



Sustainability Statement 2016



Canal &
River Trust



Glandŵr
Cymru

The Canal & River Trust in Wales



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Foreword

Canal & River Trust cares for an extraordinary collection of cultural and natural assets, holding them in trust for the nation.

These assets encompass 2,000 miles of canal, rivers, docks and reservoirs comprising the third largest collection of listed buildings and structures in the UK, some of which fall within five UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We also have 63 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, over 1,000 wildlife conservation sites and the National Waterways Museum collection and archive.

Close to 20 million people visit our waterways every year to use them for boating, canoeing, cycling, walking or quiet contemplation.

We believe these living waterways can and do transform places and enrich lives. In our work we need to carefully balance the needs of those who currently enjoy our network and the demands placed upon it so that it can continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

We want to maintain a sustainable and evolving canal and river network that is recognised as a national treasure; accessible to and cherished by all.

Our approach to sustainability promotes excellence and balance in three key areas; communities; the economy and the environment. It builds upon our Green Plan, first developed in 2010, to reduce our use of natural resources. The Trust was awarded the Carbon Trust Standard in November 2014 which recognized our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint.



While we are proud of the progress we have made so far we are not complacent. We will not only continue to reduce our everyday impact on the environment, including our use of natural resources, but also seek to have a positive impact where practicable. However, the future of the waterways in our care is dependent upon their continued relevance to people's everyday lives and the recognition of their value by the people with whom we work, such as town and country planners, councils, businesses and government at all levels.

The pages that follow show what sustainability means to us and how we aim to achieve it.

Richard Parry
Chief Executive – Canal & River Trust.



Our Vision

Living waterways that transform places and enrich lives.

What sustainability means to us

Canal & River Trust uses sustainable development as a central organising principle in the way we operate and grow. For us sustainable development is where current social, environmental and economic demands are met without compromising the needs of future generations.

It is important to us that these three areas are held in equal importance in our activities and forward planning. With this as a guide we can contribute to place making and the resilience of current and future communities.



Leading by example

As a Trust, we have three overarching sustainability concerns:

1. What is our impact on communities?
2. What is our impact on the environment?
3. How can we responsibly manage our assets to secure our financial future?



Communities

Our waterways' long-term survival will only be secured if communities across England and Wales believe they are relevant to their current and future lives. We undertake a range of activities to promote local community engagement and participation.

Volunteering

We provide a wide range of high quality volunteering opportunities both on the canal banks and in our offices. This gives people a chance to do something positive, meet new friends and learn new skills while benefiting the area in which they live. We believe this both increases the local sense of ownership in their canal, and helps to secure the future of our waterways. By the end of March 2015 volunteers had given 450,000 hours. Our work would not be possible without our fantastic volunteers, who are vitally important to the sustainability of our network.

Adoptions

Waterway adoption schemes have been set up to build on people's desire to make a difference to their local area. It enables a community group or groups to care for a section of their local canal. Typically we ask for a commitment of at least one day a month for 12 months, but we don't ask adoption groups to work alone or to take on jobs normally done by the Trust's professional staff. 120 adoptions had taken place by the end of March 2015.

Education

Through our learning programme we hope to stimulate lifelong engagement with our canals and rivers. The Trust's learning programme, Canal & River Explorers, has been specifically designed to help children discover their local history, geography and wildlife while having fun. Our explorer volunteers have reached over 40,000 children per year.



The Economy

We earn income from the delivery of services and our endowment portfolio, the bulk of which is in property. Capital returns are reinvested to generate future income. We strive to improve public access generating new visits to the water, alongside the promotion of mixed use on the waterside. This supports the maintenance and operation of our waterways and is the foundation for future investment in them ensuring they can be enjoyed by future generations.

Our business planning is long term and we are always looking for innovative ways for waterways to remain relevant anchors for their communities.

Sustainable Employment

To play our part in a sustainable economy, we believe in fair employment and investing in training and education.

