



Canal &  
River Trust

Keeping people, nature & history connected

## **NORTH WEST WATERWAY PARTNERSHIP**

### **HYBRID WORKSHOP № 1 & 2 - NOTES**

#### **LANCASTER CANAL**

**How and why do people / communities currently use the canals in each Strategic Character Area?**

- Boating (leisure and business)
- Walking (to work, school, shops, leisure at beauty spots, with dogs)
- Cycling (to work, school, leisure)
- Fishing
- Volunteering
- Events

**What are the most significant issues and barriers facing in each Strategic Character Area?**

- Quality of the moorings – difficult to get in at the side due to the shape of the canal.
- Popularity of 'Honey Pot' moorings, many of the same boat occupy the popular sites all of the time. Overstaying can be an issue. There can be large concentrations of boats between Bilsborrow and Lancaster City Centre.
- Towpath maintenance issues, surface condition. What percentage of the towpath is tarmac or a bound surface?
- Diversity of use can be an issue. For example, conflict can arise between those from boats sitting out on the towpath and cyclists.
- Co-ordination and value of volunteer resources needs focus. Lots of volunteers but it needs some volunteers in different areas with different focus. Maybe too much of the same. Is it being managed correctly?
- There is a perception of it being CRT's responsibility to maintain the canals and people may be reluctant to help as they feel that BW were traditionally well funded by government (tax payers) to do this. Asking for help may seem like a failing on the part of the Trust.
- As the Lancaster Canal's surrounding areas are mainly affluent, it can be difficult to make a case for third party funding. Perception that it is not needed as the areas are wealthy enough. Funding streams more readily available to deprived areas.
- Glasson Dock Management.
- Large distances between settlement areas means that no two areas have particularly strong links.
- Economic climate is restricting the development of canal-side land which means that the Trust does not have as much access to Section 106 or utility agreements as it has done in the past.
- Large dredging and operational costs associated with the Ribble Link.
- Lancaster Canal boaters have a different mind-set to users of the general network which means that customers who visit via the Ribble Link are not always a welcome addition. Lancaster customers enjoyed the exclusivity offered by the fact that it was land-locked before the Ribble Link was developed.

- How do we link the appeal of boating to the rest of the tourism?
- It is felt that the local businesses benefit from the custom that the canal brings but do not give anything back. Businesses such as 'Owd Nells' at Bilsborrow.
- High turnover on some of the boat based businesses on the Lancaster Canal, especially the day boats which seem to change hands a lot.
- Need to find out where the visitors are coming from.
- Lancaster Canal users not used to using locks and visiting Glasson would require the locks to be in good, serviceable and regularly used to create a destination there. Locks need to be made user friendly if Glasson is to be an attraction for boating visitors.

**What are the opportunities and big ideas for increasing use and engagement generate wealth & prosperity from the canals within each Strategic Character Area?**

- The Lancaster Canal is very well supported by volunteer groups – maximise and diversify this.
- Teaming up of volunteer groups in other areas to deliver better diversity.
- As a Trust, we need to communicate the message of 'ownership' through the communities. Make a break from the perception that it is / was BW's responsibility and all government funded.
- Direct volunteer resource towards steady state and business plan to ensure that the resource is making an impact on the company spend. Don't use solely to deal with the 'pretty' jobs which the Trust would not resource internally. Ensure there is some real added value.
- Economic growth in areas such as the Northern Reaches. During the consultation works on the Northern Reaches, there were a few parties who expressed interest in marina developments on the northern section.
- Dukes Theatre is working on schemes tapping into the local communities, schools etc.
- Preston has the Guild Wheel activities which have used the Ribble Link and Southern section of the Lancaster Canal for related activities and events.
- Local authority events can bring betterment schemes for the waterways.
- Local developments can offer funds and betterment opportunities, Section 106 Funds or utility agreements (drainage) from developing sites.
- The Ribble Link is a special feature of the Lancaster Canal which connects the ordinarily land-locked canal to the rest of the network for six months of the year. The operation is crucial.
- There have been some Lancashire Days planned with boat trips along the Lancaster Canal tie in to coach parties promoting the local destinations. These are being marketed in the wider North West and even market towards the cruise customers docking at Liverpool. Barry has the information on this and there is a 'magic mile' marketing document.
- Lots of different kinds of boats in business – hire boats, day boats, restaurant boats, hotel boats. Some of these can be used as part of wider tourism objectives, especially day boats.
- More off-line moorings would be a big advantage.
- Need a "Skipton-style" destination which attracts a diverse range of users. Glasson could be something like this with the right management. Lancaster City Centre also presents the same potential with the Castle and historic city centre appeal. The moorings would need to be hugely improved for this. Barton Grange also suggested.
- Hire boat customers present a good opportunity to recruit 'friends' of Canal & River Trust.
- Need to use the information obtained by the funding drives at Lune and Preston to see what kind of people are donating to the Trust.

