training needs analysis is being completed for all roles; we will then identify skills gaps for all colleagues.
- Implementation of phase 1 for our new people system continues, with a go live date for Core HR, Recruitment, Onboarding and single sign on planned for 23 June. Phase 2, which includes Payroll, Learning, Talent and Performance is still to be confirmed.

FUNDRAISING

Positives:

- Successfully recruited maternity cover for the Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships position, Jon Collins will join from GambleAware in April; he was previously with CRUK.
- Various tests and preliminary work is underway in Individual Giving in preparation for B25, the first full year of the Fundraising Strategy, including hyperlocal approaches in Baildon (Yorks) and Watford, interactive testing of legacy propositions/messages on Facebook ahead of the DRTV launch, and new approaches to digital / improved data collection etc.
- Our £2.5 million People's Postcode Lottery grant has been confirmed for 25/26.
- The Winter Appeal 'Perfect Storm' has exceeded its £52k target and currently stands at £104k (with up to £10k in additional gift aid).
- Friends recruitment has surpassed the 24/25 target and a higher stretch target with over 900 signups achieved in February alone, comfortably exceeding the attrition rate.
- Contactless Giving has reached the full-year B25 target ahead of schedule (£185k vs. £161k), with the average gift increasing to over £10 – more than 100% year-on-year growth.
- We were invited as one of 15-20 charities to submit a first-stage application for a £2 million grant from the Prudence Trust, intended for a Nature Connectedness/ resilient mental health programme aimed at 11-24 year olds, and successfully advanced as one of the final three national charities with our full-stage application to be submitted by 12th May.
- Successfully conducted a high-value event with guest speaker Steven Knight in Birmingham on 4th March, with 52 guests including existing Friends with potential to give at major donor level, corporates, and trusts, follow-up with attendees now taking place.

Challenges:

- Redacted
- Redacted.

Chief Executive,
March 2025

APPENDIX 1: KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES & TARGETS 2024/25

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS (KPIs) FOR NATIONAL & REGIONAL REPORTING			Year to date Jan	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	659m	900m	858.8m
	Satisfaction Rating - user & visitor experience	Towpath User Satisfaction	91%	91%	91%
		*Boater Satisfaction	46%	54%	54%
Improving our public safety and health & safety of our colleagues	Public Safety	No. of reported incidents due to infrastructure	46	< 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)	135	< 138	139
Being inclusive - Growing the number of local users	Local Users (1km)	% of local people (living within 1km) using our waterways regularly	52%	53%	50%
Being relevant & valued locally	Value of Waterways (1km)	% of people living within 1km corridor recognise the value of waterways	78%	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 to date Jan	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) 64% (1km)	52% (all) 67% (1km)	50% (all) 65% (1km)
Building a strong and broad supporter base	Supporter Growth	№ of Supporters (active & passive)	1,727,996	1,75m	1,600,536
		№ of active Friends & other regular individual donors	31,140	31,000	27,263
Improving colleague engagement & diversity of those working & volunteering for C&RT	Diversity	% of colleagues people of colour	5.82%	5.4%	4.98%
		D&I - % of recent hires people of colour	10.19%	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	601,685	762,000	739,443
		No. of active Trust volunteers	5,459	4,800	4,566
Grow our charitable income	Fundraising Income	Income from all sources of fundraising	£5.4m	£8.5m	£6.3m

*Annual survey. Figures shown are for year-end 2023/24.

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 December 2024 and January 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.
- 1.3 The Trustees are asked to note the content of the paper.

1.4 Redacted.

2. PERFORMANCE REPORT

AFR (Rolling 12-month figure)	Year to January 2024	Year to Nov 2024	Year to January 2025	24/25 Target
Colleagues	0.16	0.16	0.16	
Volunteers	0.27	0.14	0.00	
Contractors	0.08	0.00	0.00	
Trust Overall	0.16	0.12	0.11	0.15

RIDDOR Incidents	Year to January 2024	Oct & Nov 2024	December & January 2025	B24 YTD
Colleagues	5	1	1	5
Volunteers	3	0	0	0
Contractors	1	0	0	0
Dangerous Occurrence	0	1	1	2
Totals	9	2	2	7

Fatalities (Public)	Year to January 2024	Oct & Nov 2024	December & January 2025	B24 YTD
Canal	25	7	9	23
River	10	2	1	10
Reservoir	1	0	2	2
Dock, Marina, Boat, Aqueduct or Towpath	11	0	1	7
Totals	47	9	13	42

Public Infrastructure Related Injuries	Year to January 2024	Oct & Nov 2024	December & January 2025	B24 YTD

Numbers of Incidents Reported to the Trust	34	8	4	45
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Safety Improvement Opportunities	Year to January 2024	Oct & Nov 2024	December & January 2024	B24 YTD
Numbers of Reported Hazards, Near Miss & Positive Interventions	5820	1502	1293	6212

3. Executive Director Summary

Accidents to Employees, Volunteers and Contractors

- 3.1 The headline safety performance in relation to accidents has seen a decrease in the Accident Frequency Rate (AFR) to 0.11 against a KPI of 0.15.
- 3.2 There was one reportable injury notification and one reportable dangerous occurrence notification.
- 3.3 Redacted
- 3.4 Redacted

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

- 3.5 The number of Safety Improvement Opportunities recorded for December and January has decreased when compared to the previous period, potentially due to the Christmas break. The figure of 1293 in the table in Section 2 is made up of 290 hazard observations and near miss reports, and 1003 positive interventions. We aim to increase the number of reports of this type by 5% each year – at the end of January we are on target to achieve this increase.

Fatalities

- 3.6 There were thirteen fatalities reported across the Trust network during this period. Seven of the fatalities were male, with four females and two unknown at this time. All were adults. Redacted.

Infrastructure Safety

- 3.7 Four 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 was presented at the January meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. Redacted
- 3.8 A total of 127 visitor risk assessments (VRA) are due to be carried out by the end of B24. At the end of January 2024, 110 assessments have been carried out at 26 high risk visitor sites and 84 assets. Redacted

4. Colleague Safety

- 4.1 The Trust will be launching a new toolkit in April 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 high and the new one-stop-shop toolkit, involving a refresh of existing training, better guidance, support and help with assessing the threat, will launch to coincide with the anniversary of the murder of our colleague Clive Porter.

5. Public/Water Safety

- 5.1 A new Power BI dashboard detailing fatalities on the Trust network will be launched soon, giving the national H&S team and regional colleagues a much clearer picture of the fatalities across the network and per region. A significant range of data points will be displayed, where available, including the season, day of the week, age, activity (e.g. walking, cycling, swimming), and other geographic and location information which will help identify any trends in fatalities that we can address through comms and campaigns or local prevention strategies.

- 5.2 Our Water Safety for Little Explorers campaign ran throughout February 2025. The regional Learning & Skills coordinators delivered storytelling sessions to Reception classes and nurseries, as well as some library story time sessions across the regions, reaching hundreds of young children. A film of the author Matt Buckingham reading the book was shared on our social media channels and has so far reached over 60k people in two weeks. Feedback for the in-person events and online is overwhelmingly positive and we are getting more requests to produce a Makaton-friendly film which will be progressed in due course.

6. Enforcement/Legal Activity

- 6.1 **Redacted**



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 WSW - The River Severn has been closed due to high river levels for the majority of Christmas and January, finally opening at the beginning of February. Damage has been less than might have been expected but includes a landing stage access ramp lifting out of position at Holt Lock.



2.1.2 WSW - River levels on the Kennett & Avon (K&A) high, causing several boats to sink, including two in Keynsham Lock cut and two in Hanham Lock. River levels remained high for some time to allow removal, but now resolved.




2.1.3 WSW – High variation in water levels at Wilton Water (K&A) due to flash floods mean houses in the village of Wilton could be flooded. Local engagement with residents resulted in new operating procedures for Wilton Water.

2.1.4 LSE - Some of the reactive team had to break away from the stoppage in Aylesbury to complete the emergency heel/collar repair at lock 55 on the GUS. Following a boat strike and damage caused to the bottom gate. A recycled retro heel fit from stock was altered to fit and installed by the RRT with a contracted lift supplied by Rothen Group.



2.1.5 LSE - lock 79 GUS Missing Person Incident - reactive team advised onsite Emergency Services in the design and Logistics of the lock Chamber and Culverts. We also arranged at very short notice the installation of two fabric dams so the Lock Chamber could be dewatered to assist Emergency services in their search. Once the Police had completed operations, we arranged for our contractor to unblock the fouled and out of service T/path Ground paddle culvert, this had been in plan for B25.

- 2.1.6 LSE - Lock 78 GUS boat Strike resulting in top gate displaced from pot causing Navigation Closure. Reactive team attended and re-seated the displaced top gate. Navigation reopened within 12hrs.
- 2.1.7 Reactive Response team and Direct Services team worked together to plug a leak at culvert 45 on the Macclesfield Canal, which was causing significant water loss, a small trickle remains but will be picked up when permanent repairs are planned in and carried out.
- 2.2 Operational Incidents (other)
- 2.2.1 Redacted
- 2.2.2 WMS - Bridge 110, Stockton Road, Napton, Oxford Canal – struck by vehicle, which left the scene, so no details for cost recovery. Towpath closed due to unsafe brickwork. Reactive Response Team have rebuilt it in 20 days, including organising the emergency road closure. Towpath and navigation now open.
- 
- 2.2.3 WMS - Lock 58 Tardebigge on the Worcester Birmingham flight has had restricted width due to bulging brickwork, identified after a boat became stuck in October. Further investigations have raised concerns about the structure of the wall. Investigation continue in relation to the stability of the wall and as preparation for designing a repair.
- 2.2.4 WMS - Lock 40 Wilmcote on the South Stratford is closed due to a damaged quoin, brickwork and insecure anchor point. Works underway by Kier with reopening due in May.
- 2.3 Operations – other
- 2.4 Simpler Recycling – of 259 sites affected by the regulations change, 229 are in the process of modification to allow us to become compliant. We believe that a further 18 can be resolved within our updated facilities policy and may require closure. We are awaiting the programme for delivery of new bins. We have started our customer communications through the Boaters Update and initial changes to our website. Further updates to come close to the implementation date.
- 2.5 Operations Risks
- 2.5.1 We are currently monitoring twelve unplanned navigation closures at this point, of which only two are expected to go into the boating season.
- 2.5.2 M&E technician recruitment continues to be challenging with a third round of adverts in W&SW and London with unsatisfactory result. This continues up the line, with a recent advert for the Senior ME Engineer not producing any valid applications. The recruitment team have been asked to provide MEICA recruitment data so we can better understand the problem.
- 2.6 Water Management
- 2.6.1 The final draft of our Water Strategy 2025 – 2030 has been prepared and is with the executive for review.
- 2.6.2 There are no changes since the previously reported abstraction appeals.
- 2.6.3 We have written to our boating businesses and licence holders to update on the position in respect of water supply on the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal, which includes an appeal for people to raise awareness of the issue with elected members.

