

# Working Together

## Effective Waterways Partnerships



## The Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC)

March 2010



# What is the Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC)?

IWAC is the Inland Waterways Advisory Council. It's a statutory public body providing independent advice to the UK Government, Scottish Government, navigation authorities and other interested parties on all matters it considers appropriate and relevant to Britain's inland waterways.

IWAC was created in April 2007 by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Its predecessor organisation was the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council which was created in 1968. IWAC is supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Scottish Government.

In England and Wales, IWAC's remit covers all of the inland waterways such as:

- canals (including those managed by British Waterways, canal companies, local authorities and smaller independent bodies);
- rivers (including those which are the responsibility of the Environment Agency, British Waterways and port authorities);
- the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads; and
- the navigable drains of the Fens.

In Scotland, IWAC's remit covers inland waterways that are owned or managed by, or which receive technical advice or assistance from, British Waterways.

## What is IWAC's role?

IWAC's role is to ensure that the inland waterways are sustainably developed to meet the needs of all who use and enjoy them. Once used mainly for freight transport, inland waterways now have a strong recreational and amenity use. They are an effective catalyst for the regeneration of local economies, acting as a distinctive focus to bring economic, social and environmental benefits to cities, towns and rural communities.

IWAC has published reports which include: using inland waterways to tackle social exclusion, funding and income sources for a selection of overseas waterways, insights into the funding of inland waterways in Britain, balancing the needs of navigation and aquatic wildlife, awareness and appreciation of the canal network in Scotland, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by moving more freight onto inland waterways.

## More about IWAC

Please visit our website at [www.iwac.org.uk](http://www.iwac.org.uk) for further information on IWAC and to see copies of its reports.

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# Executive Summary

Partnership working is widespread in the context of waterways restoration and operation. This is indicative both of the number of stakeholders, and the desire to bring additional resources to projects. Effective partnerships can add significantly to the sustainability of projects and 'working together' is advocated by UK Government and many public, private and third sector organisations. The Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC) seeks to encourage good partnership working in the waterways setting. We are aware that this position is also shared by the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA).

For a wide variety of reasons, however, not all waterways partnerships thrive. In order to assist all involved with partnerships, this IWAC report "*Working Together – Effective Waterways Partnerships*" seeks to highlight crucial good practice principles by drawing on the experience of five effective partnerships working in England, Scotland and Wales. The resulting guidance will help to reinvigorate those partnerships that are struggling, and will help to set new partnerships along the right road to success.

Following a visit to the Chesterfield Canal Partnership, where a number of 'working together issues' were being effectively addressed, IWAC circulated questionnaires to five effective partnerships of UK significance, to gather information about their purpose, organisation, leadership, membership and the issues faced and lessons learnt. The partnerships were:

- The Chesterfield Canal Partnership
- The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership
- The 'Sobriety' Project Ltd
- The Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership
- Animating the Canal – West Dunbartonshire

Each of the case study partnerships faced similar issues but dealt with them in different ways according to their context and aspirations. The detailed responses from each of these partnerships are reproduced as appendices to this report. IWAC thanks those partnerships that contributed to this study.

IWAC is not advocating any single solution to a particular issue but wishes to indicate a range of effective responses that others may wish to adapt to their own setting. The themes under which the key issues can be grouped are:

- Clarity of Purpose
- Structure
- Strategic Planning
- Finance
- Communication
- Leaders and Champions
- Community Involvement
- Partner Participation

Each theme is explored in turn with general principles. For each, extracts from the case studies are provided as illustration.

The Working Together study has established the following principles which contribute to a successful partnership. They are:

- Effective partnerships are clear about their purpose, whether it be all-encompassing or very specific. Agreement within the partnership about the scope of activity is a key to success. Openness about how this links to each organisation's strategic priorities is also critical.
- Effective partnerships adopt a variety of management structures, ranging from memoranda of understanding and constitutions to legally binding agreements, depending on circumstance. If the success of the partnership is dependent on partners' commitment of significant and financial resources then a formal, legally binding partnership agreement would be appropriate and justified.
- The strategic plan for the partnership is the road map of where it is going and how it is going to get there. The case studies reflect anxiety about resources and where they are to come from. Through having a strategic plan, these issues can be addressed positively and up front. Where a partnership's aims are broad, the strategic plan helps to specify the links between each strand and allows for progress on several fronts concurrently.

# Executive Summary

- The search for funding for a project often leads to the formation of partnerships in the first place. Organisations working together do provide synergy and can be more effective at achieving financial security. Particular issues faced are related to capital funding, meeting funder's expectations, generating match funding, maintenance funding for restoration projects and meeting core costs. Some of the partnerships have developed effective ways of overcoming these financial problems.
- In a partnership involving many organisations and many levels of management, effective communication is the lifeblood of the venture. Meaningful two-way communication within and between partner organisations, with business and the local community, are also recognised as crucial by the successful partnerships. Communications issues are addressed by the case study partnerships in a variety of ways and recommendations are given for ensuring clarity over decision making, management information systems and external promotion.
- Successful partnerships have a leader whose roles and responsibilities are clear and who directs activity effectively. The lead role can successfully rotate between organisations or may be fixed depending on circumstance. Perhaps more critical is the choice of the individual to be the partnership leader. Risks arise when the nominated leader does not have the necessary 'flair', or has insufficient empathy with the constraints on other partners.
- Involving the local community, through consultations and celebration, and even through full membership within the partnership, is seen as a key to success by several of the case study projects. Indeed, in some cases, the aspirations of the partnership were first provided by the community. Partnerships that treat all members with respect and equality, recognising the skills brought by all partners are likely to make more lasting progress.
- The level and type of partner participation is crucial to success. The case study partnerships recognise that each of the partner representatives needs to act as a champion for the partnership within their own organisation. They need to have the authority to be able to communicate issues and decisions back to their own organisations and to accurately reflect their organisation's own interests to the other partners. A number of issues are raised linked to partner motivation and capacity.

In conclusion, the following summary guidance is given:

- Seek **clarity and consensus** in defining your purpose
- Agree an **appropriate structure** at the outset
- **Plan** appropriately what you propose to do
- Agree a **strategic plan** as part of 'signing up to' your partnership
- Take all possible steps, even small ones, to **reduce the risk of future financial uncertainty**
- **Communicate effectively** at all levels and with all stakeholders – make it a priority
- Recognise the need for both champions and conciliators within the **leadership** of the partnership
- **Involve the local community**
- Be **clear about partners' roles** and be open and **honest about problems**
- Be **committed** to deliver the benefits which you envisaged at the outset
- Adopt a **'can-do' attitude** and stick with it

IWAC is eager to disseminate Working Together widely and to add to the number of case studies of effective partnerships for waterway projects of all sizes. IWAC would welcome AINA's active involvement to facilitate this process.

# Introducing Waterways Partnerships



Organisations working together to achieve shared goals is not new. From informal collaborative working to detailed contractual arrangements with clearly defined risks accounted for, the waterways renaissance is being achieved through the combined efforts of many different players, often working together on site specific projects or towards a shared vision. Many waterways projects have multiple stakeholders, and the effectiveness with which these different organisations work together has a significant impact on the rate of progress and the value of final outcomes.

Advocates of partnership working argue that working collaboratively is the best way to get sustainable results that benefit communities, the environment and the economy. Effective partnerships bring additional skills and resources, increased credibility and demand for schemes, more funding opportunities, and a broader range of outcomes that satisfy more stakeholders.

UK Government and Scottish Government policy encourage joined up thinking within and between public sector organisations to encourage all activities to meet a variety of public benefit outcomes. The Governments' support is being given to the many projects that are being developed by two or more of the public, private and third sectors. Regionally and locally, public sector organisations are becoming accustomed to working together to deliver Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets, Local Area Agreement requirements and Community Strategy outcomes.

In the waterways context, the Inter-Departmental Group for Inland Waterways in England and Wales was formed in 2008 to encourage all UK Government Departments to recognise the value of the waterways and to become more involved. Although Defra is the lead department for inland waterways, the Benefits of Inland Waterways research, currently being undertaken for Defra, highlights the many

# Introducing Waterways Partnerships

potential benefits of the waterways across several departments. Departments working together effectively and with regional public sector organisations and local waterway stakeholders will enhance the capacity to generate and sustain these benefits right across the UK.

