



Caring for our waterways
– how the Trust applies its
finances to benefit boaters

Boater Report 2019



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

canalrivertrust.org.uk

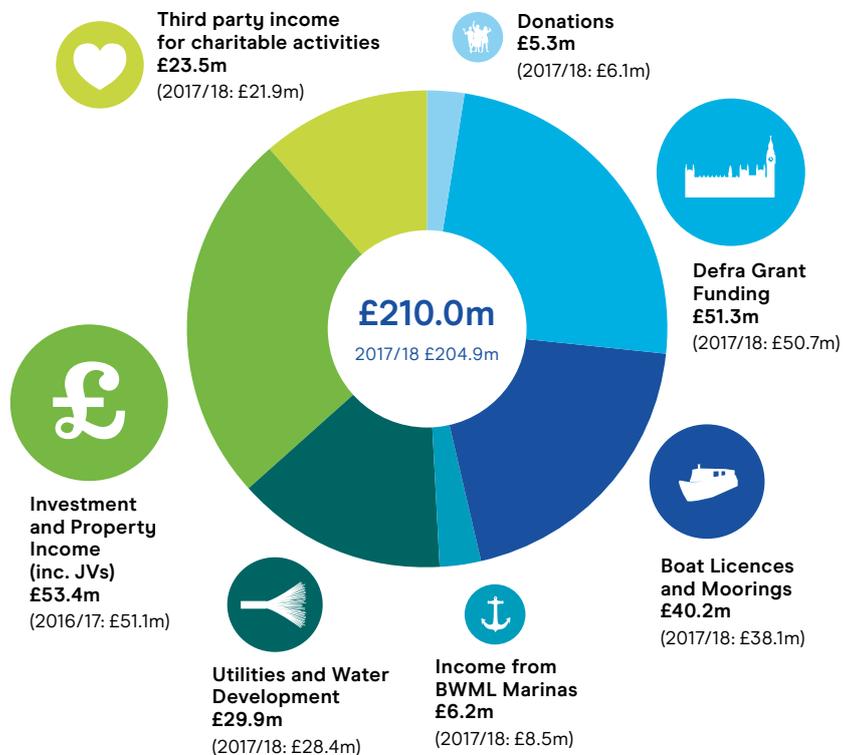
We are the charity that cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England and Wales. Keeping them open for boating is one of our core purposes. Belonging to and shared by us all, millions of people, including almost 35,000 boaters, use and enjoy these waterways every day. We believe canals and rivers have the power to make a real difference to our lives and, the more we use them, the healthier and happier we can feel.

Many different people and organisations make our work possible – fees from boat owners and businesses, our grant from Government, our investment and commercial income, lottery funds, corporate and local authority partnerships, thousands of donations from members of the public, and our dedicated volunteers who gave us over 670,000 hours of their time – we are grateful to them all. Together we are creating living waterways that transform places and enrich lives, delivering greater wellbeing to millions.