We are also planning a series of local forums relating to the difficulties. The risk to keeping the navigation open for the whole boating season is significant.

3. PORTS & HARBOURS

3.1 The Harbour Management Board are due to meet again in April. The current contract with Marico Marine for our Designated Person has been retendered and awarded to ABPmer from March 1st. This allows for a short handover and we are looking forward to the feedback on our management processes and performance from the new DP.

3.2 We have internally filled the position of Harbour Master for Sharpness.

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

4.1 Considerable levels of activity ongoing to prepare for the BBP delivery. All regions are participating in Operations Ready workshops to ensure there is collective clarity on the priorities and approach this season. The key areas of the plan actions are the roadmap for the activity. Boater Dashboards have been created in Power BI to inform customers via the website.

4.2 The revised PPM and standard relaunches in March. We are rolling out aligned KPIs/ measures for all teams along with new manager dashboards to facilitate self-service of their planning information in relation to all tasks including paddle repairs. Mobilisation of the vegetation contracts to the revised specifications is underway with some risks being managed. Additional focus on contract delivery and compliance is being resourced and the creation of new reactive teams.

4.3 For the O&M Improvement programme, the updated internal training CAATS was relaunched for the 6 main activities pre-Christmas, with helming being the next focus area. Operationally the focus on workboat utilisation is being maintained; a programme of site reviews is underway seeking best practices for sharing and common areas to improve, and other productivity measures. In the next few weeks lead managers will all receive training in the Lean problem-solving tool kit with executive colleagues having already completed this.

5. ORGANISATION

5.1 Management Team - WSW director, following a process launched pre-Christmas our preferred candidate declined due to concerns on the financial stability of the Trust and change of leadership. Therefore, we have reviewed the applications and interviewed a new potential candidate. A second interview will be held before the Trustees meeting.

5.2 Advisory Boards

5.2.1 The South-West Regional Advisory Board was on 14th March in Gloucester.

5.2.2 WMS RAB met in January in its new form, chaired by Glenn Howells. The meeting also accepted the application of Sandeep Mahal, deputy CEO of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and advocate of inclusion and of canals. The board particularly focused on the balance between its ambition to make a positive impact on the region's canals by driving through operational improvements as well as pursuing new opportunities for income generation, and the significant budget and resource restraints we face.

5.2.3 EMS RAB met in January and February with the new Chair, Andy Richardson and regional leadership team to discuss priorities for the coming year and develop an action

plan. The RAB members also supported with the invite list for the March Trustee Reception in Leicester.

- 5.2.4 YNE RAB met on 14th January and discussed our work in the media and communications team, also business boating. Both were led by internal colleagues.

6. LONDON & SOUTH EAST REGION

- 6.1 A successful period of external engagement has resulted in active participation and engagement with the London Mayor's Office on a number of issues and projects. This includes the memorial to the Transatlantic Slave Trade at Docklands and invitations to the London Assembly Environment Committee and Round Table to discuss the Mayor's pledge around the health of London's waterways. Work in particular, with the Deputy Mayor, the Southall Wellbeing Way and LNRS have increased the Trust's influence and recognition of us as a key partner in London.



Recent correspondence is also focussing on air pollution on London's canals which has drawn the attention of the media. Picture shows the London Assembly Environment Committee Hearing.

- 6.2 Operationally the region continues to implement learning from LEAN management techniques due to recruitment of experienced lean practitioner as AOM on the Lee and Stort seeing real benefits to efficiency and productivity. As an example of how improvements are recorded locally include the operations management whiteboards in the Enfield Yard office. We are slowly working our way through a series of historic issues and experimenting to learn our way into better practice aimed to design them out.



6.3 Redacted

- 6.4 The Environment Agency have now confirmed the remediation requirements for the waste material on site which the Wendover Canal Trust will need to address to enable them to resume restoration work. On separate note the Navigation Advisory Group were also engaged to give advice regarding communication of the challenges relating to the funding of leakage repairs along an earlier section of the restoration from around 15 years ago. The closure will be emotive as we need to temporarily close a section of the arm and there is understandably concern that a closure could adversely impact future volunteer restoration activity.
- 6.5 We continue to focus effort on volunteering capacity and capability with a new cohort of Volunteer Leaders, following an extended recruitment. We are trialing a new method of securing corporate volunteering through the operations team and are pleased with the early signs. We continue to deliver Volunteer/Task Manager development days as

well as our LSE Colleague engagement forum which are well received by the teams. The STEM programme within the region also continues to go from strength to strength. Finally, the fundraising teams continue to explore and develop our pipeline of projects and funding bids having secured additional statutory funding and partner funding for various budget relieving initiatives.

- 6.6 London West team have been busy this period completing access steps to culverts and installing fencing along the Slough arm. Repairs to coping stone at lock 95 and installing new secure doors on the Cowley volunteer shed.



- 6.7 West India Docks Operations supported a visit by French Navy vessels.



- 6.8 **Youth and event activity** STEM: In January, Session 1 of the KS5 Canal & River Trust Engineering Futures Pilot was held at the London Academy of Excellence Tottenham (LAET). The three-part pilot showcases the different types of engineering at the Trust, our commitment to conserving 200+ years of waterways and the breadth of our work with field work opportunities in London (Session 2 – Docklands) and further afield (Session 3 – Stoke Bruerne). 50 students were selected from LAET, Preston Manor (Brent) and CONEL (Tottenham) to attend an introductory session and workshop led by civil engineers Neil Owen and Peter Walker, M&E engineer Brandon Hamilton and hydrologist Hannah Fagen. The pilot introduces students to real STEM opportunities and the opportunity to complete projects based on the Grand Union Canal Transfer scheme.



- 6.9 In February we welcomed our first cohort of 27 Level 1 Engineering students from CONEL (Tottenham) for a tour of the Impounding Station. They were provided with a STEM engineering resources to support their engineering tour.

- 6.10 **Towpath funding secured.** Harlow and Gilston Garden Village proposals have been consented, securing S106 of £3,382,500 for 'Stort Valley Improvements', including towpath improvements and habitat restoration, enhancement or protection measures. The proportion for towpath improvements is TBC (c£2.6m was requested by the Trust for upgrades between Roydon Rail Station and Harlow Mill Rail Station). New access ramp to the towpath on the GUP from Spikes Bridge Park is being delivered by LB Ealing contractors (part of Southall Wellbeing Way project).

7. WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

7.1 We have resubmitted our Green Flag award applications for the Gloucester & Sharpness, Kennet & Avon, Bridgwater & Taunton, and Mon & Brec Canals.

7.2 Open Day at Caen Hill on 8th February was successful with 325 visitors (plus schools on the run-up), NBTA protestors tried to disrupt by booking out tickets with minimal success. Although the weather was poor, we raised £158 in donations, and recruited 5 new Friends. The event was well supported by volunteers and colleagues from across the regional team, Direct Services and Heritage. Local Authority and Town Council representatives attended, as well as Historic England. We received excellent feedback.



7.3 Talybont Lift Bridge (Mon & Brec) has been fixed with a temporary repair but will need a further road closure to permanently repair. We are in dialogue with the local community council to ensure that we work together to complete these.

7.4 The Kennet & Avon has been reopened at Burghfield following a breach caused by the recent storms.

7.5 Gloucester & Sharpness and River Severn

- Since November 2024, the maintenance team have carried out bank repairs at Cambridge Arms to remove a large void that was spreading under the towpath. 600 sandbags, 20t concrete, rebar and 5t soil were used. Approximately 5t of concrete capping has been removed.
- Hempsted Bridge required minor repairs to prevent a stop wedge from falling in. The bridge has ongoing issues regarding surfacing which Gloucestershire Highways are responsible for, and we are in communication with them regarding.



7.6 **Actif:** We've been awarded £35k by the Actif North Wales Innovation Fund to deliver a test and learn bespoke project supporting the access and engagement of young women and girls in sport and physical activity in Wrexham. We will recruit a funded part-time PM to deliver the project between now and Jan 26.



7.7 **Brecon 225:** The Camlas Aberhonddu 225 anniversary celebrations started in January with articles about the anniversary in both the Brecon & Radnor Express and Abergavenny Chronicle. A monthly feature throughout 2025 will help raise the profile of the celebrations.

7.8 Attraction Explorers at Gloucester and Trevor Basin have delivered water safety messaging to 1887 children during January and February (to date), following a significant response to our winter safety campaign and Little Explorers. Across W&SW we engaged 1893 children in January. Uptake for visits at all sites (plus outreach) is high following a slump before Christmas.

8. WEST MIDLANDS REGION

8.1 The Walsall canal around the area of the cyanide pollution incident remains closed due to persistence of cyanide remaining in the sediment. This can be easily liberated

endangering fish and other organisms; agreement has been reached with the EA that the only acceptable mitigation will be to remove the sediment by dredging. The polluter's representatives have also agreed and we are working to complete the project by the end of March.

8.2 We are currently managing some critical lock repairs that will require closure of much-used stretches of our canal network through our reactive teams.

8.3 Our RAB celebrated several volunteers for their tremendous contribution to our work. In January, Hatton volunteer Phil Garner received recognition for over 10000 hours volunteering with the Trust. Phil undertakes a range of activities for us, including vegetation/tree management and organisational tasks such as doing volunteer rota's and managing equipment stores. Volunteer Frank Carter was also recognised for over 4000 hours of volunteering with the Trust.



8.4 Hatton Open Week - During 10th – 16th February, Hatton Hub received over 800 visitors ranging from local and national politicians to local business representatives, donors and friends, school classes and members of the public. Hatton open weekend took place over February 15th/16th including lock tours, canal talks, lets fish and canal art. Despite the weather, numbers over the weekend included 250 Saturday, 350 Sunday and 55 participants in Let's Fish activities. Fundraising colleagues reported 20 friends recruited and contactless donations of £535.