AINA has recently published *'Harnessing the Potential of the Waterways: Bringing Benefits Back to Navigation Authorities'*. This highlights many practical and cost-effective schemes by which navigation authorities have worked, sometimes in partnership with others to generate income and achieve growth. This document complements previous AINA material and guidance which is designed to attract visitors and encourage them to make more of the waterways. The River Thames Alliance, led by the Environment Agency, is cited as a case study of many organisations working together in a particularly complex and high profile waterway environment.

IWAC's 2006 report *'Just Add Water'* offers an achievable model of regeneration-focused 'waterway hubs' in more local contexts where individuals, businesses and organisations work together towards a shared vision for a locality to provide a variety of community benefits. IWAC's 2008 short report *'Using Inland Waterways to Combat the Effects of Social Exclusion'* takes partnership working further by highlighting the life changing impacts achievable by bringing together novel partners such as waterways museum managers and prison services.

Improving the accessibility of the waterways to the communities through which they pass is an important aim for waterway managers. Accessing and understanding the needs of those communities is the core business of the local authorities. The need for waterway managers to be more active in forming partnerships with local authorities is increasingly recognised, for example at the AINA 2008 conference.

Even interests that may seem difficult to reconcile, such as nature conservation and navigation on inland waterways can achieve mutual added value where the essentials of good partnership working are integral to the scheme from the outset. IWAC's *'Balancing the Needs of Navigation and Aquatic Wildlife'* gives good practice in consultation and partnership working as key prerequisites to achieving shared benefits and reducing conflicts between different interests.

Yet despite partnership working being so important to achieving positive outcomes, there are many organisations whose structure, working practices and ethos make them ill-prepared to enter into and sustain the partnerships from which they would benefit. Procurement practices, resource focus and even marketing strategies can all be disincentives to partnership working. In many large organisations the 'silo mentality' of skills, function specialisation, and target specific productivity pressures make cross fertilisation of ideas, and the development of collaborative projects, less likely.

Not all organisations have readily available human resource skills that assist partnership working. An organisation used to working in isolation may not have developed the skills that are essential. These are the ability to 'put oneself in another person's shoes', to compromise, to think clearly and creatively, to negotiate and to address risk, to take account of issues that may lie outside one's professional comfort zone and, above all, to combine patience and determination.

For some organisations and projects the rewards of partnership working justify the effort many times over. For many, partnership working is the 'way of choice' to achieve both quality outcomes and sustainability. In some situations, however, partnership working is an uphill struggle from the outset.

This Report does not repeat the sort of generalised advice that can be found by a search on the internet. IWAC's advice derives directly from examples of successful partnerships in the waterways sector.

# Scope of this Report

This report explores the characteristics of some successful waterway partnerships and seeks to identify what makes them effective. By sharing good practice, IWAC seeks to ensure that more organisations will be able to enter into partnership working with confidence, with an awareness of the potential pitfalls and with ideas of how to overcome the potential difficulties whilst taking advantage of the benefits of working together.

There are many examples of partnerships that 'survive' rather than 'thrive'. This report is in part addressed to the people who work within these 'just surviving' partnerships. The examples given are intended to inspire a renewed look at protocols and practice which can result in steps towards improved effectiveness and increased outcomes.

In particular, *Working Together* seeks to highlight the potential to engage with a wider set of partners, and even with 'novel' partners, whose main agenda may not be the restoration or upkeep of an inland navigation itself. If the interests of another party can be achieved through the process of project implementation, or from the after-use of a completed scheme, then they are potential partners.

Recognising the links between organisations will require the celebration of success and other awareness-raising activities. There is a need for support, in particular, from local authorities, the Local Government Association, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Welsh Local Government Association, Regional Development Agencies, development bodies, the voluntary sector, and the Inter Departmental Group for Inland Waterways in England and Wales.

Collaboration between organisations takes many shapes. At one end there are client and contractor relationships based on financial agreements. In contrast, organisations may choose to work together informally without obligation or commitment. Or one organisation may consult others on a project it intends to implement. This Report focuses on those partnerships where:

- There is a financial relationship but not a tendered contract
- The partners seek out a shared agenda
- The partners have a mutual need for each other's skills
- The partners recognise each other as stakeholders
- The agenda is likely to be delivered over quite a long period

# How this Study Came About



## The origins of 'Working Together'

In the summer of 2008, IWAC visited the Chesterfield Canal Partnership. During the visit, it emerged that one of the keys to the success of this restoration and development project was that the partnership which had been created to carry out the developments was working so well.

IWAC decided to describe the characteristics and experience of successful partnerships to organisations who may be considering setting up a partnership and to organisations who had already set up partnerships but for whom partnership working was proving less effective than anticipated.

## The nature of this report

IWAC recognises that each potential or actual partnership will have its own characteristics which will have to be reflected in the formation and running of the partnership arrangement. IWAC seeks to communicate what has worked elsewhere including some of the difficulties which have been experienced and how they have been overcome. It is up to the reader of this report to select what would be relevant to their own particular situation.

## The Methodology Adopted

Five partnerships were identified for detailed scrutiny:

- The Chesterfield Canal Partnership
- The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership
- The 'Sobriety' Project Ltd
- The Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership
- Animating the Canal – West Dunbartonshire Council

A pro forma questionnaire was prepared and a representative of each partnership team was asked to complete the information requested.

The information included:

- The project title
- A brief description of the project
- A brief description of the partnership covering the following specific questions:
  - What is the purpose of the partnership?
  - How are the activities/objectives/priorities of the partnership chosen?
  - Is the partnership formalised through a legal agreement?
- The key members of the partnership, with an indication of the basis of their membership e.g. short or long term
- A brief description of the leadership arrangements covering questions such as:
  - Who is the lead partner (if there is one)?
  - How was the lead partner chosen?
  - What is the role of the partnership leader?
- A brief description of how the partnership was created
- A brief description of the key contribution of each member of the partnership
- The top three issues which have had to be addressed and managed in order to create a successful partnership
- The key lessons to be learned from this partnership
- The key generic lessons for a successful partnership

The five case studies reproduced in the Appendix at the end of this report were prepared by individuals with first-hand knowledge of their particular partnership. IWAC is grateful to these individuals for their time and effort. The case studies understandably vary in style and depth of response, and IWAC has presented the reports as they were produced to illustrate the differences in aim and approach.

From the information provided, IWAC has summarised the common characteristics of these effective waterways partnerships and the principal issues faced and lessons learnt from these studies. The findings are presented in the next section.

# The Findings

## Introduction

The following paragraphs attempt to draw out the generic points which are reflected in the case studies. They are described as factual descriptions of the case studies or as either 'issues that had to be addressed' in order to ensure success, and/or as 'lessons learnt'. The key points for all the information are listed together under the following themes:

- Clarity of Purpose
- Structure
- Strategic Planning
- Finance
- Communication
- Leaders and Champions
- Community Involvement
- Partner Participation

For each theme we have indicated how the successful partnerships address these matters. This is through a generalised commentary drawn from the responses as a whole. Pertinent extracts from the completed questionnaires are included and credited to the relevant partnership.

## Clarity of Purpose

The case study partnerships are all clear about their purpose and that this is one of the keys to their success. Purposes vary. For example, the Chesterfield Canal Partnership has explicit aims that the partners aspire to collectively. In contrast, the Sobriety Project forms partnerships around specific projects with discreet funding and outputs which support an overriding social objective, not even essentially linked to the waterways but, in this case, to the community regeneration agenda. The Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership's aims are focused on achieving the activities needed to deliver an implicit shared agenda which has been established over many years. These priorities are chosen by consensus by the partners and are subject to review.

For new partnerships clarity should be sought regarding what the partnership is all about, how it is going to

achieve its ambitions and what resources and efforts will be required to make it succeed. These issues should be brought together in a strategic plan. If the issue of 'reason to be there' is addressed honestly and openly by all potential partners, relevant stakeholders can be engaged and trouble down the line will be minimised.

By way of general guidance, IWAC suggests that in bringing together a group of individuals or organisations the following questions need to be asked, answered, and agreed:

- Why are we considering forming a partnership?
- What issue is the partnership seeking to address or, more positively, what opportunity is the partnership wishing to take advantage of?
- How do the partnership's plans and objectives match within the wider economic and social context in the area in which the partnership will operate?
- How have the individual members of the partnership come together?
- Are all members relevant and necessary for the partnership to succeed?
- What are the hopes and aspirations of individual partnership members for the partnership as a whole?
- In broad terms, how are the resources (both physical and financial) to be provided and, in this context, does each partnership member understand what will be expected of them and/or their organisation?