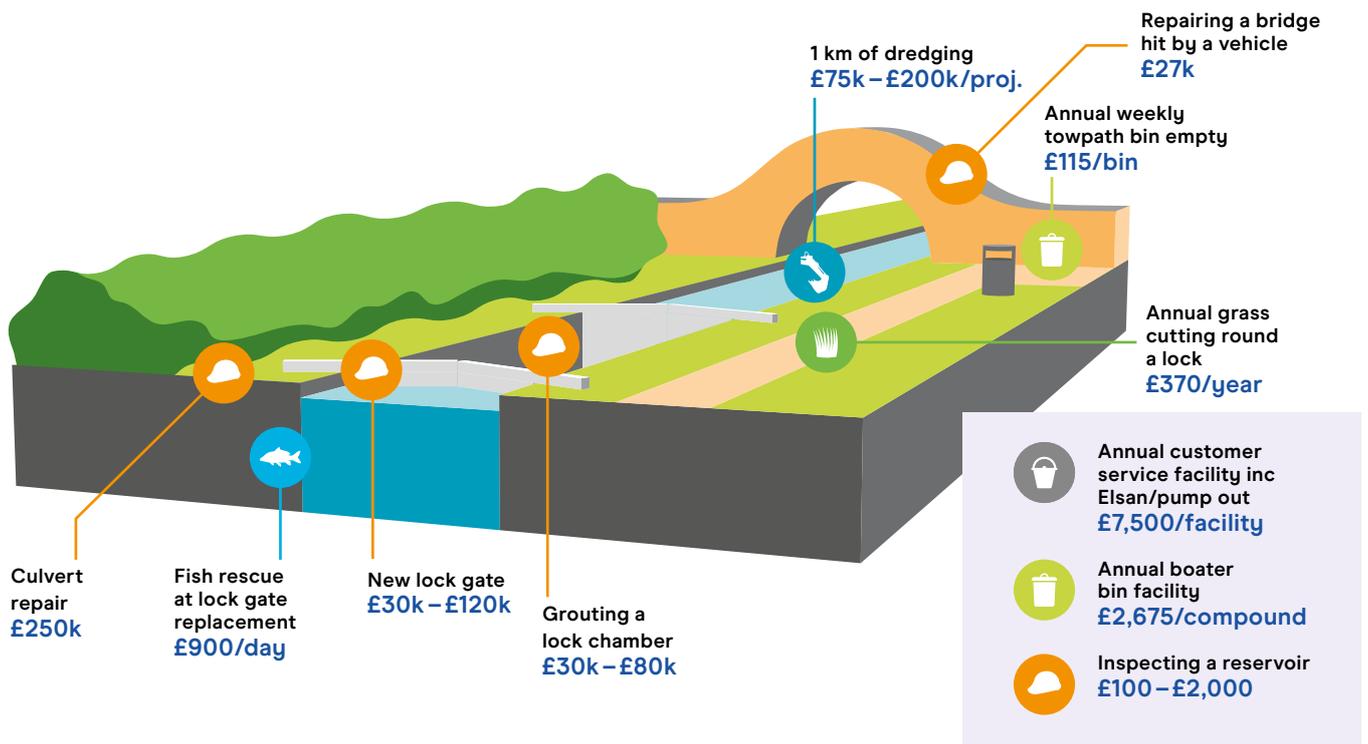
The money we receive from your boat licence forms a vital part of our finances. In 2018/19 private boat licences contributed £21.1 million, around 10% of our total income. Once the money from moorings and boating businesses is included we received £40.2 million – 19% of our total income – directly from boating activities last year.