- More drives to obtain funding for mutually beneficial schemes similar to the agreement where Tesco fund countryside skills in trade for the removal of trolleys from Trust property.
- Suggested that we could use Preston as a character area to attract new volunteers. Project would be offered as contracts whereby volunteers work towards obtaining skills as an entry into employment scheme. The volunteers can be sources from health referrals and other socially cohesive avenues.

## **GATEWAY TO THE DALES**

### **How and why do people / communities currently use the canals in this Strategic Character Area?**

- Boating (leisure and business). Strong concentration of hire / day boats in the area
- Walking (part of the Pennine Way with many leisure and local beauty spots, going to work, school, shops, and dog walking).
- Cycling (Part of the Pennine Way for leisure, going to work, school, shops etc.)
- Fishing
- Volunteering
- Events
- Ties to local historic rail interest
- Many local attractions bringing non-locals to the area:
  - Skipton Castle
  - Boats
  - Festivals
  - Traditional markets
  - Well publicised walking routes

### **What are the most significant issues and barriers facing in this area?**

- Availability of parking is bad
- Condition of swing bridges is not ideal
- Water supply can be an issue from time to time (suffered during the drought in 2010)
- Asset conditions

### **What are the opportunities and big ideas for increasing use and engagement generate wealth & prosperity from the canals within this Strategic Character Area?**

- General popularity of the area makes it an ideal location to canvass for 'Friends' of the Trust.
- The biggest pull is the experience but we need to find a way for the appeal to widen to the neighbouring towns along the route – the ripple effect. Areas such as Gargrave would be a spot to consider.
- It is a long stretch of canal with no locks, lots of natural beauty and has the highest footfall towpath figures for the NW.
- Identify the failing assets early and make plans to deal with them.
- Use the interest which already exists in the area, such as the railway enthusiasts. Tie themes together as attractions to widen the appeal.
- Lots of coach trips come into the area.
- It is already a strong area for visits and is good general condition. The best option may be to maintain the area to its current standards – light touch approach.

## **LEEDS & LIVERPOOL EAST (LEEDS / BRADFORD)**

### **How and why do people / communities currently use the canals in this Strategic Character Area?**

- Boating (transient leisure and business)
- Walking (to work, school, shops)
- Cycling (to work, school, leisure)
- Fishing
- Volunteering

### **What are the most significant issues and barriers facing in this area?**

- High numbers of locks in a short space. Lots of two and three rises. This brings larger maintenance costs and more intensive management requirements.
- The 'Friends' money is currently directed towards national priorities. Is there any way for sections of the local donations to be re-directed back into that area? Feedback suggests that donors have been happy to give to the Trust overall rather than to the specific appeals which have had more of a regional aim.
- Third Party guides such as the Nichollsons and also Canal & River Trust produced guidance documents suggest that the first five miles coming out of Leeds is not safe to stop. The recommendation is to transit through the area. Perception of safety issues will not encourage visitors to the area. Specifically at Kirkstall and Armley there have been incidents in the past year which are noteworthy. The risks must be mitigated as much as possible and this is currently achieved by having the locks managed closely by teams. However, limited this resource means that free passage is not available through the area and the canal at Newlay to Kirkstall, and Field Locks is locked down between 3:15pm / 4:00pm each day. This does need looking at in some detail to find the right balance for safety and access. Bingley three and five rises are also manned but this is more for water conservation than safety.
- Leeds and surrounding area is of interest to NW and NE partnership boards. Need to consider how one side will impact on the other and ensure that there is joined up thinking.
- Under-represented groups in the area – how can we engage?