In the early days of forming a partnership, the bringing together of the responses to these issues into some Memorandum of Understanding will quickly and effectively demonstrate whether the proposed partnership will actually work when the pressure is on.

Honesty is key. Openness about possible conflicts of interest or divergences from the consensus is vital. The partnership will flounder if any of its constituent parts are not willing to share with their colleagues what their fundamental purpose actually is.

IWAC does not seek to recommend any particular approach. We would, however, strongly suggest that where different bodies are involved in a project, the

approach to working together is clearly established at the outset: whether it be a formal or an informal arrangement and whether it is a long term partnership or a 'do it and disband' relationship. Grudging acquiescence is not enough. The approach adopted must be agreed positively by all involved.

The following extracts from the case studies illustrate the clarity of purpose achieved in each, even though they are described in very different ways.

**The purpose of the Sobriety Project is given as:**

*Generally to deliver 'bottom rung of the ladder' outcomes – preparing young people for work, returning them to formal education, giving them experience of work.*



# The Findings

## The purpose of the Chesterfield Canal Partnership is given as:

**Aim 1:** To restore the Chesterfield Canal to full navigation using, wherever possible, the historic route.

**Aim 2:** To explore the potential to create and develop a new navigable link between the Chesterfield Canal and the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation.

**Aim 3:** To protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built heritage of the canal.

**Aim 4:** To improve and widen all forms of public access to the canal.

**Aim 5:** To promote the sustainable economic and social regeneration of the Chesterfield Canal corridor in order to improve the quality of life in the surrounding communities.

## The purpose of the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership is given as:

- The Maintenance Agreements – this requires a regular reporting regime.
- The Conservation Plan – this provides the policy framework to guide the conservation and sustainable management of the waterway. All parties signed up to it.
- The Public Transport and Visitor Management Strategy is one important appendix to the Conservation Plan – this provides a series of strategic recommendations on monitoring and review. These have informed the suggestions below:
- Funding issues – the present budgetary and organisational changes within the Environment Agency and British Waterways will change many assumptions and projections of development and finance.
- Reclassification of the Waterway as a Cruiseway – this issue has risen and fallen over the years. It is proposed that within the present climate the importance of reclassification should be discussed.

## Structure

From the case studies we see that both formal and informal structures can work. This reaffirms that local circumstances should prevail.

Where a partnership has considerable financial activity, then a legally binding structure is very probably required, such as the Monmouth and Brecon Canal Partnership adopted for its Heritage Lottery Fund project. A Memorandum of Understanding with a separate constitution which falls short of a legally binding partnership can be useful where the aims are long term and wide ranging, and where financial responsibility for projects lies with individual partners.

The Chesterfield Canal Partnership has an advisory partnership structure which avoids partners feeling coerced into action or agreement by other partners.

Officers only take to the partnership matters which they are confident will be acceptable to their own organisations. Rather than stagnating partnership activity, this mechanism ensures that detailed consideration is given to implementation and capacity issues before proposals are presented formally.

Whether the partnership is legally formalised or not, there is clear evidence that the basis of the partnership has to be recorded in some form. Such a written statement is essential to ensure that there is transparency of purpose and agreement on procedure between all of the parties involved. The partnership 'Animating the Canal' in West Dunbartonshire does not have a partnership agreement but partners are united by a comprehensive development strategy. Where the partnership requires more than agreement on purpose

and procedure and where it requires actual commitment of resources – both physical and financial – we believe that greater formality would be beneficial.

Many new ventures set out with great goodwill and great enthusiasm. When things go well that spirit of enthusiasm prevails and is effective. However, at some stage, most projects hit more difficult times and that is when participants tend to refer back to the original governance documents. Where the basis of the partnership is well described and perhaps grounded in law, issues seem to be more easily resolved. Where the basis of the partnership is less clear and less formally established, resolution is often more difficult and, usually, more costly.

Even with a formal safety net in place, resolving issues is often best achieved at an earlier stage by personal communication skills. Several of the case study partnerships refer to the importance of being able to

understand and empathise with the different issues, priorities and problems of each partner and to the need for patience with different organisations' operating cultures. Having people on board with good negotiation and conciliation skills seems as every bit as important as having inspired and dynamic leadership.

It is our view, therefore, that where a proposed partnership is confined to general cooperation over a project not involving significant commitments of resources then a strategy or Memorandum of Understanding approach may well be appropriate. If, however, the success of the partnership is dependent on partners' commitment of significant resources we would be of the view that cost and effort of establishing a formal, legally binding partnership agreement is appropriate and justified in the longer term.

Extracts from the case studies illustrate the points made above.

**The structure of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership is described as follows:**

*During the development of our Living Landscapes Lottery Bid a more formal decision-making structure was proposed based on our current model, but with decision-making powers given to the Core group. This was formalised through a legal agreement.*

**The structure of the Chesterfield Canal Partnership is described as follows:**

*There is a Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution signed by all partners, and approved through each partners' own decision-making process. The Partnership is only 'advisory' so all decisions must go through to each partner. Senior executives and elected Members sit on the Executive Steering Group. Temporary sub groups are set up for issues and site specific work as required. Derbyshire County Council's financial regulations are used as it hosts the staff and holds the partnership budget.*

**The structure of Animating the Canal – West Dunbartonshire is described as follows:**

*The actions for the partnership were identified in a 2005 study 'Animating the Canal' and then the working group identified its priorities from these actions based on the outcome of previous community consultation by two of the partners. The partnership then decided which of the partners would lead on each priority.*

# The Findings



## Strategic Planning

The importance and value of having a practical development and implementation plan for the partnership cannot be overstated and is apparent in all the successful partnerships.

The strategic plan for the partnership is the road map of where it is going and how it is going to get there. The case studies do reflect anxiety about resources and where they are to come from. By adopting a pragmatic approach to strategic planning, these issues can be addressed positively and at the correct stage in the process i.e. up front. Where a partnership's aims are broad the strategic plan helps to specify the links between each strand and allows for progress on several fronts concurrently.

Among the case studies, informal partnerships were formed before a strategy was written in several instances.

For the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership (see box in Clarity of Purpose) the Conservation Strategy – which overarches other strategies – was formalised in a funding application. Often several months of negotiation take place before certainty over aims can be confirmed, for example in the Sobriety Project and its public sector partners. This approach allows all stakeholders to be engaged and to input ideas and resource into the strategy.

A partnership should only be ratified or formalised once a strategic plan has been prepared and agreed by all partners. It should be a key precursor to agreeing a partnership not a first task for a newly formed formal partnership. Potential partners should recognise that they should not formalise a partnership until they have agreed on a strategic plan in appropriate detail.

We use the word 'appropriate' because each partnership will have different requirements, hence the need for different levels of detail will be determined by the local circumstances. A strategic plan should, however, cover the following topics as a minimum:

- Purpose and Objectives (as discussed above)
- Physical plans/need for technical studies
- Planning issues/strategic context
- Delivery options
- Project control and Management plans
- Financial plans
- Approval and control
- Statement of outcomes and benefits

A strategic plan is a live document not something that, once prepared, is put on the shelf and is forgotten about. It is essential for a number of reasons:

- It spells out the why, what and how of the partnership
- It is the key document for obtaining the positive support of all key stakeholders
- It is the justification for the investment of resources

In major restoration projects, for example, the strategic plan will – inter alia – identify each of the studies needed to assess feasibility and design details, even where timescales for the projects are hard to determine. Some of these studies will be critical in providing credibility for the partnership's aim. The strategic plan 'umbrella' gives a context for prioritising activity of the partnership.

Finally, the strategic plan is the basis for assessing progress throughout the life of the partnership. It will need updating at key points. Any revisions will require stakeholder support. Updating the strategy also gives an opportunity to celebrate the successes and progress towards shared goals.