Income for the last financial year



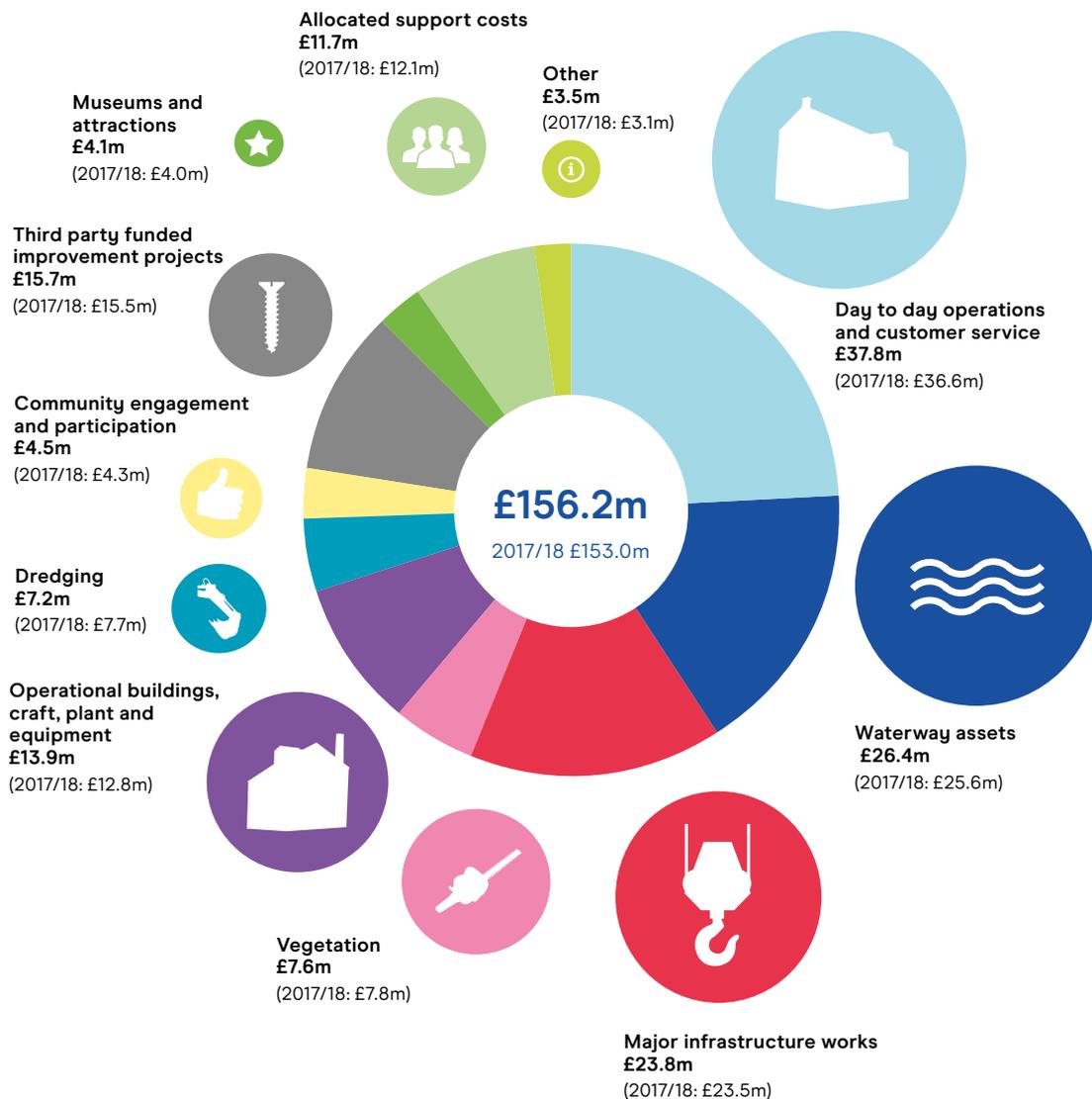
Operating and looking after 2,000 miles of historic canals and rivers, and the wide variety of assets and structures that are integral to them, many of which are over 200 years old, is a costly task. Every year we carry out thousands of jobs, from multimillion-pound projects on reservoirs and embankments to smaller everyday tasks that keep our canals and rivers open for boaters and others to enjoy. Our ambition is to make things better for you and other boaters by focusing on the immediate repairs that most directly affect you whilst still ensuring the waterways' basic infrastructure is in good condition and reducing the number of times a canal is closed unexpectedly because of a structural failure of some sort.



Where does the money go?

Our total expenditure in 2018/19 was £201 million. We spent £156.2 million on our charitable activities, increasing from £153 million in 2017/18. In addition to this we spent £44.8 million on raising income, decreasing from £45.2m despite an increase in income.

Resources expended on charitable activities



We spend the bulk of our funds on operating the waterways and taking care of their infrastructure. In 2018/19 the amount of money that we spent on waterway operation, maintenance and repair rose to £134.7 million from £131.6 million as we completed 130 major projects and our direct services team undertook 800 planned repairs. Through our 224 planned stoppage projects we repaired over 1,000 defects and replaced 137 lock gates. We also undertook the day-to-day running of the network responding to incidents, providing assistance, and keeping water supplies at the right levels, as well as looking after our contracts for managing vegetation

and collecting waste amongst others. This includes an allocation of £10 million related support costs including essential IT systems and the costs of employee training, development and recruitment.