### **What are the opportunities and big ideas for increasing use and engagement generate wealth & prosperity from the canals within this Strategic Character Area?**

- Local businesses could get involved with helping to promote the area.
- Create good working relationships with the local authorities and stakeholder groups to tackle issues of crime. It may be that someone else is already leading on some good projects that we can join to address the anti-social element in the area.
- Local developments need to be approached for help with the anti-social issues – open a discourse with others who are developing the area.
- Bradford have been developing tourism marketing materials – is there something that we can do in partnership with them?
- Change perceptions of the canal corridor. Must be viewed like a highway and should not be acceptable to have 'no go' areas which are locked down. Perceptions must be managed.
- Leeds City Centre area has received funding for towpath upgrade works, currently being undertaken by May Gurney – 2 ½ kilometre length between Granary Wharf and Leeds. Value of £350,000. The programme will take 8 weeks and is funded by Sustrans and Leeds City Council - can we do a post project appraisal to see what added value this brings. Is there more engagement?

- Lots of LEP's in the area.
- Towpath upgrade works secured for the World Heritage Site at Saltaire. 600 metres. What other things can we do to maximise this WHS?
- Lots of businesses in the Bradford and Leeds areas to tap into.
- Create links with local residents / faith groups to broaden the appeal of the local waterways.
- Bradford Canal – what happened to this?
  - Westfield Shopping Centre under new management – it may come up in the future
  - Operational issues with the water flow and building over the remainder length
  - Would this be our kind of 'big scheme'?
  - Would Bradford City want it? What is the gain?

## **LEEDS & LIVERPOOL WEST (LIVERPOOL / WIGAN)**

### **LIVERPOOL DOCKS**

**How and why do people / communities currently use the canals in this Strategic Character Area?**

- Boating (leisure and business)
- Walking
- Volunteering
- Events
- Retail – shops / bars and restaurants

**What are the most significant issues and barriers facing in this area?**

- World Heritage Site – lots of restrictions on development
- Canal & River Trust are unknown in the area. It is hugely visited area but no CRT branding in the area. No visible presence.
- Liverpool City Council values the waterspace greatly but views it as their own.
- Local residents have been a barrier to new initiatives in the area.
- Gower Street Estates own the majority of the land in the area along with Liverpool City Council. This makes placing things on the hard standing problematic. Would need their permission to fundraise on the land etc.
- Low income at the site.
- The 'Link' section of the Liverpool Canal Link needs some explanation / interpretation board. People think that it is just a water feature.
- Nothing on the website to detail the Liverpool Docks and what can be found there.
- There is a booking system / assisted passage in place which is a barrier to freedom of cruising. Have raised the bookings from 6 boats per passage to 10 but the swing bridges remain a physical barrier to freedom of movement (specifically Bridge 9 – Hancock's Swing Bridge). Issue with the local authority which imposes the restrictions.
- Diversity of the users – how do we tap into under used areas?
- Cannot walk the entire route of the Liverpool Canal Link.
- Wigan Flight – perception of difficulty of use. Would people pay to use the flight? Would be pay for a pilot service if one were available? Could we produce a data base of 'pilots' for the Wigan Flight to pass to those who feel that they need it? Would it resolve a problem? Maybe survey the issue to gauge the 'need'.
- Leeds & Liverpool Canal does not get the numbers of visitors – why is this? What can be done to encourage use?