These principles are well illustrated in the following case study extracts:

**One of the key generic lessons of good partnership working cited by Animating the Canal – West Dunbartonshire is:**

*It is essential for the lead partner to have a **clear strategic overview** in order to be able to make informed decisions that will prevent the partnership from straying from its path.*

**The Sobriety Project described how the partnerships were formed as follows:**

*The partnerships are formed, in each case, by hard work over many months!*

*The first stage is to be seen to be doing the work effectively and to draw attention to it as a possible way of meeting the expressed requirements of the commissioner or purchaser. Waterway-related activities are simply part of the process of delivery. There are countless other ways of achieving the same outcomes but we believe that the waterways are a good resource for this kind of work.*

*Second stage may be tendering or, at very least, putting forward formal proposals delivery of targets and outcomes.*

*In some cases, for example East Riding of Yorkshire Council Youth Offending Team, the lead partner has to report to several standing committees: e.g. Youth Justice Board, Crime Concern, Virtual Integrated Management Team.*

**The Chesterfield Canal Partnership chooses its priorities for action in the following way:**

*Through an adopted Restoration and Development Strategy, Access Strategy and Communications Strategy, which guide an annually updated rolling work programme. This is devised by the Officers Working Group and approved and monitored by the Executive Steering Group. It is sufficiently flexible to allow new opportunities to be grasped.*

# The Findings

## Finance



Clarity about financial issues is essential for success. Lack of funding for a project often leads to the formation of the partnership in the first place. Organisations working together do provide synergy and can be more effective fundraisers. Indeed for some funders, evidence of partnership working is essential. However, having an eye to a partnership's finances is, unsurprisingly, crucial throughout its life. In particular, the case study partnerships described the need to work towards financial sustainability for newly restored or developed areas.

Other important factors include:

- Reassuring partners that major capital works will be funded, including from external sources
- Ensuring that activities are closely aligned with the expectations of funders
- Engaging all partners in raising the resources needed as match funding for external grants, (e.g. volunteer hours, in kind officer contributions, land values etc.)

Some of the partnerships have developed effective ways of overcoming these problems that are linked to financial insecurity. In particular:

- Making it explicitly clear in partnerships agreements and publicity material where most funding is expected to come from
- Integrating future economic activity into restoration projects that will give a return to the managers of the waterway, so that long term funding for maintenance is secured
- Forming a Partnership whose role is only advisory so 'anxious' partners can be re-assured that they will not be pushed into financial commitments that they are unwilling/unable to make
- Fully engaging with voluntary sector partners and communities to increase the potential for external funding and to generate in kind contributions

- Celebrating the ways in which the partnership addresses each of the key stakeholders' core activities and giving due recognition to key funders
- Operating with a very lean core structure so that value for money is assured and activity closely follows funders' requirements
- Developing an exit strategy for partners, such as the development of a Community Interest Company, to provide a clear future maintenance arrangement

Not all of these strategies for reducing financial uncertainty will be relevant to any one particular situation but all partnerships should address the long term implications of the work they propose and ensure that the issues of long term financial risk are transparent and are being addressed as a priority.

Some illustrations from the case studies support these points.

**In describing the project which is the focus of Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership the following is stated:**

*After the Royal Reopening in 1990, the task then was the ongoing maintenance and the work still required to be costed, funded and undertaken. The Water Appeal for £1.8 million was the next big task and then, of course, the Heritage Lottery Grant. This Grant was awarded to the partnership, not British Waterways or The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust. Indeed the partnership oversaw the project as it progressed.*

**For the Kennet and Avon, financial concerns were two of the three main issues faced by the partnership.**

*Issue 1: Insufficient finance to secure the canal's sustainability*

*Issue 2: Who leads and champions*

*Issue 3: Negotiations as to the financing of the canal's maintenance*

**For the Sobriety Project, one of the key contributions of each member of the partnership is financial:**

*Coalfields Regeneration Trust: £180,000 over two years*

*East Riding Adult Services: £7,000 p.a.*

*East Riding Youth Offending Team: £147,000 over three years*

*Vermuyden School: £21,000 p.a.*

*Her Majesty's Prison Moorland (Open): £90,000 p.a.*

**For the Chesterfield Canal Partnership, partner anxiety over finance is the first of the three main issues faced.**

*Issue 1: Anxiety by Local Authority members that membership necessarily means funding capital restoration works.*

*This is managed by:*

- *advisory status for the partnership so cannot dictate actions/decisions to the partners*
- *making external funding expectations explicit in literature*
- *acceptance of different abilities to pay/spend*
- *developing an exit strategy by setting up Community Interest Company to provide long term maintenance resources*

# The Findings

## Communication



Good communication is essential to achieve and then maintain effective partnership working. In any one individual organisation effective communication is essential. In a partnership, however, involving many organisations and many levels of management, effective

communication is the lifeblood of the venture. Meaningful two-way communication with business and the local resident community is also recognised as crucial by the successful partnerships.

Communications issues are addressed by the case study partnerships in the following ways:

- Developing clear roles and responsibilities and feedback mechanisms from the outset
- Developing and adopting a formal Communications Strategy, for both partners and external stakeholders
- Holding regular meetings with project managers, working group members and contractors on site
- Nominating an individual to oversee communication roles across the partnership
- Nominating project leaders for contracted works so that any issues can be immediately and consistently addressed
- Investing in high quality promotional material to communicate the vision and spread the word about progress
- Enter awards to obtain recognition of success and to raise morale
- Undertake small scale works whilst large schemes are in their development phase to maintain community belief in the project

IWAC suggests that the following approach should be adopted to ensure that there is effective communication throughout the partnership and throughout its constituent partner organisations:

- Clearly defined levels of delegated authority:
  - Who is entitled to decide what?
  - Who needs to be informed about what?
  - What are the procedures to obtain the necessary authority when aspects of the project diversify from the agreed plan?
- Efficient management information systems which:
  - Provide accurate and timely information about all key aspects of the project
  - Are available at the appropriate level of detail for all key participants in the project
- Agreement by all parties about how decisions can be taken out with the normal management systems (e.g. the regular partnership meetings)
- Effective methods of keeping all parties informed on a regular and timely basis

**For Animating the Canal – West Dunbartonshire, communication is one of the issues faced.**

*Issue:* Constant communication between partners, especially through regular working group meetings. This was managed by the lead partner, who was also required to act as overseer of all the other partners' roles.

**For the Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership, two of the main lessons learnt by the partnership relate to communication**

*Lesson:* To communicate and champion the purposes.

*Lesson:* To work from good information.

**The Chesterfield Canal Partnership recognises the importance of good external communication and cites this as one of three lessons learnt.**

*Lesson:* Invest in high quality promotion to communicate the vision and spread the word about progress. Enter awards to get recognition of successes and raise morale. Get a groundswell of public opinion to support the project.

Information and how it is communicated is often seen as an add-on to management which should not unreasonably interfere with 'getting on with the job'. In the successful case study partnerships as illustrated below, effective communication is seen as the lifeblood

of how the partnership works. Keeping the information flowing effectively is seen as a must for success. Communication issues are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are addressed and resolved without impacting on the successful progress of the partnership.

# The Findings

## Leaders and Champions

Closely linked to good communication is the need from the outset for a partnership initiator. This is someone who is a capable and enthusiastic motivator and who can galvanise others into action. Partnerships will rarely progress beyond the good idea stage unless there is a committed and inspiring champion.



Successful partnerships have a leader whose roles and responsibilities are clear and who effectively directs activity. Consensus on strategic direction is vital but the day-to-day driving of the successful partnerships cannot be undertaken by committee. Rapid decisions may need to be made and communicated later. One individual, often with the support of a core group, usually takes the lead.

In most situations it will be obvious which organisation should supply the leadership role. It is often a local authority or statutory organisation, but it need not be so. Positive agreement by all participants, including minority players, is essential.

The case studies show that the lead role can successfully rotate between organisations, either annually (Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership) or after an agreed number of years (Chesterfield Canal Partnership). This can be effective in increasing partner participation even where there is a nominated project or development manager. Other partnerships retain the same lead organisation over many years (Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, West Dunbartonshire Council).

Perhaps more difficult will be the choice of the individual from the agreed lead organisation to be the project leader. As can be seen from the case studies, the leader in particular has to be able to command respect and to motivate all involved, whilst at the same time exercising

day-to-day management control. Positive support for the appointed project leader by all parties is essential. The risk of project stagnation, when the nominated leader does not have the necessary 'flair' or support, is significant.