In addition to this, we spent £15.7 million directly on works funded by third-parties (from outside the Trust) to improve the network – the largest category being for towpath re-surfacing, mostly in and around some of the cities that the waterways run through – and £4.1 million in running our museums and attractions. £1.7 million of support costs supported these activities.

Major works, minor works & everyday repairs



117,500

calls received by customer services



130

major works projects



800

planned repairs



Over **1000**
defects repaired



137

lock gates replaced



100,000m³

dredged
(43 Olympic swimming pools)



4,500 miles

grass cut
(2088 football pitches)



86,000

litter and dog bins emptied



27,500

toilet, Elsan and pump out clean-ups



99.04%

flood management assets in A-C grade



1 million

(approx.) fish rescued



87%

assets in A-C grade



Spotlight on: dredging

In 2018/19 we spent £7.2 million dredging around 150km, shifting 100,000m³ in the process.

We aim for two boats to pass with reasonable depth beneath the hull, based on the waterway standards, plus adequate depth at the bank for defined moorings and facilities (as many canals were constructed as shallow dishes this is not always possible).

Our specialist hydrographic survey team carries out a rolling inspection programme covering the whole network roughly every seven years. Combined with customer reports, graded by seriousness and scope of impact, this tells us which sections need attention most urgently.

On parts of the network, such as rivers that silt up after winter flooding, we programme checks on short cycles (1 to 5 years).

The cheapest way to dredge is using an excavator on land to dredge back onto the bank, although a floating team is essential for most sections. We try to combine dredging with the need for bank protection so we can use the dredgings as backfill.

We have some dredging disposal lagoons on our land and can float material to these cheaper options. However, if dredged material is too contaminated or there is no space locally, we take material to landfill. This is the most expensive operation as only a few sites in the country take wet dredgings.