8.5 The engagement culminated at the VIP open event at Hatton locks that was arranged to give local key stakeholders the opportunity to have a special preview of the works before the public open weekend. During two sessions, 22 local leaders, including the riparian MP, Sir Jeremey Wright,. They were all amazed at the level of work the Trust does and were keen to help support the Trust and its work.



8.6 Open days at Ellesmere Yard have included local councillors and social media coverage of the Forging Ahead project has given the Trust and the project a wider outreach.

8.7 Work is ongoing alongside Wychavon District Council regarding project to improve access to the Droitwich corridor. Site visits have been conducted to check suitability for increased bench provision.

8.8 We met Cllr Richard Jeffcoat Tipton Green to arrange a potential group of his residents to tackle graffiti in Tipton.

8.9 Talks have begun with Froncysyllte Councillors to make plans to improve the visitor experience around Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. There is also a plan to create a local circular walk incorporating the towpath and other heritage assets, which requires some remedial work from the trust to make accesses safe.

9. EAST MIDLANDS REGION

9.1 Flooding caused damage to the towpath again near Blue Banks Lock, Grand Union Leicester Line, which was reconstructed after last winter's storms. The most recent overtopping has washed away the surface dressing. Repairs are being completed by our team and volunteers.



9.2 We have started repairing a popular stretch of canal in Loughborough. We are re-building a 15-metre section of canal wall from foundation upwards and new surfacing. The project has £50k contribution from Loughborough Town Deal. The project has received media coverage on BBC Radio Leicester, Loughborough Echo and Leicester Mercury.



9.3 We attended a 'Flooding Roundtable' hosted by Loughborough MP, Dr Jeevun Sandher. Others included Leicestershire County Council, Charnwood District Council, the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water and Network Rail. Actions were identified but the discussions highlighted the challenges faced by all agencies in terms of capacity and resources to address flooding issues.

9.4 Pre-booked craft workshops at Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum have proved successful engaging new audiences and raising vital income. The workshops have been very popular and we are extending the programme with people travelling long distances to attend.



9.5 The South Leicestershire Towpath Taskforce have painted and installed new totem posts following a spate of vandalism where the existing totems were knocked/kicked out of the ground.



9.6 Harborough District Council has awarded Foxton £20,000 for a new arts sculpture trail which is currently being developed with two local artists. The project is designed to bring in visitors from the top car park into Top Lock with a new engaging experience/trail and showcase the varied ecology, wildlife and heritage through wooden sculptures.

9.7 Two Leicester Towpath Taskforce groups have joined forces to help clear up after the flooding. The teams used a Trust workboat to clear vegetation and around 50 bags of litter from the offside and island area of Belgrave Lock on the River Soar. The teams have built a strong relationship with local colleagues in Leicester City Council who kindly dispose of this waste.



9.8 Funding has recently been secured from the new East Midlands Combined County Authority which covers Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. £20,000 has been awarded for the design phase of a 6 mile stretch from Burton to Swarkestone with a view to additional funding for the works to follow.



- 9.9 The project to improve hedgerows in Northamptonshire continues with contractors carrying out hedge laying at a number of sites. The project has been made possible through a £27,500 grant from the Drax Foundation, which provides funding for non-profit organisations.

10. NORTH WEST REGION

- 10.1 The region continues to suffer operational difficulties. The recent storms resulted in a closure of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal at lock 11 where the adjacent embankment has been washed away in the river Tame. The lock is not at imminent risk of failure but cannot be safely operated. Investigation towards concluding the repair approach are ongoing. The section of canal is likely to be closed into the summer and a review is ongoing related to the other works that can be accelerated to take advantage.

- 10.2 Following the major breach of the Bridgewater Canal (Bridgewater Canal Company / Peel) we are continuing to offer guidance and support to Trust customers and are investigating with Peel how an alternative navigation route via Ellesmere port to Manchester can be economically achieved. Each passage would currently cost around £400 due to Peel's fees and inspection requirements.

- 10.3 The Daffodil is a former Mersey ferry, which was rescued and lovingly refurbished by local entrepreneurs, spending a reported £3.5m to convert her into Liverpool's latest venue, incorporating a restaurant and bar, with an entertainment suite in the former engine room. The vessel has a 15 year mooring lease and occupies the same location as the previous light ship, so it's a prominent addition to the waterfront.



- 10.4 National Heritage Lottery Fund have advised that the business plan submission for Anderton is paused with a suggestion that the project proposals are refined further before submission of a revised expression of interest. Whilst this will have immediate impacts on the project team, Operations BP25 for Anderton was based on business as usual with uncertainty regarding the project reflected as relative upside or downside in the plan. Full impacts and any recommendations are being worked through.

- 10.5 **Redacted**

- 10.6 The Reactive Response team and local Operations teams conducting repairs to lock gates, paddles, cills and cill fenders on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and Shropshire Union Canal. These works will improve water retention as well as improve the operation of the locks. Balance beam and lock gate strengthening works have also been undertaken at Wharton Lock on the Shropshire Union Canal. The purpose of the works is to extend the life of assets which are due/overdue replacement.

11. YORKSHIRE & NORTH EAST REGION

- 11.1 The Hirst Lock to Primrose Lane towpath upgrade project on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal is now open, as is the accessible ramp beside Scarwood Bridge near Slaithwaite on the Huddersfield Narrow.
- 11.2 Work has started on four new towpath schemes, a combined total of 14km of improvements. The 1km towpath upgrade at Mirfield on the Calder & Hebble, funded by Network Rail's First & Last Mile scheme will complete in late March.

11.3 Both the 4.5km towpath upgrade between Slaithwaite and Standedge Tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal and the 5.5km upgrade between Aspley and Cooper Bridge, on the Huddersfield Broad Canal are due to start on site and will be complete in July. The 3km “Missing Link” on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal towpath between Kildwick and Silsden started in late February and will be completed in June. This is the last section of the Leeds & Liverpool in West Yorkshire to be surfaced.

12. BOATING AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

12.1 Boating & Mooring

12.2 Licensing

12.3 Indicative licence evasion has seen its first rise in 4 months, rising to 11%. We believe this is due to better data collection now we have a full team of rangers in place, capturing more unlicensed boats. The largest regional increase in evasion was in London which was the team carrying most vacancies. The new case managers are monitored monthly on the stages of the process, we have a significant backlog of cases which we are working through.

12.4 Boater satisfaction

12.4.1 Initial trials of the updated stoppage notices system have been completed and the next stage in development is ongoing. These have been successful and the new system well received. A second round of trials will take place at the end of March., with the expectation of going live by mid-April.

12.5 Boat Licensing Customer Support

Redacted

12.6 Customer Service

12.6.1 KEY IVR – work completed by Open Contact has resulted in the failure rate of Key IVR improving from 30% to between 5-10%. We’re continuing to seek improvement.

12.6.2 Implementation of the automated authorised extended stay (AES) process in December has seen a reduction of over 70% in AES requests by phone/email.

12.6.3 Chat Bot – ‘Lockie’ is now being put live for limited periods, increasing in length over the coming weeks with a view to being live full time by the end of March 25.

13. VOLUNTEERING

13.1 Volunteering (reporting to end of January – updated from previous)

	Hours/Number
Total hours	601,685
Overall number of Active Trust Volunteers	5,459*
Overall number of Active Partner Organisations	220

*no. of volunteers recruited into a role in Assemble

- 13.2 Given the introduction of the new Assemble system was from April 2024 we have made tremendous progress with volunteers adopting the new system. We are at 90% of the YtD target and have recorded 95% of the total that we had recorded at the same stage last year. This is reliant on task managers ensuring they are using the system to its fullest and exploiting the opportunities to automate hours when using rotas/events etc.
- 13.3 Partner Organisation (PO) records remain within SugarCRM. There has been an increase in PO numbers of 13 to the end of January but we are at 72% of the YtD target and have recorded 74% of the total recorded for the same period last year.
- 13.4 We continue to work directly with task managers to review all POs to ensure that relationships are maintained, and hours recorded by quarterly checks to gap/delays in recording. The increase of 13 POs will include some new partners but will also be old partners whose time had not been recorded.
- 13.5 In the run up to the end of March, further reports showing those volunteers who are recruited to a role but have no time recorded will be produced and shared with Task Managers to support location and input of missing hours for recognition.

13.6 January's volunteer recruitment 2025 - #VolunteerByWater

13.6.1 The campaign was live from January 20th until February 2nd. Opportunities to volunteer were promoted on social media, on local radio and in regional news.



13.6.2 Key metrics: 19,900 visits to the campaign landing page- resulting in over 500 applications to volunteer in teams across the charity.

13.6.3 7 celebrities donated their social media support to the campaign:

- Ranvir Singh, Dr Amir Khan, Brian Blessed, Alex Bell, Laura Tobin, Dan Walker, Patrick Grant.
- 7 influencers provided support in their social media channels which resulted in over 127,000 views of content focussed on volunteering for the Trust
- Focussed support from Ranvir Singh:
- 4-page OK! Magazine feature; 3-page Prima feature (May edition, out at the end of March); and 9 interviews across key regional BBC radio stations (for our network) e.g. BBC Radio Manchester, Nottingham, Stoke, Leeds and Lancashire, with a combined listenership of 1,112,000



13.7 Media coverage on BBC news, and regional news: 162 mentions since January 23rd

14. ENGAGEMENT

14.1 During January and February, we delivered Explorer and water safety education to 18,120 children, engaged 4,026 participants in events and activities and received 16,040 visitors at our attractions.

15. BRAND, SUPPORTERS & INFLUENCE

15.1 LSE - Opportunities to engage with MPs have included following up a boat strike at Lock 55 where correspondence with local MP Victoria Collins (Harpenden & Berkhamsted) highlighted the challenges of caring for the network, she will visit us. Our strong supporter Uma Kumaran (Stratford & Bow) is due to make another visit in her constituency.

15.2 EMS - Local Operations and Direct Services teams welcomed Stuart Andrew, MP for Daventry, to Buckby Locks. We talked Stuart through the planned lock gate replacement works and gave an insight into day-to-day management of the network. Stuart has previously been on boating holidays and was really interested in the detail. It was a positive meeting with discussions around the Trust's work, funding challenges and the Grand Union Canal water transfer project.