**The leadership arrangements for the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership are given as follows:**

*There is no lead partner as such. The drive comes from the Officer Group meetings. The Chairmanship of the Officer group and Member Group rotates. In the case of the Officer Group each Year. In the case of the Member Group every meeting. The Member Core Group meeting is administered by Newport County Council.*

**Within the Monmouthshire and Brecon Partnership, quality of project leadership is also one of the issues faced:**

*Issue: Appointing relevant officers. Need enthusiastic capable individuals, otherwise initiative stagnates.*

**The roles taken by the key members of the Animating the Canal Partnership – West Dunbartonshire are as follows:**

- **West Dunbartonshire Council:** long term member and lead partner
- **Clydebank rebuilt:** long term member and lead partner
- **Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire:** short term member, funder of the initial study that catalysed the Animating the Canal project
- **British Waterways Scotland:** long term member
- **The Waterways Trust:** long term member with additional responsibility for extra funding and for community and schools projects
- **West Dunbartonshire Greenspace:** long term member with additional responsibility for schools projects and access improvements

**The leadership arrangements of the Chesterfield Canal Partnership are given as follows:**

*A Local Authority (LA) elected Member chairs the Executive Steering Group (ESG). The LA that is chair also provides secretariat and chair of the Officers Working Group (OWG). Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) Countryside Service provides line management support to the Development Manager who takes both strategic and day-to-day lead in most affairs.*

*ESG Chair rotates between the local authorities every two years. 'Whose turn is next' is flexible to allow for political expediency. Vice Chair is 'trained up' to become chair in next round.*

*The Development Manager, with OWG officer support, leads all detailed strategic and delivery matters, provides national view and inspiration.*

*DCC leads by example – active restoration and development work and by adopting a 'can do' attitude.*

# The Findings

## Community Involvement



Involving the local community, through consultations and celebration, and even through full participation in the partnership, is seen as a key to success by several of the case study partnerships. Indeed, in some cases the aspirations of the partnership were first provided by the community. Community groups and their lobbying may have brought the partnership together in the first place. In West Dunbartonshire the actions for the partnership were identified in a 2005 study *Animating the Canal* based on the outcome of previous community consultation by two of the partners.

The strength of these successful partnerships may come from the strength of local community support which helps to convince local politicians and decision-makers of the benefits to be gained. Voluntary sector organisations input, in time on the ground and in expertise either from Canal Trusts or others, can make scarce resources within Partnerships go much further. This will only become

established if the efforts of volunteers are nurtured and acknowledged.

In external funding applications, public consultation is often a key indicator of the perceived value of a project and will form part of the justification for support. Involving local community representatives in the partnership itself helps to bring different perspectives and voluntary support which can be used as match funding and in 'changing hearts and minds' in the community. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, public participation gives officers a public mandate for their actions.

Partnerships that treat all members with respect and equality, recognising the skills brought by all partners, are less likely to develop stress in the relationship between private, public and voluntary sector partners and are likely to make more lasting progress.

### **The importance of involving the community is recognised by Animating the canal – West Dunbartonshire**

*A working group established at the outset of the project to bring together all parties interested in the regeneration of the canal in West Dunbartonshire.*

*The purpose of the partnership was to bring together the different skills, knowledge and experience of the partners, and to place particular emphasis on community involvement, which could only be maximised through the partners working together.*

**Key lesson:** *Without involvement from the public, the project could not have been delivered because it came from their ideas, through previous research and consultation. The partners could not have delivered it on their own without a public mandate.*

### **The Sobriety Project involves many different sectors of the community**

**Coalfields Regeneration Trust:** *Community improvement and putting young people on a pathway to employment – **target outputs:** 195 people*

**East Riding of Yorkshire Council Adult Services:** *Longish term supported employment for People with a learning disability – **target outputs:** 10 places per week*

**East Riding of Yorkshire Council Youth Offending Team:** *Provision of activities to keep young people out of the criminal justice system – **target outputs:** 40 young people*

**Vermuyden School, Goole:** *Activities with young people temporarily excluded from school to enable them to return to mainstream education – **target outputs:** 16 places per week*

**Bridgeview (EBD) School, Hull Work Related Learning East Riding Council, Oakfield School, Hull:** *Longer term placements, otherwise as above; 'pay as you go' rather than Service Level Agreement (SLA) – **number of placements:** 8 places per week*

**HMP Moorland (Open):** *Community Service placements for men coming towards end of sentence; SLAs not with prison but with charitable trusts – **number of placements:** 8 men a day, 7 days a week*

# The Findings

## Partner Participation



Lead partners of successful partnerships recognise that the best results can only be achieved through the participation of all partners, even if some partners have a relatively minor role.

The case study partnerships recognise that each of the partner representatives working with the partnership needs to act as a champion for the partnership within their own organisation. They need to be at a sufficient level of seniority, or have the authority to be able to communicate issues and decisions back to their own organisations, and to reflect accurately their organisation's own interests to the other partners.

Too junior or inconsistent officer or community representation from organisations which do not consider themselves as key members is likely to cause problems. There can be no passengers in any successful partnership – everyone involved must be there for a reason. Minority partners can be as critical to the success of the partnership as those with larger roles to play and they need to be persuaded of this by the partnership leaders.

The role and involvement of all parties are clear in successful waterway partnerships. Successful partnerships are formed to resolve fundamental issues, rather than 'paper over the cracks' and all need to be constantly aware that the partnerships is seeking solutions, not indulging in 'moaning and complaint'.

As the project progresses, roles can change. New roles should not just "happen by default". The need for change should be recognised, agreed by all and implemented openly and effectively. Regular review of roles and responsibilities also allows potential new champions and leaders to emerge and be nurtured.

It is highly likely that for many involved with a partnership project, this will not be their sole or even principal role. If the partnership is of secondary importance to any key individual involved in the actual day-to-day management of the partnership then the risk of slippage and the potential lack of attention to detail could both affect the project's success. Where this is foreseen, then it is time for a review of roles and responsibilities to ensure best results.

In agreeing that their organisation should become a partner, the senior members and/or officials need to commit the resources required. Once agreed, any reversal of commitment is likely to be challenged by the other partners, with justification. It is a characteristic of strong partnerships that they are able to challenge individual partners whilst also accommodating their changing priorities and resources. A partner playing a reduced role may well be better than the same partner being driven 'away from the table' altogether.

For a partnership to be successful, all partners need to be treated with equal respect, regardless of status. Whilst the lead role may be taken by the navigation authority or by the local authority, voluntary sector partners and marginal partners play a crucial role in bringing additional skill, expertise and links to the widest stakeholder group: local communities. In partnerships there is a risk that some partners will be involved in order to protect or promote vested interests. Whilst this is unsurprising, it can be destructive and may be overcome by all partners signing up to an agreed constitution and strategy. The partnership's leaders need to instil confidence in all partners that their interests will be protected and embraced by the completion of the whole scheme, even if not all the projects are their particular

priority. Where the interests of a potential partner are likely to be parochial, then these may best be involved through specific sub groups or project groups, rather than full membership.

Achieving consensus within partnerships may be challenging when the partnership's area of interest straddles regional boundaries and neighbouring development agencies have different priorities. Similarly, where several different departments within national agencies such as the Environment Agency are implicated or more than one region of British Waterways is involved, it is unlikely that the different interests will all be represented at partnership meetings. In effective partnerships, matters of potential dispute to do with representation are addressed outside the main partnership setting, in sub groups, or through direct liaison with individual members.

Successful partnerships adopt a 'can do' approach to their goals. This is communicated not only by the leaders but by all members, to each other and externally. Patience and determination are crucial to successfully achieving outcomes even if it is 'one step at a time'. With these characteristics good partnerships will weather many setbacks and disappointments without losing focus.

**The Kennet and Avon recognises the importance of the following lesson in partner participation:**

**Lesson :** *To address issues and deal with solutions, rather than 'carp'.*

**The Chesterfield Canal Partnership considers the following to be the generic lessons of a successful partnership:**

- *Partners need to understand each other, and be able to accept each other's limitations and changing priorities*
- *All need to be confident that their interests will be served by the completion of the project even if not all of the activities are their particular priority*
- *All partners need to be treated with equal respect, regardless of status*
- *Lead partners need to recognise that the best results cannot be achieved without the contribution of all partners*
- *Patience and determination are crucial to success*

**In Animating the Canal – West Dunbartonshire two of the issues identified link to the ways partners participate:**

**Issue:** *Ability to identify and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners. This was managed by agreement at the initial stage when the partnership first met.*

**Issue:** *The partners' enthusiasm and commitment to the same goal and to keep the momentum up against obstacles.*

# Conclusions



In this short report, we have attempted to consider what makes a successful partnership work effectively. We have presented the experience of five successful partnerships – all different in approach but with many common themes running through them.