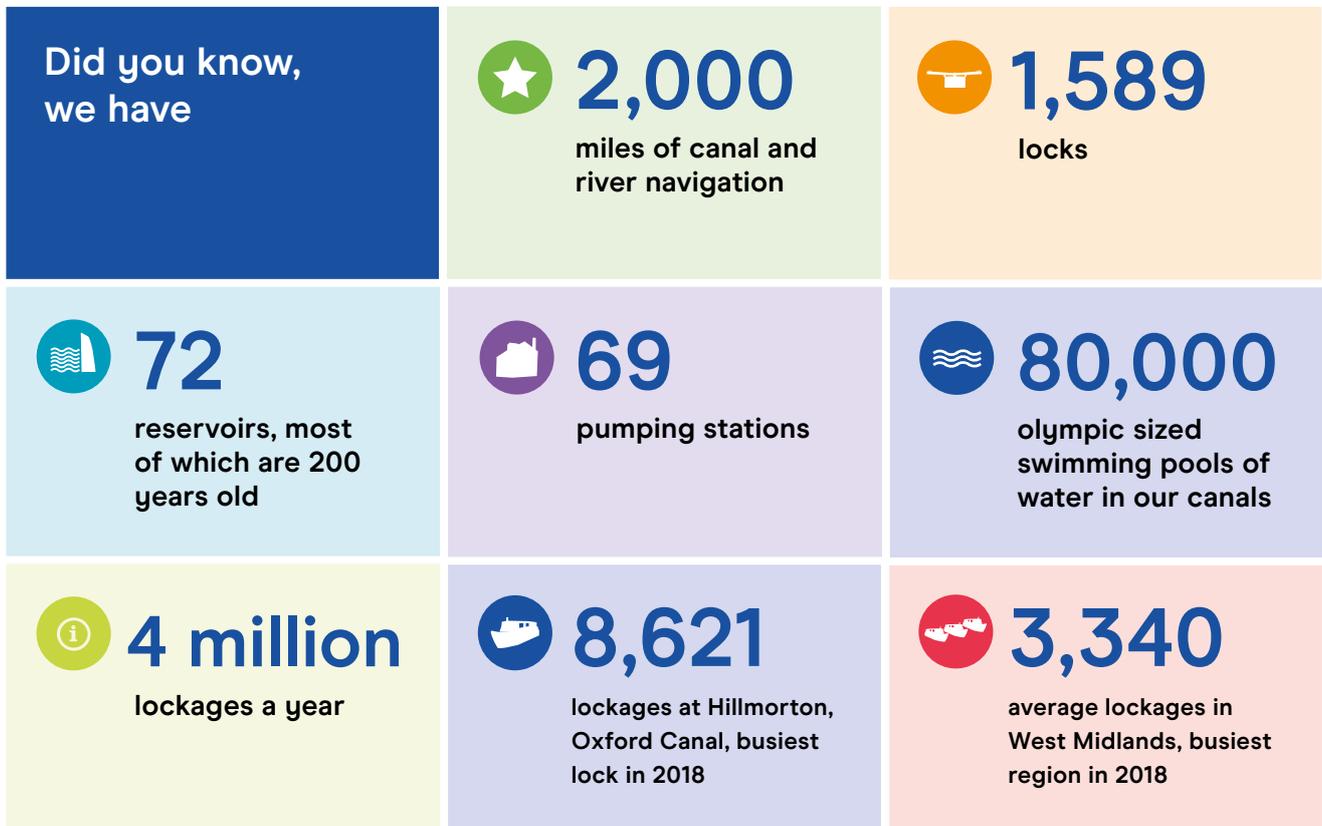
Keeping the waterways flowing

Navigation depends on a reliable water supply and careful management of water levels. Our Water Management team keeps a close eye on things all year round, working closely with operational colleagues.

The changing climate means we may need to get used to more extreme weather conditions. Summer 2018 was the driest on record and yet 90% of our waterways stayed open: this achievement was thanks to everyone working together. It highlights the importance of managing, and investing in, our reservoirs, feeders, pumping stations and water monitoring systems.

When water levels are running low, we take the precaution of closing some locks up at the end of the day to ensure there's no wastage of water.

Every year hundreds of jobs are completed during our winter maintenance programme that contribute to water-saving – last year just under 50 were purely about conserving water. We aim to strike a balance between making the waterways as accessible as possible for boaters and mitigating against future risk. Find out more about water management on our website.



The importance of boat licensing

In March 2019 there were around 35,000 licensed boats on our waterways, with your licence fees contributing to maintaining the waterways for everyone with a boat.

Up-to-date licences are held by 96.5% of boats, meaning unpaid fees would provide around £740,000 in additional income that could be being spent on maintaining our canals and rivers.

The challenge

Our 2,000 miles of navigable canals and rivers include 1,581 locks, 55 tunnels, 2,974 bridges, 278 aqueducts, and 72 reservoirs. It's our challenge and our gift to look after them for the 20 million people living within five miles of a waterway, the four million people using them regularly, and of course the 35,000 boaters like you who cruise and live on them.

Boats and boaters are integral to our canals, a reminder that the original purpose of our waterways was for navigation. We are committed to ensuring you know what is happening on the waterways and looking for new ways to hear from you.

We want you to be involved: become a Friend, volunteer, or simply help to promote our cause and spread the word – tell people about the value of our wonderful waterways and why they should fight for them to stay open for everyone – because they are a vital part of our history and a source of wellbeing today, making life better by water, for boaters and all those who have discovered their local canal towpath.

The Trust's boating team is always happy to hear your views, comments, and suggestions so please do let us know what we can do to make your experience as good as we can, and in turn how you can help us to keep our canals and rivers at their best now and for the future.

Contact us on 0303 040 4040
canalrivertrust.org.uk/contact-us

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All information correct at the time of printing.

Cover Image:

Caen Hill Locks, Devizes