15.3 EMS - South Northamptonshire MP, Sarah Bool, visited Stoke Bruerne. We gave Sarah a tour of the canal museum and shop before taking a short walk on the towpath outside. Sarah has since asked to hold one of her forthcoming constituent meet & greet sessions at the Canal Museum café.



15.4 WMS - We continue to engage with MPs in the region. In the last 2 months, this has included:

- Gareth Snell MP for Stoke on Trent central – site visit to the new Fenton yard
- Alex Ballinger MP for Halesowen – site visit to local canal
- Jodie Gosling MP for Nuneaton – teams meeting

15.5 WMS - Mary Creagh MP for Coventry East and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DEFRA visited the Coventry canal by boat. Her particular focus was on the wildlife along the canal, and she was delighted to spot otter spraint, see signs of water voles, meet a sleeping fox and be accompanied by a kingfisher. It gave a good opportunity to relay our strategic messages around the opportunities and challenges we face. She met our local volunteers as they were doing their regular vegetation management and litter picking tasks.



15.6 WMS - Sir Jeremy Wright, MP for Kenilworth and Southam, along with other local councillors and dignitaries, visited Hatton locks on Friday 14th February to see the works that are going on around our Lock 40 stoppage.

15.7 WMS – Regional Director met Al Carns MP for Selly Oak and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the MOD and Minister for Veterans and has agreed a visit on site in early May, to coincide with the 80th anniversary of VE day.



15.8 Regional Director met WMS Mayor Richard Parker on two occasions in relation to canalside housing developments in Wolverhampton and Birmingham specifically. They spoke about the potential to hold a roundtable discussion on the topic and the Mayor is supportive of that. The Mayor has recently secured £21m funding for active travel routes, which is another area we will pursue with him and his active travel champion Beccy Marston, who the team already have a relationship with.



15.9 NW - MP for Lancaster, Cat Smith visited the Lancaster Canal to meet colleagues and volunteers. This was a positive meeting giving Cat the opportunity to see the material improvements being made for access to the canal and towpaths for a number of communities in her constituency. She has offered to support conversations with Steve Reed as required / advised.

DRAFT

Trust Board Meeting
19 March 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 Assets in Grades D&E has decreased from 13.60% to 13.56%.

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	01/02/2025
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%
2. Towpath Condition (measured quarterly)	Towpaths in Grades A, B, C	60%	81.20%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	81.05%	81.05%	81.05%	81.05%
3. Flood Management (measured quarterly)	>C2m 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

2.1 **Redacted**

2.1.1 **Redacted**

2.1.2 **Redacted**

2.1.3 **Redacted.**

2.1.4 **Redacted**

2.1.5 **Redacted:**

2.2 Critical Assets

2.2.1 **Redacted.**

2.3 **Arising Issues on the wider canal network**

2.3.1 The table below shows the number and value of arising issues for 2024/25 by region. These are issues which have required significant engineering input, or which have a potential to require investment this financial year or into next year.

Number of Arising Issues by Region requiring significant engineering input or which have a potential to require investment B24 (£'000)				
Region	Arising in February 2025	Arising in February 2025 cost £'000 (cost x probability)	B24 YTD (no. of issues)	B24 YTD cost £'000 (cost x probability)
Y & NE	1	60	31	983
NW	3	225	35	3250
L & SE	3	55	33	640
W & SW	2	81	21	589
EM	0	0	15	364
WM	3	143	55	1474
Total	16	773	191	7157

2.3.2 These are a selection of the typical issues:

- Wasps Nest Headwall Collapse:** A downstream headwall at a culvert below the Grand Union near Soulbury collapsed. The failure occurred during a storm event in December 2024 over the Christmas period. The headwall had been monitored by the assets team for several years and is planned for rebuild in 2025/26. The works are programmed to start in May. To protect the exposed bank, the operations team are planning to install a sandbag wall to protect the slope from scour erosion. The Asset Team are increasing monitoring to weekly until the permanent repair is completed.
- KA-039-024: Towpath Culvert No 2 Vicarage Bridge:** Leakage from the canal is entering an abandoned towpath culvert. Unfortunately, there has been a significant change following the weather over the last month with a large hole opening above the culvert, extensive voiding in the banks to the sides, increased water flow into the culvert and movement of the pile line. Kier have been mobilised to site as an emergency to initially seal the leak pathways and stabilise with a view to formally abandoning. An Emergency AR is being prepared.



- Flooding along the River Soar in Loughborough (SO-025) -** Investigations continue following canal overtopping and flooding along the River Soar in Loughborough.

These are currently being investigated to determine the impact the Canal played in the issues.

- **Bridge 130 Kellet Lane Bridge LC-063-002 – Bridge Strike – CRISP**

There was a bridge strike overnight on 27/28 January. Offside, south-east parapet and approach wall. Approximately 13m of damage, six coping stones dropped and damaged with an additional four dislodged. Two string course stones dropped and roughly 3m of approach stone wall were damaged. There was also slight damage to the road surface. The towpath and navigation have reopened, there was no damage to the moored narrow boat. Full road closure with concrete blocks in place. Highway Authority have disconnected the traffic signals.



- **CF-003 Rudyard Feeder**

The fencing along part of the feeder, to prevent animal trampling and damage to the feeder (Urgent / Arising AR), which is being delivered by a fencing contractor under the supervision of the Customer Operations Team, will now be installed as soon as weather permits and subject to some conditions set out by the farmer. These include the provision of water troughs to compensate for the access to the feeder. A meeting is planned in March to agree a strategy for ongoing liaison with neighbouring landowners.

- **SS-016-004 Lock 40, Wilmcote** - Following further investigation, the canal is now closed. The anchor, quoin, quoin backing stones and surrounding walls have moved a further 100mm into the canal over the last 10 years to a point that the gate is now fouling on the lock invert. Emergency AR has been approved.



- **OX-036-019-L Embankment 12** -

The overtopping and leakage which were noted in January, following vegetation clearance to facilitate an ESPI inspection, have been repaired by customer operations and volunteer teams. A total of 3T of clay and 40 Soluform bags,



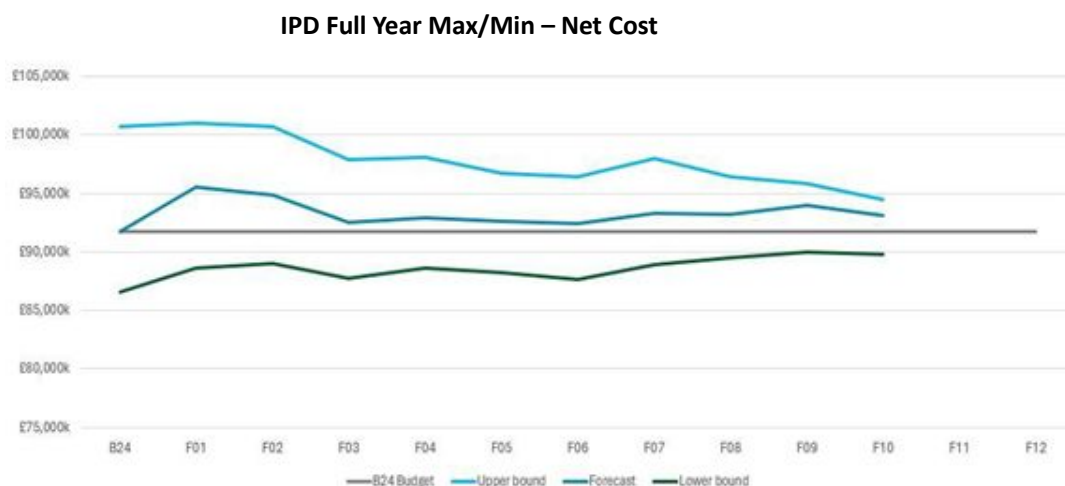
together with the use of a Direct Services craft, were needed to address the defects, which has considerably reduced the risk of an embankment failure.

3. FINANCE

3.1 Current month £1.6m underspent v F6 forecast, £2.3m under YTD due to a combination of delays on projects and deferrals, as well as some efficiencies.

Contribution	Month			Year to Date					Full Year					
	Actual	F6	Variance Actual vs F6	Actual	B24	Variance	F6	Variance Actual vs F6	B24	F6	Variance F6 vs B24	F10	Variance F6 vs F10	Variance B24 vs F10
Project Delivery	(4,798)	(5,753)	956	(39,223)	(39,024)	(199)	(41,047)	1,824	(48,599)	(54,297)	(5,698)	(56,253)	(1,956)	(7,654)
Direct Services	(2,987)	(3,319)	332	(20,545)	(21,541)	996	(20,485)	(60)	(25,551)	(26,249)	(698)	(25,882)	367	(330)
Asset Management	(458)	(832)	374	(6,907)	(7,634)	727	(7,280)	373	(9,172)	(8,984)	(188)	(8,700)	284	472
Bridge Strikes (CRISP)	6	-	6	(278)	(79)	(199)	(301)	24	(95)	(301)	(206)	(297)	4	(203)
Non PP Income Projects	(8)	(0)	(8)	(18)	-	(18)	0	(18)	-	0	0	(0)	(0)	(0)
Infrastructure and Programmes	(34)	104	(138)	(322)	348	(669)	(69)	(253)	312	63	(250)	(470)	(532)	(782)
I&P Emergency, Urgent & Arising	-	(279)	279	-	(5,728)	5,728	(559)	559	(6,900)	(1,117)	5,783	-	1,117	6,900
External Project Delivery	(30)	(11)	(19)	(134)	(139)	5	(14)	(118)	(199)	(53)	(146)	(113)	(61)	86
Programme Management Office	(103)	(115)	12	(1,167)	(1,280)	114	(1,182)	16	(1,537)	(1,531)	6	(1,420)	111	116
Total Contribution	(8,612)	(10,186)	1,574	(68,593)	(75,076)	6,483	(70,939)	2,345	(91,740)	(92,469)	(728)	(93,136)	(667)	(1,395)

3.2 The lower bound in the graph below assumes no risk realised to year end and an additional £0.25m carried over into next year. The upper bound assumes that all risk is realised and a minimal carryover into next year, and all emergency / urgent arising budget is used.