Over 1,600 dedicated people work for the Trust in widely varied roles from engineering and ecology to heritage management and property development. In order to ensure our staff can achieve the right work-life balance we offer flexible working arrangements.

We are also committed to the continued training of our staff as well as providing quality training placements in the form of apprenticeships and traineeships.

Diversity and inclusion

Canal & River Trust respects the dignity of all employees. We embrace the unique differences between individuals and aim to create an environment that values and respects the contribution of all.

We aim to have a workforce that represents Britain's diverse population and reflects the local communities in which we operate. We are committed to the principles of equal opportunity and we recognise that embedding diversity and equality is a continuous process requiring constant development and involvement from employees and others we work with.

Natural Resources

At the Trust we continually strive to enhance the natural, built and social environment. We believe our waterways are a unique opportunity to connect people with their history and with nature. Canals and rivers are perfect hubs for sustainable regeneration, with a focus on place making, providing a sanctuary for nature and giving new life to our built heritage.

Our canals and rivers depend on a plentiful supply of water which is likely to be affected both by climate change and increasing demand for other uses. Because of this, we appreciate the importance of safeguarding our natural resources, and using them responsibly and sparingly.

We are particularly proud of our exemplar evidence based decision making on abstraction issues on the River Usk. Achieved in partnership with the Wye and Usk Foundation, Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water and Severn Trent, with Natural Resources Wales as regulator, we were able to agree sustainable abstraction levels which ensured that economic and social needs could be satisfied while improving the conservation status of the river.

Going forward, we will seek to minimise our impact on natural resources by:

- Continuing to maintain and manage our canals and rivers to minimise water use
- Continuing to develop our monitoring systems to give us up to date information about water supplies
- Constantly seeking ways to reduce our use of energy, particularly electricity (for water pumping) and fuel (for our vehicles)
- Developing new sources of green energy, particularly micro generation using hydro power and wind generation
- Preparing, publishing and reporting on the Trust's Green Plan

The Environment

We take our obligation to protect the waterways environment that has been entrusted to us very seriously. In order to achieve this, we focus on the following key areas:

Protect our natural environment – ensure no net loss as a minimum

Our key controls are the application of environmental and heritage appraisals – at least 1,500 appraisals are completed every year for our activities ranging from one off projects to national programmes or generics for routine tasks. These appraisals ensure that our work does not cause excessive, unnecessary damage to the environment.

Many impacts come from third parties, users and neighbours or natural causes – we record over 2,000 environmental incidents every year, mostly invasive plants; fly-tipping; and water pollution. Our role is to help manage incidents in the short term and plan more strategic responses to resolve issues (e.g. following up on those responsible for fly-tipping; helping develop invasive weed plans etc.) and helping recover costs / secure income to meet demands.

We also use an Environmental Performance Indicator to highlight the Trust's performance.

Improve our natural environmental assets

Since becoming a Trust we have been delivering more on enhancement of our environment through our works, waterway volunteering and external funding. Examples include creating new homes for birds, bats and otters; installing reed fringe as bank protection; and improving our hedgerows and other vegetation management.

Some of our environmental value is difficult to preserve because it exists alongside competing uses and changes in activity. To manage this we have been developing our surveys of existing value to assess where improvements are best placed.



The Green Plan

We are committed to reduce our consumption of resources, and to minimize our CO₂ footprint. To turn this commitment into action, our Green Plan is led at Director Level. As a result the Trust was awarded the Carbon Trust Standard, a certification that recognises our achievements to reduce our carbon footprint. The award recognises that we cut our emissions by 13.6 per cent between 2012 and 2014, which is equivalent to an annual reduction of around 3,000 tonnes of CO₂.

Part of our sustainability process is the continuing evolution and development of the Green Plan, to continue to reduce our environmental impact and to make our day-to-

day operations more efficient. The Plan can be adapted on a rolling basis to ensure that our policies remain up-to-date and can learn from best practice in other organisations.