As an independent body advising Government, we have presented some thoughts on issues to be considered when setting up a new partnership or when reviewing existing arrangements for existing partnerships. We trust that the readers of this report will take from it some positive thoughts about the way forward for them in their individual situations.

IWAC would stress the following approach as essential for success:

- Seek **clarity and consensus** in defining your purpose
- Agree an **appropriate structure** at the outset
- **Plan** appropriately what you propose to do
- Agree a **strategic plan** as part of 'signing up to' your partnership
- Take all possible steps, even small ones, to **reduce the risk of future financial uncertainty**
- **Communicate effectively** at all levels and with all stakeholders – make it a priority
- Recognise the need for both champions and conciliators within the **leadership** of the partnership
- **Involve the local community**
- Be **clear about partners' roles** and be open and **honest about problems**
- Be **committed** to deliver the benefits which you envisaged at the outset
- Adopt a '**can-do**' attitude and stick with it

# Partnership in Practice – Sharing Information

IWAC thanks the waterway partnerships that have contributed to *Working Together* by sharing their information, experience, concerns and solutions. The examples of good practice, as illustrated in *Working Together*, are a small selection of the partnerships currently in place. They are distinct from some others in that they are 'thriving' rather than 'surviving' partnerships. There are, of course, other partnerships, including those operating on smaller scale projects, or those in their infancy, that are finding creative and effective ways of bringing organisations together for the benefit of the waterways and their communities.

IWAC works closely with AINA to disseminate information about inland waterway matters to stakeholders and

decision-makers. In the spirit of good partnership working, IWAC invites AINA to publish *Working Together* on its website. AINA could then invite its members to add to the good practice information contained and to add to the appendices to the report. Partnerships for projects both large and small would be able to complete questionnaires describing their partnership arrangements and the solutions that they have found to issues that arise when working together. By sharing, and continually updating good practice, the prevalence of effective partnerships for the waterways will increase, and will add further value to the waterways renaissance.

# Glossary

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| AINA      | Association of Inland Navigation Authorities   |
| BW        | British Waterways  |
| DCC       | Derbyshire County Council  |
| Defra     | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs   |
| EBD       | Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties   |
| ESG       | Executive Steering Group   |
| IWAC      | Inland Waterways Advisory Council  |
| LA        | Local Authority  |
| OWG       | Officers' Working Group  |
| PSA       | Public Service Agreement   |
| SLA       | Service Level Agreement  |
| Waterways | Inland waterways covered by IWAC's remit.<br>In England and Wales this includes canals, rivers, the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and the navigable drains of the Fens. In Scotland this includes inland waterways that are owned or managed by, or which receive technical advice or assistance from, British Waterways. |

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Christine Johnstone (contributor and checker)

## Pictures

Courtesy of Chesterfield Canal Partnership  
(Geraint Coles): front cover, page 5, page 8

Courtesy of Sobriety Project Ltd (Bob Watson):  
page 11, page 14, page 20, page 24

Courtesy of Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals  
Regeneration Partnership (Rob Frowen & Wyn Mitchell,  
Newport City Council): page 22, page 26

IWAC (John Manning): page 16, page 18

# Appendix – Case Studies

## Case Study 1

### Project – Chesterfield Canal Partnership

#### 1. A Brief Description of the Project

To complete the restoration and development of the Chesterfield Canal to bring environmental, social and economic benefit to the communities along the route.

#### 2. A Brief Description of the Partnership

##### 2.1 What is the purpose of the partnership?

Aim 1: To restore the Chesterfield Canal to full navigation using, wherever possible, the historic route

Aim 2: To explore the potential to create and develop a new navigable link between the Chesterfield Canal and the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation

Aim 3: To protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built heritage of the canal

Aim 4: To improve and widen all forms of public access to the canal

Aim 5: To promote the sustainable economic and social regeneration of the Chesterfield Canal corridor in order to improve the quality of life in the surrounding communities

##### 2.2 How are the activities/objectives/priorities of the partnership chosen?

Through an adopted Restoration and Development Strategy, Access Strategy and Communications Strategy which guide an annually updated rolling work programme. This is devised by the Officers Working Group and approved and monitored by the Executive Steering Group (ESG). It is sufficiently flexible to allow new opportunities to be grasped.

##### 2.3 Is the partnership formalised through a legal agreement?

There is a Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution signed by all partners, and approved through each partners' own decision-making process. The Partnership is only 'advisory' so all decisions must go through to each partner. Senior executives and elected Members sit on the ESG. Temporary sub groups are set up for issues and site specific work as required. DCC's financial regulations are used as DCC hosts the staff and hold the partnership budget.

#### 3. The Key Members of the Partnership

Long term; core funding partners:

Bassetlaw District Council  
Chesterfield Borough Council  
Derbyshire County Council

North East Derbyshire District Council  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
Derbyshire County Council  
Chesterfield Canal Trust

Long term; fund canal maintenance but not core staffing costs:

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council  
British Waterways

Long term; plug holes in core costs and promote events:  
Inland Waterways Association

Long term; advisory, interest groups:

The Environment Agency  
The County Wildlife Trusts

#### 4. A Brief Description of the leadership arrangements

A Local Authority (LA) elected Member Chairs the ESG. The LA that is chair also provides secretariat and chair of OWG. Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) Countryside Service Area Manager North provides long term line management support to the Development Manager who takes both strategic and day-to-day lead in most affairs. DCC officers take the lead in main restoration and support strategic development as most action is in Derbyshire at present.

ESG Chair rotates between the local authorities every two years. 'Whose turn is next' is flexible to allow for political expediency. Vice Chair is 'trained up' to become chair in next round. DCC effectively leads as it has the need and capability to do so.

LA that is Chair calls chairs and minutes meetings. The Development Manager, with OWG officer support, leads all detailed strategic and delivery matters, provides national view and inspiration. DCC leads by example – active restoration and development work and by adopting a 'can do' attitude.

## 5. A Brief Description of how the partnership was created

Chesterfield Canal Society (now Trust) lobbied since 1977 for formation of the Partnership, did restoration work on locks in Derbyshire section and promoted the cause through award-winning magazine Cuckoo and four yearly seminars. Canal Society and local authorities etc. formalised partnership in 1995, developed first strategy in 1997. Since then numerous feasibility and justification studies and ongoing restoration. Development Manager and part time admin support employed from 2003/4. Governance and core strategy were refreshed completely in 2005/6.

## 6. A Brief Description of the key contribution of each member of the partnership

### 6.1 Member 1, Derbyshire County Council

Part funds and hosts Development Manager and administrative support. Provides human resources, finance, health and safety, premises and line management support. Owns and manages five miles of restored canal. Leads on restoration of remaining nine miles. Active restoration contracts on-going. Applying Community Assets Transfer funds to restoring and extending lock house to handover to Canal Trust. Leading on establishment of Community Interest Company to generate funds for ongoing maintenance of restored sections.

### 6.2 Member 2, Nottinghamshire County Council

Develops canal and improves access to canal in Notts. Current chair of partnership. Integrates canal corridor in to strategies e.g. for Sherwood Forest. Part funds staff.

### 6.3 Members 3, Bassetlaw District Council; North East Derbyshire District Council; Chesterfield Borough Council; Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC)

Integrate restoration route into Local Development Framework, develop Area Action Plans for the canal corridor as opportunities arise, core fund partnership staff (except RMBC), development control function for canal schemes, partner regeneration projects with the private sector/British Waterways. RMBC funds management of restored canal.

### 6.4 Member 4, British Waterways

Partner with RMBC in restoration, management of restored canal. Master planning and restoration of Kiveton Waters. Regional perspective on inland waterways network.

### 6.5 Member 5, Chesterfield Canal Trust

Independent lobbying role, promotion through membership, magazine and events, operate two trip boats. Core funds staff, partner in schemes, brings volunteer support and action and grant aid, closely linked to local community.

### 6.6 Member 6, IWA

National link to inland waterways issues and perspective, provide grant aid funding, link to Waterway Recovery Group.

### 6.7 Member 7, The Wildlife Trusts, Environment Agency

Three Trusts represented by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, provide natural history advice. Act as consultee on wildlife/environment issues for development control authorities. Provide biodiversity and flooding advice so environmental credentials of schemes are good.