4. PRIORITY PROJECTS PROGRAMME

4.1 The following projects currently carry the most risk and are tracked most closely.

Redacted

Other reservoir projects of note:

4.1.1 Redacted

4.1.2 Brent Siphon Study: The Trust have completed a review of the siphonic spillway at Brent Reservoir. The findings have been discussed internally and the report provided

to the Environment Agency to support their studies of flooding in the Brent area downstream of the reservoir.

- 4.1.3 Earlswood Traffic Barrier: Vehicle damage has again occurred to the wooden barriers at Earlswood Reservoir. The damage was reported on social media on 11 February 2025. The local team erected a temporary repair the following day. This is a well-used single-track road with barriers that are the Trust's responsibility to maintain.

4.2 Embankments, cuttings, culverts and bridges:

- 4.2.1 Reeds Bridge Replacement (Grand Union): Due to multiple issues with access and utilities impacting the ability to get onto site, the works are now planned to start in May 2025. Following a change in access permissions, the works can now be carried out without a full stoppage.
- 4.2.2 Bridge 36 Underwalk repairs (River Stour): Urgent arising works started on site Jan 2025. Current forecast higher than Level B due to additional temporary works and overpumping. Following dewatering an additional 8m section of wall moved (foundation had completely eroded) and the bridge had to be closed until a stability check was undertaken. The check found that the bridge remains unaffected and has now reopened. The stoppage has had to be extended past 14 March 2025 to repair the additional section of collapsed wall.
- 4.2.3 BCN Bridges: Works progressing on site but potential delay due to lead-in time of some fabricated items and stoppage extended.
- 4.2.4 **Redacted**
- 4.2.5 Culvert 40, Barbridge (Shropshire Union): The adjacent landowner has sought legal advice on the abandonment proposal before signing the access / works agreements. There is a risk these works will carry over into April 2025 if the legal documentation isn't in place. Contractual documentation is all in place and JNBentley are awaiting an access date.
- 4.2.6 Culvert 14 (Huddersfield Narrow Canal): Access licences and agreeing an easement to install a manhole on council owned land has prevented works starting as per the programme. To avoid reputational damage with our boating customers, we have opted to split the project into two phases. The contractor will now mobilise to site on the opposite side to install the first manhole and undertake the canal bed repairs during the published stoppage. The contractor will then need to re-visit in 2025/26 to install the second manhole and CIPP liner.

4.3 Mechanical and electrical projects:

- 4.3.1 Crofton PS Replacements (Kennet & Avon): The non-return valves have been replaced and the air valves were delivered at the end of February for installation by 7 March 2025.
- 4.3.2 Anderton Boat Lift East Gate Cable Issue: Arcadis were commissioned to investigate the root cause of the failure and will be complete by the end of March 2025. Planning and programming the repairs to understand when the east gate can be put back into operation is not possible until the scope of repairs is understood.
- 4.3.3 Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge: The project was pushed back into Summer 2025 due to concerns from the council about granting any traffic orders outside of the school holidays. A new programme was submitted by AMCO in February which suggests that all works can be completed in 2025, minimising disruption to the A49 trunk road. The

project manager is working with wider Trust colleagues to review the proposed methodology and programme.

4.3.4 Ribble Sea Gate Task Order: The project was mobilised on 7 February 2025 (temporary track laid, stop planks installed and gate removed for repair) with project completion forecast as 7 March 2025.

4.3.5 Tees Barrage Stop Planks: WIP now out to AMCO, Qualter Hall and Sharpness Shipyard as part of mini tender.

4.4 Lock projects:

4.4.1 Tardebigge Top Lock (Worcester and Birmingham): Cracking and movement of the lock wall has worsened significantly over recent weeks. It had been hoped to undertake more modest repairs but it is now going to require significant temporary works to take the majority of the wall down safely and then rebuild it. It is listed and believed to be one of the deepest on the network. Timescales for re-opening are still being discussed given the recent change in solution required.

5. DIRECT SERVICES PROGRAMME

5.1 Nineteen projects completed in the month against a plan of eight.

Total DS Outputs Planned Vs Actual (calculated automatically)	UoM	Year		% change
		Planned	Actual	
Bank Protection	m	3074.6	2630.6	-14
Towpath Improvements	m	751	1902	153
Gate Replacements. Number of locks.	No	20	22	10
Gates Replacements. Number of Leaves fitted.	No	49	54	10
Gate Repairs – to include relines and Cill/Quoin repairs and any works to conserve water	No	31	36	16
Other Leak Repairs – km length, Aqueducts, embankments	m	143	170	19
Boundary/Retaining Wall Repairs	m	52	26	-50
Fencing	m	0	0	0
Access Improvements	No	8	11	38
Bridge Repairs	No	31	34	10
Other Asset Repairs (Culverts, Weirs, Aqueducts etc.)	No	49	90	84
Total number of notifications	No	116	132	14

5.2 We are planning to reduce our Direct Services work programme for the first half of 2025/26 to create capacity to address the backlog of safety related defects. Whilst it will mean delaying some other priority repairs by up to a year, delivering less complex activity over the coming months will create capacity for our teams to deliver more safely by improving the planning for the more complex jobs later in the programme and to complete additional safety training over the spring/summer.

6. Grand Union Canal Transfer

6.1 The project's Gate 3 submission to Ofwat is well advanced and under review. A Board paper is planned for May 2025 to approve progressing through this stage of the project.

6.2 **Redacted.**

6.3 We appointed DK:CM as Architectural Design consultants looking at the look and feel of above ground structures within the historic context of the canal environment. They are due to report in April 2025 and the principles will form part of the scope for the project's design teams.

6.4 A Development Consent Order Delivery Team has been established, with Trust representation led by Richard Newton.

6.5 Redacted



Board Meeting
March 2025
Information Report

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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 2024 Pay Gap Reporting is complete and for gender pay, the Trust continues to have a positive pay gap in favour of women working at the Trust (see Section 6 below).
- 2.2 In conjunction with our Corporate Partnerships Team (Fundraising), we have implemented functionality in our Wellbeing app for Trust colleagues to redeem the points that they earn from undertaking daily challenges (steps, mindfulness sessions, cycling or Sudoku), as direct donations to the Trust. This has been launched with a one-off donation of £5,000 from the app's supplier, YuLife. Our aim is to share this wider with other YuLife customers.
- 2.3 Our 2025 pay talks have concluded with an offer being accepted and taken to ballot by the Trade Unions – the ballot will run for 2 weeks, and we will make the changes if accepted for the April payroll. Details of this offer are in section 5 below.
- 2.4 We have appointed Perret Laver to support us in Trustee recruitment, the roles go live w/c 24th February and will close after 4 weeks with interviews being held in May and June.
- 2.5 The recruitment of the Welsh Bwrdd chair is in progress with interviews expected to take place in March 2025 with an appointment in April 2025.
- 2.6 We have been recruiting for key vacancies in Fundraising Directorate for the roles of Head of Fundraising Operations and Head of Philanthropy & Partnerships (Maternity Cover). Candidates have been appointed and start in April 2025.
- 2.7 We will be celebrating International Women's Day in March via a webinar organised by the Women's Network.
- 2.8 We marked Race Equality Week (3-7 February) with a series of all-colleague communications on the theme of #EveryActionCounts. A daily 5-minute challenge helped colleagues listen and reflect and then make a conscious decision to take action.

- 2.9 We are in the stages of launching our internal Leadership development programme – Excelling in Leadership, this will bring to life our newly launched leadership behaviours. This programme will be delivered internally after working with an external specialist partner - Franklin Covey.

3. People Operations

- 3.1 We have had sign off for the Phase 1 timeline of implementation for the New People System (Dayforce). Our Go Live date will be 23rd June 2025 which will see the introduction of the new Recruitment module, Core HR and Self Service come into action (Phase 1). The Communication and Training plan are being led on by our People Change Manager to ensure awareness is heightening and knowledge developing around the Trust more widely. We have a robust Stakeholder map that we referring to as we enter the testing stage for our Core HR module and Discovery phase for our Recruitment module.
- 3.2 The B25 plan was presented earlier this year, and we are now working towards refining our Objectives and measures to sit alongside the detailed plan and main goal for 2025 – To successfully deliver Dayforce to improve service and stewardship. Redacted

4. Reward & Wellbeing

- 4.1 2024 Pay Gap Reporting is complete and for gender pay, the Trust continues to have a positive pay gap in favour of women working at the Trust (see Section 6 below).
- 4.2 Further to supporting the pay talks outlined in Section 5 below, plans are now in place to upload the agreed offer to Payroll for 1st April effective date.
- 4.3 In conjunction with our Corporate Partnerships Team (Fundraising), we have implemented functionality in our Wellbeing app for Trust colleagues to redeem the points that they earn from undertaking daily challenges (steps, mindfulness sessions, cycling or Sudoku), as direct donations to the Trust. This has been launched with a one-off donation of £5,000 from the app's supplier, YuLife.
- 4.4 Our new approach to Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) launched in January, with a focus on general awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues within the workplace. We intend to offer short half-day awareness training to more colleagues (starting in Infrastructure & Programmes) to help address the stigma of talking about mental health, as well as maintaining a network of primary MHFAs.
- 4.5 Planning is underway for our colleague recognition events, the Trust Awards in October & our Service Lunch (25 years) in November.
- 4.6 We have continued to review our healthcare provision to Managers (contractual benefit) and presented recommendations to Remuneration Committee in February. We will move ahead with an 'as-is' position for our current population but will make changes to the provision for any new starters.

5. Employee Relations

Redacted

6. Inclusion & Diversity

6.1 Inclusion and Diversity Strategy Delivery Programme

6.1.1 We took the Annual Pay Gap report to Remco for the snapshot date of April 2024. For the first time we are publishing our ethnicity pay gap in addition to gender, along with an action plan that focusses on understanding our data better.

6.1.2 At The Trust, women earn £1.14 for every £1 that men earned, and colleagues of colour earn £1.08 for every £1 that white colleagues earned (comparing median hourly pay). We are in the process of preparing communications to colleagues.

6.2 Inclusion Circles

6.2.1 Throughout 2025, we will build on the articles by Exec Sponsors in the Source Magazine last year by profiling the inclusion circles each month. We start in February with the Rainbow Network, marking LGBTQ+ History Month. The theme for this year is activism and social change and some members of the Network have recounted memories of change they lived through.