## **What are the opportunities and big ideas for increasing use and engagement generate wealth & prosperity from the canals within this Strategic Character Area?**

- World Heritage Site – HLF and other funding streams available.
- Albert Dock is a key destination – massive footfall. Up to 5M visits a year.
- Install branding in the area and increased presence for CRT.
- Liverpool City Council values the waterspace greatly but view it as their own. This means that there is opportunity for partnerships.
- Great opportunities to recruit ‘friends’ as of high footfall and visitor attractions.
- Lots of tourist attractions in the area – Duck, Tate, restaurants, bars and Liverpool One on the doorstep.
- Good local transport links.
- Good parking – chargeable.
- More interest in since the Liverpool Canal Link has been developed.
- Interpretation installation for the Liverpool Canal Link in the centre to let everyone know what it is and who is responsible for it – QR codes for a heritage trail.
- Need to find a better use of the waterspace for a) income and b) animation.
- Liverpool Waterfront Partnership – work with them to understand what we can do to improve tourism. Maybe obtain an interlinking member of the group. Potential for presentation from a member in the future to get an understanding of what they are doing.
- Planning submitted for a wakeboarding venture.
- Pedalo’s on the South Docks.
- Potential for sponsorship of areas on the Docks.
- HCA site behind the arena; blank canvass.
- Develop the website to include details about the Liverpool Docks and what can be found there – maybe install link into the Liverpool Waterfront Website which has lots of detail about the area [www.liverpoolwaterfront.org](http://www.liverpoolwaterfront.org)
- Towpath treks website; pier head through to the old canal.
- Activity days – local stakeholders may be able to help.
- Bridges along the Liverpool Canal Link area could be made fully automated with the timing restrictions installed in the programme for user operation – like Plank Lane Lift Bridge – subject to funding.
- Internet booking process for the Liverpool Canal Link would be good.
- Liverpool Vision – alignment of their priorities with Canal & River Trust
  - Look into a presentation to the group (Green Print for growth)
  - Lots to tap into – good to be at the forefront of the schemes
  - Locally led schemes – fund manager looks at proposals

## **LIVERPOOL TO WIGAN**

### **How and why do people / communities currently use the canals in this Strategic Character Area?**

- Boating (transient leisure and business)
- Walking (to work, school, shops)
- Cycling (to work, school, leisure)
- Fishing
- Volunteering

### **What are the most significant issues and barriers facing in this area?**

- There are lots of physical barriers up against the canal-side through the area – fencing and railings.

- The cultural association of the area – all properties back onto the canal here and littering and fly tipping is an issue.
- Lack of safe moorings and facilities.
- Desirable locations can have restrictions – such as Rufford Old Hall, worried about access by non-fee payers through the land.

**What are the opportunities and big ideas for increasing use and engagement generate wealth & prosperity from the canals within this Strategic Character Area?**

- Where there are proposals which affect CRT it may be better to take a low energy approach and let someone else take the lead. They will need to seek input from CRT anyway and we will be able to ensure we get added value without the need to attend lots of irrelevant meetings – i.e. ‘The Great Park’.
- For new developments, encourage the planners to reduce the amount of high physical barriers adjacent to the canal such as fencing and railings.
- Biennial events have proven to be very successful in the past.
- Sefton Council keen to make the Strand Shopping Centre a destination – re-development of the area pending. They would like some safe moorings as part of this.
- Neighbourhood group in Netherton has been awarded £1M funding grant. They have made a £500.00 donation to canal clean up schemes and also want to run canal-side events.
- Burscough has had recent towpath upgrade works and there seems to be good scope in the area for funding for added value works – West Lancs specifically.
- Burscough is a good area for recruiting ‘friends’ as it has the heritage wharf.
- Rufford Brach, rear of Rufford Old Hall – sustainable route to train stations.
- Scope for reciprocal agreements with local tourist providers like Rimrose Valley.
- Pier to Pier schemes such as Wigan to Southport – Sustrans NCN.
- Looking at ways to sign cycle routes so that they are in-keeping with CRT code of use. Sustrans website may also include different messages for towpath users – more pedestrian friendly / shared use messages.
- What is the situation with Angling on these sections? The majority of the Western section of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal is under lease agreements to local fishing clubs. How can we work with them to increase use?
- Water space strategy for the Wigan Pier Quarter has been commissioned. This will look at the navigation, occupation of office space, refuse availability, secure moorings etc.
- Haigh Hall in Wigan has requested some moorings for visitors which we are looking at installing in the next financial year. They have agreed that the dredging required to facilitate moorings can be left on their land. Wigan Council is also looking at installing interpretation which links the canal to the town centre.
- Is there any potential for the site at Aintree Race Course – can this be used during race time to raise profile / make money?
- What are the social engagement opportunities?