## 7. What are the top three issues which have had to be addressed in order to create a successful partnership and how are they managed?

### 7.1 Issue 1

Anxiety by local authority members that membership necessarily means funding capital restoration works. Managed by:

- advisory status for the partnership so cannot dictate actions/decisions to the partners
- making external funding expectations explicit in literature
- acceptance of different abilities to pay/spend
- developing an exit strategy by setting up Community Interest Company to provide long term maintenance resources

# Appendix

## Case Study 1

### 7.2 Issue 2

Cross regional working, where investment in one region may benefit another region's economy as much if not more. Sometimes a lack of cross regional coordination in British Waterways. Different priorities among Regional Development Agencies. Managed by:

- promoting positive end results for all
- engaging all players in developing access and community recognition

### 7.3 Issue 3

Very lean core structure, barely sufficient capacity to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Managed by:

- belief that lean is efficient and avoids extravagance
- engage all partners and community in raising resources needed
- developing sense of ownership (recognition of value) in key partners that bring vital in kind contributions

## 8. What are the key lessons to be learned from this partnership?

### 8.1 Lesson 1

Encourage partners to work towards shared long term goal. Respond to difficulties/different priorities of partners with patience, in knowledge that the project is bigger than any short term hiccups.

### 8.2 Lesson 2

Be very clear about strategic process and get feasibility studies in place before expect new partners to support the project. Undertake small scale works whilst doing studies to keep community belief in place that progress is being made.

### 8.3 Lesson 3

Invest in high quality promotion to communicate the vision and spread the word about progress. Enter awards to get recognition of successes and raise morale. Get a groundswell of public opinion to support the project.

## 9. What are the Key Generic Lessons for a successful partnership?

Partners need to understand each other, and be able to accept each other's limitations and changing priorities.

All need to be confident that their interests will be served by the completion of the project even if not all of the activities are their particular priority.

All partners need to be treated with equal respect, regardless of status.

Lead partners need to recognise that the best results cannot be achieved without the contribution of all partners.

Patience and determination are crucial to success.

# Appendix

## Case Study 2

### Project – Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership

#### 1. A Brief Description of the Project

The purpose of the project is to restore the un-navigable sections of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals to full navigation. This involves the restoration of:

- a. the main line from Five Locks Cwmbran to Newport, where a new canal terminus in the form of a basin/marina will be built;
- b. the Crumlin Arm from Cwmcarn to Newport which incorporates the 14 Locks of the Cefn Flight.

#### 2. A Brief Description of the Partnership

##### 2.1 What is the purpose of the partnership?

The partnership is based around an Officer Group of representatives of all the partners which meets on a regular basis. Our objectives and priorities are discussed at the Officer group where a recommended decision is agreed. This is then reported into the Member Steering Group comprised of elected Member representatives or senior managers of our partners for ratification.

##### 2.2 How are the activities/objectives/priorities of the partnership chosen?

As each partner makes its own decisions within its own administrative area, the Member core group has acted over the years as a body which recommends decisions back to its partners. It's a way of making sure we are all pulling in the same direction. This was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding.

##### 2.3 Is the partnership formalised through a legal agreement?

During the development of our Living Landscapes Bid Lottery Bid a more formal decision making structure was proposed based on our current model, but with decision making powers given to the Core group. This was formalised through a legal agreement.

Our Mission Statement is to:

To facilitate community regeneration through developing and enhancing the economic, environmental and social potential provided by the regeneration of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals network by:

- Transforming the physical environment of the canal
- Bringing economic benefit to the area
- Creating a recreational and educational resource
- Bringing navigation back to a section of the canal
- Facilitating connection of the canal to the River Usk
- Creating a flagship visitor attraction
- Engaging with volunteers

#### 3. The Key Members of the Partnership

- Newport City Council – long term
- Torfaen County Borough Council – long term
- Monmouthshire County Council – long term
- Caerphilly County Borough Council – long term
- Powys County Council – long term
- British Waterways – long term
- Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals Trust – long term
- Brecon Beacons National Park – long term

#### 4. A Brief Description of the leadership arrangements

There is no lead partner as such. The drive comes from the Officer Group meetings. The Chairmanship of the Officer Group and Member Group rotates: In the case of the Officer Group, each year; in the case of the Member Group, every meeting.

The Member Core Group meeting is administered by Newport CC.

#### 5. A Brief Description of how the partnership was created

The origins of a partnership started back in the 1970s, following a major breach of the canal structure at Llanfoist when a Youth Opportunity Training Scheme successfully made safe three miles of vulnerable canal embankment by constructing the canal channel in concrete. British Waterways staff repaired the breach.

# Appendix

## Case Study 2

A Manpower Services scheme followed in the 1980s when the priority was small scale restoration. During the following years a canal forum brought canal supporters together to discuss issues of the day and future restoration initiatives.

The present Regeneration partnership was set up just after Local Government reorganisation in Wales in 1996 when interested parties were invited to join a reformed partnership to look at wholesale restoration. This initiative came from Richard Dommatt then Waterways Manager for British Waterways and Wyn Mitchell, then Head of Planning at Newport County Borough Council.

The partnerships vision of complete restoration was given credibility by the availability of HLF and European funding opportunities.

### **6. A Brief Description of the key contribution of each member of the partnership**

#### *6.1 Member 1, Newport City Council*

Canal owner through Newport  
Meeting administration  
Officer support  
Member involvement

#### *6.2 Member 2, Torfaen County Borough Council*

Canal Owner through Torfaen CBC  
Officer support  
Member involvement

#### *6.3 Member 3, Monmouthshire County Council*

Officer support  
Member involvement

#### *6.4 Member 4, Caerphilly County Borough Council*

Canal owner through Caerphilly CBC  
Officer support  
Member involvement

#### *6.5 Member 5, Powys County Council*

Member involvement

#### *6.6 Member 6, British Waterways*

Canal Owner through Monmouthshire and Powys  
Technical expertise  
Advice on funding  
Lead partner on INTERREG schemes

#### *6.7 Member 7, Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals Trust*

Volunteer support  
Conduit for grant applications  
Run the 14 Locks Canal centre  
Operate Trip Boat  
Organise Trail Boat Festivals  
Organise publicity and events

#### *6.8 Member 8, Brecon Beacons National Park*

Officer support

### **7. What are the top three issues which have had to be addressed in order to create a successful partnership and how are they managed?**

#### *7.1 Issue 1*

Willingness of partners to join

#### *7.2 Issue 2*

Appointing relevant officers. Need enthusiastic capable individuals, otherwise initiatives stagnate.

#### *7.3 Issue 3*

Understanding each other's issues

### **8. What are the key lessons to be learned from this partnership?**

#### *8.1 Lesson 1*

Need good communication between the partners

#### *8.2 Lesson 2*

Understanding each other's issues and different operating cultures

#### *8.3 Lesson 3*

Need keen enthusiastic officers to drive the project

### **9. What are the Key Generic Lessons for a successful partnership?**

Good communication between partners. Understanding other partners' issues, priorities and problems.

# Appendix

## Case Study 3

### Project – The ‘Sobriety’ Project Ltd (a charity)

#### 1. A Brief Description of the Project

‘Sobriety’ is the name of the Humber barge built in 1910 as a sailing vessel, which gives its name to the Project. The HQ is the Yorkshire Waterways Museum, registered with the Museums Libraries and Archives Council and winner of several museum and tourism awards during the last 10 years and welcoming about 25,000 visitors annually. There are two established satellite projects in Thorne (Doncaster) and Selby (North Yorkshire) and an embryo project in York which are purely community boat enterprises. At a national level the Project is a member (like the Seagull Trust) of the National Community Boats Association

Sobriety’s aim is to use the inland waterways as a means of tackling social exclusion and every three years it develops a business plan to achieve this. Trustees have recently completed a review of the 2005-2008 plan and have published the new Plan 2008-2011.

To create a sustainable infrastructure and mechanism for achieving objectives, we regard the establishment of partnerships and service level agreements with public bodies, such as RDAs and local authorities, as one of our main objectives.

Currently the Project has partnerships with a number of public bodies which are partners in the delivery of service level agreements for social, economic and health targets.

#### 2. A Brief Description of the Partnership

##### 2.1 What is the purpose of the partnership?

Generally to deliver ‘bottom rung of the ladder’ outcomes – preparing young people for work, returning them to formal education, giving them experience of work.