6.2.2 The Rainbow Network have also produced a short video for LGBTQ+ History Month on being an Ally, encouraging colleagues to sign up, and are holding a webinar in late February. Looking forward, we will be celebrating **International Women's Day** in March via a webinar organised by the Women's Network.

6.2.3 Looking forward, the Inclusion & Diversity Manager is hosting a two day meeting for the inclusion circles leads to progress their plans for the year, discussing how they can collaborate to become even more effective.

6.3 I&D Awareness Events - We marked **Race Equality Week** (3-7 February) with a series of all-colleague communications on the theme of #EveryActionCounts. A daily 5 minute challenge helped colleagues listen and reflect, and then make a conscious decision to take action. Topics included Intersectionality, Recognising Privilege, Inclusive language, and Code Switching/Masking. The week ended with a call to action, for colleagues to make their "Big Promise", setting out what action they will take to further race equality. Promises will be published in the Source Magazine at the end of February.

7. People & Talent

7.1 Management & Leadership development programmes

7.1.1 Our Peopleways – (HR essentials training for managers) management development programme continues to be delivered and positive feedback received – with 68% of our managers now engaging with the programme. To enable consistency in our managers and help with ER case reduction,

this programme is now being mandated for all managers, starting with modules; Inclusive Leadership, Managing Performance & Understanding the HR responsibilities of a line manager, this was initially only mandated for our customer operations and infrastructure and programmes front line managers. We believe this will continue to increase our management capability in key areas.

- 7.1.2 We are in the stages of launching our internal Leadership development programme – Excelling in Leadership, this will bring to life our newly launched leadership behaviours. This programme will be delivered internally after working with an external specialist partner - Franklin Covey. The programme consists of 4 modules, starting with the self and then extending to leadership traits: 7 Habits of highly effective people, The 4 Essential roles of leadership, managing change – turning uncertainty into opportunity and Working at the Speed of Trust. This will be delivered over a 2-year period; we will be piloting with our SMs from April and then cascading to leaders at the Trust.

7.2 Engagement

- 7.2.1 During February we launched 'New colleague executive listening session' where all colleagues with around 11 months service were invited to attend a session to provide their reflections on their time at the Trust as well as provide suggestions for improving our onboarding experience. Richard facilitated the session with 9 colleagues attending, we are working through the feedback received. The session left a positive impact on the attendees, who were pleased to have been given the opportunity to share their experiences with Richard. Our intention is to complete these monthly with our next session taking place in March. This will give greater insight into the improvements needed for onboarding new colleagues.
- 7.2.2 Work is ongoing with preparing for our annual colleague engagement survey, which will run from 11 March to 31 March. The questionnaire will be conducted through Hive with the same questions as last year for comparison.
- 7.2.3 During February we held our quarterly induction event – 43 colleagues attended the day, positive feedback was received, the most useful parts cited were networking with colleagues, meeting Richard, experiencing the waterways on the boat trip and just generally the vast amount of information they learned on the day.

- 7.3 Training Audit Action Plan - Work continues with responding to the audit action plan, Training needs analysis conversations are being completed for roles and managers will then begin to complete skills gap analysis for their team members.
- 7.4 Dayforce preparation – Learning will be implemented during phase 2 of Dayforce, work has begun on cleansing content from our current learning management system to ensure that we are ready for implementation.
- 7.5 Talent Development

- 7.5.1 We have now launched our talent registers, top talent colleagues – those with an outperforming performance rating and that have expressed a desire to progress have been offered different development opportunities; these range from supporting our recruitment activity (adding diversity to our panels), supporting ER case work, becoming superusers or mentors to starting formally recognised development programmes.
- 7.5.2 We are approaching our End of Year performance conversation period and during this time we will revisit our talent registers and engage more colleagues.

8. Recruitment

- 8.1 We have been recruiting for key vacancies in Fundraising Directorate for the roles of Head of Fundraising Operations and Head of Philanthropy & Partnerships (Maternity Cover). Candidates have been appointed and start in April 2025.
- 8.2 Following the retirement of our RD in Wales and the Southwest we embarked on a campaign to recruit a new Regional Director with key connections in Wales. We had over 90 CVs and sifted this down to 20 virtual calls and then a shortlist of 10 candidates who we interviewed. We offered to our preferred candidate who unfortunately decided not to join us, we are considering some of the other long listed candidates and covering the position internally for a period of time whilst we readvertise the post.
- 8.3 The recruitment of the Welsh Bwrdd chair is in progress with interviews expected to take place in March 2025 with an appointment in April 2025.
- 8.4 With the end of term for three trustees in 2025 we have appointed Perrett Laver in Jan 2025 which was agreed by the Appointment Committee. The timeline started in February 2025 with an agreed timeframe which concludes with interviews in May. Steve Dainty Finance Director is working with Nurole who are supporting the appointing of the Co-optee role for the Finance Committee; stage 1 interviews have been conducted and 4 candidates have been progressed to stage 2 meetings.
- 8.5 Dayforce recruitment system is due to go live in June 2025, the team are currently involved in discovery workshops to map out end to end process and timelines. We envisage that we will need to implement a recruitment freeze for a period of a few weeks where we only recruit key vacancies and manage the transition from one system to another.
- 8.6 Line manager training for the new system will be rolled out alongside the Inclusive Recruitment Mandatory training from March to Sept 2025

9. People Business Partnering & Future Talent

- 9.1 We have 60 individuals on Future Talent Programmes, made up of 24 apprenticeships, 3 Graduates and 30 colleagues upskilling themselves in current role, including the next cohort of Stepping into management.
- 9.2 There are 19 colleagues currently enrolled on to Stepping into Management.

- 9.3 We have reviewed our apprenticeship offer, in particular the pathway through to Management and Leadership and have mapped this out with our own internal offer and aligned apprenticeships. This is now ready to launch to our top talent, and we have 6 females who will enrol on the Women in Leadership programme.
- 9.4 We have advertised for New Future Talent roles which consists of 9 construction apprentices and 2 graduates. We received over 300 applications for apprenticeship roles and over 100 for graduate roles within first 10 days of launch. We are continuing to monitor and sift through the applications.
- 9.5 On February 18th we held a Future Talent networking event in Birmingham which was attended by 19 apprentices and graduates. Richard Parry was present to give a business update, the day was extremely successful with great feedback.



Board Meeting

19 March 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**
- **Strategic Engagement - Growing Our Influence with Policy Makers, Statutory Funders & Influencers**
- **Significant Campaigns, Initiatives & Programmes**
- **Strategic & Performance Reporting, Reviews, Tools & Guidance**

2. Strategic Insight, Direction & Planning

Redacted

2.1. **Redacted**

2.2. **Redacted**

2.3. **Redacted**

2.4. **Redacted**

Redacted

2.5. **Redacted**

2.6. **Redacted**

2.7. **Redacted.**

Planning System Reforms & the Planning and Infrastructure Bill

2.8. The Government published the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and a press release on 11 March confirming further reforms to overhaul the planning system, putting growth at the heart of the statutory consultee system.

2.9. The Government's Planning & Infrastructure Bill seeks to make provision about infrastructure, town and country planning development corporations, compulsory purchase of land and environmental outcomes reporting; as well as make provision for a

scheme, administered by Natural England, for a nature restoration levy payable by developers.

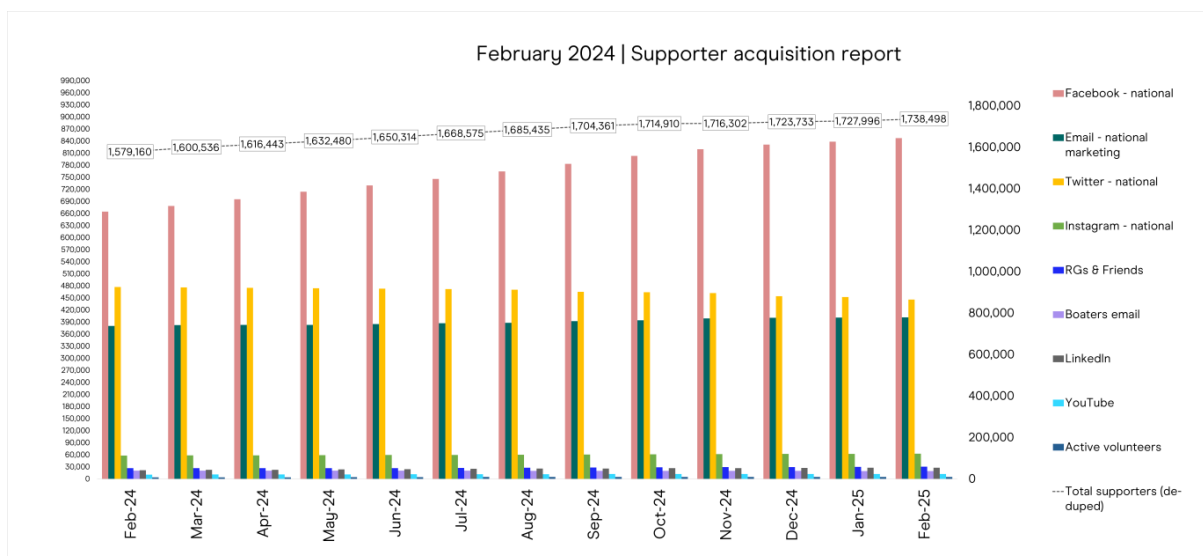
2.10. Under new plans, the Government intends to limit the scope of statutory consultees and remove a limited number of them, including Sport England, Theatres Trust and The Gardens Trust in planning decisions. The scope of other statutory consultees will be narrowed to focus on heritage, safety and environmental protection.

2.11. Redacted

Growing our Supporter Base

2.12. At the end of February 2025, our acquisition advertising helped drive total passive and active supporter numbers to 1.73 million. During January and February 2025, we created 19.7 million opportunities to see our acquisition-led marketing and created over 23.7k new connections.

2.13. Redacted



2.14. In January and February we drove 37k people to volunteering opportunities, generated 6.1k Facebook event responses, and steered 4.7k people to local fundraising events. These regional adverts are a pivotal part in our marketing mix, contributing to building comprehension, trust, inclusion and diversity, visitor experiences and local and accessible messaging.