The Green Plan has five key areas:

- Energy reduction
- Vehicle mileage & travel
- Sustainable procurement
- Waste reduction & recycling
- Environment & Public Benefit

Learn more here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/environment/the-green-plan>

Energy Reduction

We have worked with the Carbon Trust to produce a Carbon Management Plan with the ambitious target of reducing our carbon emissions by 25% by 2015 (based on 2009/10 baseline). In 2010 the Trust spent £4.3 million on electricity and £0.2 million on gas. Electricity usage alone led to emissions of around 19,000 tonnes of CO₂. However, we have achieved a reduction in electricity use from 36 GWH to 25.8 GWH between 2010 and 2013/14 and now purchase 100% renewable electricity. The reduction is due in part to the introduction of energy management software and new technology, such as office LED lighting.

Next steps

We will

- Continue to drive down our energy consumption and CO₂ footprint
- Build upon our Carbon Trust standard – ensuring year on year improvement
- Utilise energy management software to direct investment and influence staff understanding and behaviours.
- Explore modern technologies - introducing it where it is practicable and economic to do so and where this complements the unique waterway environment that is within our stewardship.
- Build towards >95% electricity measured by smart meter and >95% gas
- Continue to evolve and invest in modern energy efficient technologies wherever possible

Vehicle Mileage & Travel

We recognise that our complex and geographically diverse operations carry a significant impact and we are committed to reducing our mileage, operating more efficiently and using more efficient and environmentally friendly means of travel wherever we can. We are proud to have reduced car mileage from 5.3m miles in 2010 to 4.7m in 2013 / 14, due in part to our green travel plan which encourages our staff to 'drive less, drive smart'. To build on this success, we have currently capped the CO₂ limits of fleet cars by around 20-25%,

purchased the first electric vans of their type in the UK and buy the greenest, most efficient commercial vehicles wherever possible. We also aim to make 20% of our commercial fleet "electrically powered" within 5 years

However, we do not believe that this alone is enough, so to avoid car transport wherever possible we have introduced wide-spread video-conference facilities and continue to increase our use of public transport as well as promoting walking and cycling.

Renewable Energy

Wind

We currently have one wind turbine operating at Boddington and a further project in Sharpness under construction. Boddington is estimated to generate 1.142 megawatt hours of low carbon electricity per annum (equivalent to average annual consumption of 268 UK homes).

Hydro

We are working with a number of hydro developers to build hydro schemes on our weirs. As well as generating low carbon energy using our assets, we will gain an annual income for the next 40 plus years, plus much needed fish passes. Currently we have one hydro scheme built and two under construction, there are several more sites being progressed at various stages.

Heating & Cooling

We are also promoting the use of our waterway's thermal energy to heat and cool buildings. DECC has included our waterways in their heat map which shows the water sources and their potential to provide heat energy for water source heat pumps. Using the thermal energy for heating and cooling is a low carbon solution which contributes to UK Government targets which aim to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% (from the 1990 baseline) by 2050. We also have a number of other canal cooling/heating projects such as Mailbox in Birmingham and Dollar Bay residential development in Docklands (under construction).



Waste Reduction and Recycling

We are responsible for the disposal of waste from offices, customer service facilities plus construction works and dredging.

We realise that waste management can bring a huge environmental impact and we want to operate more sustainably, plus provide our customers with the means to do the same.

To improve, we are working with staff, contractors and stakeholders to decrease the amount of waste we send to landfill both by minimising the amount of waste we produce and increasing our reuse and recycling.

Our ultimate aim is for 90% diversion from landfill for our customer waste and skip waste streams.

Next steps

We will take forward a three phase improvement plan for waste management during 2015 - 2016. During this period we will seek to achieve certification from the Carbon Trust for waste reduction / waste management to add to our energy certification.

- **Phase 1:** Expand recycling ability / offer at 82 customer waste sites (Summer 2015)
- **Phase 2:** Expand recycling at operational yards and depots (Autumn 15 / Winter 16)
- **Phase 3:** Benchmark waste that is not dealt with via our national contracts and target improvement.