3. Strategic Engagement - Growing Our Influence

Redacted

Horizon Europe research project 'GreenME'

3.1. Strategy & Impact Director invited to join a small stakeholder group for a Horizon Europe research project which aims to identify ways in which exposure to nature, effective nature-based therapy (NBT) and a broader Green Care framework can be scaled-up to improve adult mental health and wellbeing equity while contributing to multiple socio-ecological co-benefits. Redacted

3.2. Redacted

4. Strategic Campaigns, Initiatives & Programmes

The National Probation Programme with Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

4.1. Redacted

4.2. A national report published by HM Inspectorate (February 2025) into the Probation Service, positively highlighted the partnership with the Trust and its impact. (Full report available: [Thematic Inspection of the Delivery of Unpaid Work](#)' (published by HM Inspectorate of Probation, Feb 2025).

Redacted

4.3. Redacted

4.4. Redacted.



Redacted

4.5. Redacted.

4.6. Redacted.

‘Volunteer by Water’ Campaign (20 January to 3 February 2025)

- 4.7. Our Volunteer by Water campaign launched on 20 January and ran for two weeks, focussing on a female demographic, aged 24-49, currently underrepresented in our volunteer teams. We deployed a mix of digital advertising, radio days, PR activity, organic social channels, and marketing newsletters.
- 4.8. Seven celebrities supported our Volunteer by Water campaign, with Dr Amir Khan, Dan Walker, Brian Blessed, Patrick Grant, Alex Bell and Laura Tobin talking about it on their social media channels, whilst TV presenter, Ranvir Singh donated her time, resulting in mass market BBC radio coverage and features in OK and Prima magazines.
- 4.9. The campaign had a huge 326 million opportunities to see our messages, 20k people visited our campaign website page and 40k people directly went our volunteer platform, Assemble, where they can apply for a welcome session or a role.



OK Magazine promoted to their readership

Instagram Reels was a key tactic

Redacted

4.10. Redacted

4.11. Redacted

4.12. Redacted



Redacted

4.13. Redacted

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4.20. Redacted.

4.21. Redacted

Redacted

4.22. Redacted

4.23. Redacted

4.24. Redacted

Anderton Boat Lift

4.25. In February 2025, we secured planning permission to extend and remodel the visitor centre building as part of a wider proposal to improve the visitor offer. We have submitted a further planning application for new and improved facilities. Redacted.

Bow Wharf 2, H2O Urban

- 4.26. We are working with H2O Urban to prepare a planning application for 66 residential properties, a commercial unit, landscaping and play space. **Redacted**

Towpath Improvements

- 4.27. The Towpath Improvement Programme with national partners Sustrans previously delivered a £1.4million activation scheme at Aldermaston Wharf on the Kennet & Avon Canal. This has become the catalyst for a wider 'Reimagining the Kennet & Avon Canal' partnership with Sustrans, the Greenham Trust and West Berkshire Council – **Redacted**
- 4.28. Work will also start next month to deliver nearly £100,000 Tranche 7 ATE funded scheme with Sustrans on surface dressing improvements on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal after delivering over £1 million of improvements around Saltaire.

Redacted

- 4.29. **Redacted**

- 4.30. **Redacted**

- 4.31. **Redacted**

- 4.32. **Redacted.**

- 4.33. **Redacted**

- 4.34. **Redacted**

- 4.35. **Redacted**

Redacted

- 4.36. **Redacted**

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

Redacted

- 5.1. **Redacted**

Our Statutory Consultee Performance

- 5.2. We received 2009 consultations in England & Wales to which a response was due in the period 1 April to 28 February 2025. We responded to 98% within 21 days or otherwise agreed extension (98% in England and 100% in Wales).

Redacted

- 5.3. **Redacted**

5.4. **Redacted**

5.5. **Redacted**

Redacted

5.6. **Redacted**

Learning - STEM & Water Safety

- 5.7. In February, we hosted an 'Inspiring the Future' in-person event, facilitated by our partners Education & Employers, engaging 100 young people in a session featuring career insights from an engineer and a local STEM lead. During the event we launched our Clean Canals Challenge, a national KS3 STEM initiative for encouraging young people to design innovative solutions for tackling canal litter.
- 5.8. The delivery of Little Explorers for Early Years is now fully integrated into our Winter Water Safety Campaign. Regional Learning & Skills Coordinators have delivered "Quack Quack" sessions in schools, libraries, and half term events for over 3,000 children during January and February.

Heather Clarke, Strategy & Impact Director, March 2025



Board Meeting

March 2025

Background Report to Chief Executive Board Report

FUNDRAISING DIRECTORATE REPORT

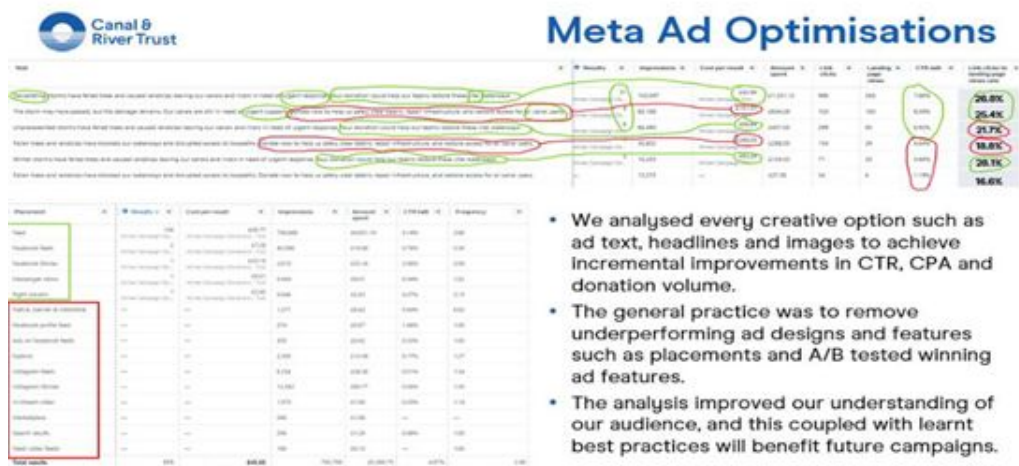
Maggie Gardner, Fundraising Director

1. Purpose & Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on key activities in the last quarter of B24 (January – Mid-March).

2. Overall

- 2.1. At the end of February, income was at £5,714k, falling short of the strategy target (F3) of £6,895k and F6 target of £5,791k.
- 2.2. We are unlikely now to achieve the year-end (YE) target. The main shortfall is in Philanthropy and Partnerships (P&P), where competition for grants has increased sharply. Additionally, we are transitioning into a fundraising charity at a slower pace than the 'hit the ground running' assumption which sat behind the Fundraising Strategy. At YE, we expect P&P to have a shortfall against the original strategy of approximately £1.8m and approximately £600k against F6 reforecast. Individual Giving and Legacy (IG&L) will also fall short on gross income by approximately £200K. Three reasons sit behind this: a delay early in the year in selling In Mem benches to allow for consultation with National Design & Heritage, longer registration time with the Gambling Commission for planned raffles (likely now to go live in the second half of B25), and an unachieved shared sponsorship target with P&P (£100K) for lock gates. As costs associated with these activities were also delayed the IG&L team anticipate delivering an improved YE net contribution of approx. £60k above target.
- 2.3. Innovation and test and learn is proceeding at pace as we head towards the B25 first full year of the new Fundraising Strategy. This is supported by investment in a much higher level of data and analysis capacity within the fundraising team – evidenced by the recent evaluation of our Winter Appeal, one slide from a detailed deck provided as an example below.



2.4 Highlights in the quarter include:

- Successfully recruited a maternity cover for the Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships position. Jon Collins will join us from GambleAware on 22 April; he was previously with CRUK.
- In Individual Giving and Legacies, various tests and preliminary work are underway in preparation for B25, which will be the first full year of the Fundraising Strategy. These efforts include hyperlocal approaches redacted, interactive testing of legacy propositions/messages on Facebook ahead of the DRTV launch, and new approaches to digital (along with improved data collection) etc.
- Our £2.5 million People's Postcode Lottery grant has been confirmed for B25.
- Redacted
- Redacted.
- Redacted
- Redacted.
- Successfully conducted a high-value event with guest speaker Steven Knight (plus David Orr, Richard and members of our West Midlands team) in Birmingham on 4th March. The event attracted 52 guests, including existing Friends with potential to give at a major donor level, corporates, and trusts. Follow-up with each of the attendees is now taking place.

3 Individual Giving and Legacy (IG&L)

February saw continued strong performance with income YTD £3.33m against a target of £3.3m and a F6 forecast of £3.2m. In addition, the IG&L team has focused on developing activities required to deliver the new Fundraising Strategy through the agreed test and learn approach.

Looking at the results in more detail:

- Redacted

4 Regular Giving (Friends) & Face to Face Fundraising

- 4.1 Redacted
- 4.2 Redacted
- 4.3 Redacted
- 4.4 Redacted
- 4.5 Redacted.

5 Contactless Giving

- 5.1 Redacted
- 5.2 Redacted
- 5.3 Redacted.



Public insight

- An independent survey of 800 adults from across the UK, ran by YouGov.
- We tested a yellow heavy creative (creative 1) vs image led creative (creative 2) and different combinations of actions but with the key messaging & campaign strapline consistent.



I would understand C&RT is a charity that relies on public support?

- 85% said strongly agree or agree to both Creative 1 and Creative 2
- However, 41% said strongly agree to Creative 2 vs 30% to Creative 1

I would stop and read this poster?

- 66% said strongly agree or agree to Creative 2, marginally more than creative 1.

I would consider donating?

- 46% said strongly agree or agree to Creative 1 and 48% to Creative 2

6 Appeals, In-Memory & Digital Fundraising

6.1 Although monies are still being received, we have completed the final evaluation of the Perfect Storm, Winter Appeal. Appeal income was double its target achieving £104K (target £52K) plus further Gift Aid income. Aside from the financial results highlights included:

- The Winter Appeal demonstrated how we can engage donors – existing and new – with examples of our work, the importance of jeopardy and the strength of aligning fundraising asks with the realities on the ground (we

held a certain amount of the campaign until storms hit). Interesting the appeal register lower negative chatter/opposition from CRT distractors (mainly annoyed boaters) we believe as it focused on the direct challenges faced by our infrastructure.

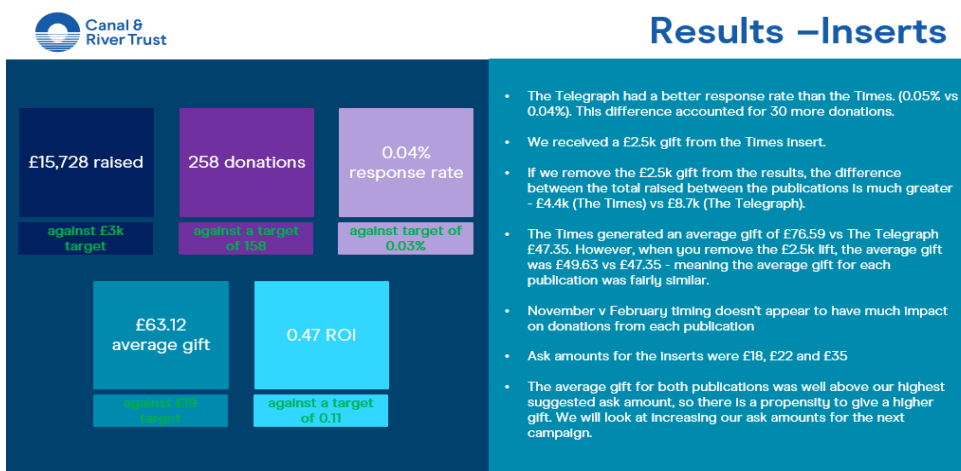


- An ability to react to results rapidly and enhance returns including effective test and learn approaches between bursts of the campaign. This is the first campaign where we have had our new digital fundraising team members in place and were able to respond to analysis as the appeal progressed. The results below are from two campaigns bursts. The first was lead by our existing media agency partner (TUG) and following poor performance we brought the learning and leadership on burst 2 inhouse, led by our digital fundraisers.

Meta campaign and performance

Campaign	Burst 1	Burst 2	Change
Dates	25/11/24 – 15/12/24	04/02/25 – 21/02/25	
Spend	£5030.11	£5673.54	-
Reach	1.1m	477,956	46%
CTR	0.15%	6%	3800%
Landing page visits	1658	6,524	294%
Percentage of people that click our ad link and then stay on to visit the page.	13.75%	33.48%	143%

- Redacted



6.2. In March, we launched a test for an 'always on' cash acquisition using a hyperlocal approach in **Baildon and Watford**. These locations were chosen based on specific criteria including past performance and local team feedback. We plan to nurture any acquired donors' local interest into broader support for the Canal and River Trust. The original images are sourced from the target location.



If the test is successful, we anticipate rolling out a version across other targeted postcodes during periods where there is no main appeal or campaign focus.

6.3. In-Memory fundraising remains behind and will not achieve end B24 target. In part this is due to difficulties in agreeing the design of the bench with heritage colleagues which delayed marketing. However, we are now selling bench dedications steadily at 2-3 a month at the revised £4k price point. The marketing plan is increasing, and other dedications are going live with Memory Tree and Mooring Bollards the focus areas in the late summer of B25.

- 6.4. We are preparing for a collaboration with the Northwest Regional Enterprise team for a Crowdfunder to support the Basuto Heritage Boat Restoration. This will launch in April with the goal of raising the final amount (£10k-£15k) to complement the £250k+ gift secured by Enterprise (which has a match funding requirement). We anticipate that this will aid further donor acquisition and may attract positive interest from the broader boat-owning community.

7 Legacies (Gifts in Wills – GIW)

- 7.1. The GIW team are confident they will meet their end of B24 income target.
- 7.2. They have exceeded their pledge acquisition target of 45, securing 52 additional pledges. The total pledge pipeline is now 213, valued at around £10m using historical pledge averages and confirmed values for two significant pledges.
- 7.3. We have two significant notifications currently being worked on, firstly the Di Skillbeck Trust are processing her estate. They had some challenges following damage to the property but have assured the team that they hope to transfer to us in the region of £100k for the trip boat at Ellesmere Port. In addition, Mr Alderslade's estate is nearing the end of the contest period and we have received further clarification that we are looking at a gift of at least £750k. He was a significant donor to the Trust in his lifetime.
- 7.4. The team are now gearing up for the annual events programme that will start again in May. We have outlined the proposed schedule below and senior leadership would be welcome to join if available. Each event is well supported by local teams with tailored experiences and guest speakers:

Type	Month	Date	Region	Site
Stewardship	Feb	13th	WM	Hatton
Stewardship	Mar	21st	YNE	Stanley Ferry WS
Enquiry	Jun	4th	EM	Stoke Bruerne
Enquiry	Jun	18th	NW	Ellesmere
Enquiry	Jun	25th	EM	Nottingham
Enquiry	Jul	2nd	WSW	Caen Hill
Enquiry	July	9th	LSE	Kings Cross
Enquiry	Jul	22nd	WSW	Trevor Basin
Enquiry	Sep	16th	YNE	Bingley
Enquiry	Oct	3rd	WM	Bradley WS

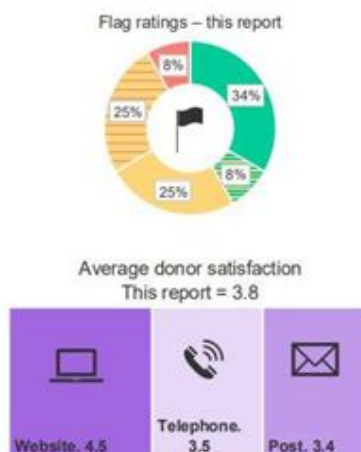
- 7.5. The success of the GIW team has been recognised with their shortlisting for four national awards. Notably, they have been shortlisted for the Internal Collaboration Award, which also recognises the exceptional colleagues who

assist us in providing outstanding experiences to our prospective donors. For a small relatively new team this recognition is exceptional.



8. Supporter Care, Stewardship & Data

- 8.1. Donor appreciation week in January was once again a significant success. The Ripple Effect Report (shared in the last Board Report) was well received.
- 8.2. The THINK Mystery shopping improvement has been maintained, with the Trust moving from lower to mid rankings in the last two reports, with an aim to reach the top 5. In the latest report, we scored 3.8/5 for support satisfaction.



- 8.3. In advance of the arrival of the Head of Fundraising Operations in April the team are finalising their B25 priorities with a particular focus on improving our data quality, integrations & insight/reporting.

9. Philanthropy and Partnerships

9.1. Jon Collins appointed as Head of Philanthropy & Partnerships (maternity cover). Jon joins us from GambleAware and previously CRUK, and he will start on the 22 of April.

9.2. Redacted

9.3. Redacted.

9.4. In December and January, the Fundraising Committee and Executive team reviewed a paper that explored some of the underlying reasons for this shortfall. Two high level challenges were identified -

- Developing compelling projects and propositions - funders require detailed plans, ambition and transformational impact. This has been difficult to gather on a national level.
- We aren't regarded as a leading voice on national issues which align with funding interests. What is the external problem we are addressing and what can we say with confidence?

Following these discussions, we have been asked to begin to outline steps to address these issues. Maggie and Lydia have developed a paper in response titled *'Moving to Philanthropic, Enterprise and Partnership Success'* which has been discussed by the Exec team and will be taken to the 17th March Trustee Fundraising Committee meeting. While some of the recommendations fall to Fundraising much of the required change is within the control of other teams and needs to be delivered by them, without Fundraising lead.

9.5. The news of a significant delay to the Anderton Boat Lift Engineering the Future is having an impact on our pipelines and fundraising plans as this is our most well developed and high-value/high profile project requiring fundraising. We also lose to some extent the opportunity of the 150th anniversary.

10. Trusts, Lotteries & Statutory

10.1. Redacted.

Redacted

Redacted

10.2. Redacted:

- Redacted
- Redacted
- Redacted

11. Philanthropy

- 11.1. Successful high value cultivation event delivered by the Philanthropy team on 4th March at the Bond in Digbeth, Birmingham. The event was hosted by Richard Parry and Chairman David Orr, with special guest speaker Steven Knight, creator of Peaker Blinders and a talk from Henriette Breukelaar with Tahir Parvaz, Amat Saeed and Tom Wilding. The purpose of the event was to cultivate relationships with those who have capacity to give a significant gift to support the work of the Trust and act as a springboard for the Philanthropy & Partnerships team to have conversations after the event. Invitations were sent to warm major donor prospects (cash donors and Friends), cold prospects, trusts and foundations, corporate contacts and key connectors for the Philanthropy & Partnerships team. Members of the Exec team and the West Midlands Regional Director extended invitations to professional contacts. 52 guests attended and we are beginning follow up conversations about supporting the Trust.
- 11.2. VIP hard hat tour at Diglis Island being arranged for eleven high net worth individuals who were unable to attend the Birmingham event but expressed an interest in finding out more about our work.
- 11.3. We are working with the Regional Director, London and South East to plan a joint approach to the London Trustee's reception in June so that we can use this as an opportunity to cultivate high value prospects based in London.
- 11.4. Planning has begun for high value cultivation opportunities around the Anderton 150th anniversary celebration weekend. Through this we have now re engaged with our top individual prospect for the Engineering the Future project.

12. Corporates & People's Postcode Lottery

- 12.1. People's Postcode Lottery £2.5 million B25 grant award confirmed in February.
- 12.2. Expression of Interest submitted to PPL's Postcode Dream Fund £5 million funding opportunity. This is a highly competitive opportunity which will award one £5m grant to an innovative and collaborative new project idea.

We developed a proposal for EcoRestore : Smart Invasive Species Control. Our concept is a 3–5 year programme led by the Trust in partnership with CABl, a well-respected international NGO focused on solving problems in agriculture and the environment. The project aims to address the biodiversity crisis by using cutting-edge biocontrol technology to proactively counteract invasive non-native species (INNS) along the Trust's 2,000-mile blue-green network of canals and waterways. By strategically deploying self-sustaining biocontrol agents in carefully selected locations, the project will strategically manage invasives in a 'smart' way, support native biodiversity, reduce pesticide use and carbon emissions.

Although the chance of success is low with this funding opportunity, we will explore taking this project idea out to other funders, and it's an example of the transformational way we can communicate our work.

A requirement of the Expression of Interest was that we submitted a video outlining the project, this can be viewed below.



12.3. **Redacted:**

Redacted

Maggie Gardner, Fundraising Director, March 2025