##### 2.2 How are the activities/objectives/priorities of the partnership chosen?

By matching the requirements of commissioners with the Project staff skills and capabilities.

##### 2.3 Is the partnership formalised through a legal agreement?

Invariably yes.

#### 3. The Key Members of the Partnership

##### *Coalfields Regeneration Trust*

Community improvement and putting young people on a pathway to employment Target outputs: 195 people

##### *East Riding of Yorkshire Council Adult Services*

Longish term supported employment for people with a learning disability Target outputs: 10 places per week

##### *East Riding of Yorkshire Council Youth Offending Team*

Provision of activities to keep young people out of the criminal justice system Target outputs: 40 young people

##### *Vermuyden School, Goole*

Activities with young people temporarily excluded from school to enable them to return to mainstream education Target outputs: 16 places per week

##### *Bridgeview (EBD) School, Hull Work Related Learning*

*East Riding Council, Oakfield School, Hull*  
Longer term placements, otherwise as above; ‘pay as you go’ rather than Service Level Agreement (SLA)  
Number of placements: 8 places per week

##### *Her Majesty’s Prison Moorland (Open)*

Community Service placements for men coming towards end of sentence. SLAs not with prison but with charitable trusts Number of placements: 8 men a day 7 days a week

#### 4. A Brief Description of the leadership arrangements

In each case there is a project manager appointed by the commissioning body or purchaser. This person meets regularly (say every three weeks) with Project staff to discuss problems and progress.

‘Sobriety’ also appoints a lead contact who is responsible for programme delivery

#### 5. A Brief Description of how the partnership was created

In each case by hard work over many months!

The first stage is to be seen to be doing the work effectively and to draw attention to it as possible way of meeting the expressed requirements of the commissioner or purchaser.

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(Waterway related activities are simply part of the process of delivery. There are countless other ways of achieving the same outcomes but we believe that the waterways are a good resource for this kind of work)

Second stage may be tendering or at very least putting forward formal proposals delivery of targets and outcomes.

In some cases, for example ERYC Youth Offending Team, the lead partner has to report to several standing committees: e.g. Youth Justice Board, Crime Concern, Virtual Integrated Management Team.

### **6. A Brief Description of the key contribution of each member of the partnership**

*Member 1, Coalfields Regeneration Trust:*

£180,000 over two years

*Member 2, East Riding Adult Services:* £7,000 p.a.

*Member 3, East Riding Youth Offending Team:*

£147,000 over three years

*Member 4, Vermuyden School:* £21,000 p.a.

*Member 5, HMP Moorland (Open):* £90,000 p.a.

### **7. What are the top three issues which have had to be addressed in order to create a successful partnership and how are they managed?**

#### *7.1 Issue 1*

Commissioners and purchasers have to be convinced that the organisation is capable of delivering the target outputs and outcomes.

#### *7.2 Issue 2*

The organisation has to line up its resources to deliver the contracted outputs.

#### *7.3 Issue 3*

Regular meetings with project managers and other members of contractor's staff are indispensable.

### **8. What are the key lessons to be learned from this partnership?**

#### *8.1 Lesson 1*

Honesty about problems is paramount.

#### *8.2 Lesson 2*

Regular reviews of targets by internal meetings of Project staff helps with troubleshooting and maintaining good morale.

#### *8.3 Lesson 3*

Target delivery is the subject of contracts but beneficiaries are individuals not numbered units. Contracts sometimes have to be changed to take this into account.

### **9. What are the Key Generic Lessons for a successful partnership?**

Keep your eye on the ball (and the market!).

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## Case Study 4

### Project – The Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership

#### 1. A Brief Description of the Project

The canal and its development over the years would never have happened without the robust and active partnerships that were formed to meet the objective of reopening our canal. Outputs from the groupings have been varied but all of them have been greater than the sum of the parts. There have been marketing partnerships producing leaflets and events, there have been employment and training partnerships that as one example set up the Manpower Services Commission Project through the Limpley Stoke Valley. Indeed, the list is long and shows by example the importance of liaison and cooperation.

The Kennet and Avon Canal Partnership Steering Group has been around for many years and has been the key influence behind the restoration period. In the 1980's it was known as the Advisory Group and had as chairman the Leisure and Amenity Director of British Waterways. This group, as the Partnership Steering Group today, had representatives of riparian local government, The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, The Association of Canal Enterprises and British Waterways. Then it was facing the task of successful but piecemeal restoration with negotiations afterwards for maintenance costs to be covered.

After the Royal reopening in 1990, the task then was the ongoing maintenance and the work still required to be costed, funded and undertaken. The Water Appeal for £1.8 million was the next big task and then of course the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This grant was awarded to the Partnership not British Waterways or The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust. Indeed, the partnership oversaw the project as it progressed.

Post HLF and Royal reopening, however, the question has to be asked, 'is there a need for the partnership steering group anymore?' The view of the group is that there is a need and they have agreed new terms of reference to ensure the purpose is clear.

#### 2. A Brief Description of the Partnership

##### 2.1 What is the purpose of the partnership?

- The Maintenance Agreements – require a regular reporting regime.

- The Conservation Plan – provides the policy framework to guide the conservation and sustainable management of the waterway. All parties signed up to it. One important appendix to the Conservation Plan was The Public Transport and Visitor Management Strategy. This provides a series of strategic recommendations on monitoring and review. These have informed the suggestions below. Funding issues – the present budgetary and organisational changes within the Environment Agency and British Waterways will change many assumptions and projections of development and finance.
- Reclassification of the Waterway as a Cruiseway – this issue has risen and fallen over the years. It is proposed that within the present climate the importance of reclassification should be discussed.

##### 2.2 How are the activities/objectives/priorities of the partnership chosen?

By consensus.

##### 2.3 Is the partnership formalised through a legal agreement?

By a Memorandum of Understanding that is at present being revised.

#### 3. The Key Members of the Partnership

All riparian local Authorities, the Kennet and Avon Canal Trade Association, the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust and British Waterways – all long term. The Environment Agency is to be invited to join.

#### 4. A Brief Description of the leadership arrangements

The organisation is chaired by The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust which is a continuation from the previous arrangement.

#### 5. What are the top three issues which have had to be addressed in order to create a successful partnership and how are they managed?

##### 5.1 Issue 1

Insufficient finance to secure the canal's sustainability

##### 5.2 Issue 2

Who leads and champions

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### 5.3 Issue 3

Negotiations as to the financing of the canals maintenance

## 6. What are the key lessons to be learned from this partnership?

### 6.1 Lesson 1

To address issues and deal with solutions rather than 'carp'

### 6.2 Lesson 2

To communicate and champion the purposes

### 6.3 Lesson 3

To work from good information

## 7. What are the Key Generic Lessons for a successful partnership?

- Leadership
- Seek Consensus
- Clarity of purpose

# Appendix

## Case Study 5

### Project – Animating the Canal – West Dunbartonshire

#### 1. A Brief Description of the Project

A 2005 study commissioned by the partners to identify ways of increasing activity on and alongside the canal showed that as the canal passes through Clydebank, it was bordered by poorly-defined incidental space that was not well used and did not relate well to either the canal or the existing urban structure. Further analysis led to two main physical development projects:

1. The redesign of the north canal bank at Clydebank shopping centre, bringing improved linkages to adjacent land uses and opportunities to use the canal for recreation.
2. The installation of a new canopy over the canal footbridge linking the north and south malls of the shopping centre. The design is inspired by a swan in flight and replaces an unpopular 25-year-old metal lattice framed structure.

Other benefits to the environment and the community included the upgrading of the canal towpath surface as an off-road route; installation of landmark artworks; and access, seating and signage improvements. The canal environment has been positively altered and this has encouraged its greater use by the community. The wellbeing of the community is likely to improve and their pride and confidence in the area is growing as a result of the project.

#### 2. A Brief Description of the Partnership

##### 2.1 What is the purpose of the partnership?

A working group established at the outset of the project to bring together all parties interested in the regeneration of the canal in West Dunbartonshire.

The purpose of the partnership was to bring together the different skills, knowledge and experience of the partners, and to place particular emphasis on community involvement, which could only be maximised through the partners working together.

##### 2.2 How are the activities/objectives/priorities of the partnership chosen?

The actions for the partnership were identified in a 2005

study *Animating the Canal* and then the working group identified its priorities from these actions based on the outcome of previous community consultation by two of the partners. The partnership then decided which of the partners would lead on each priority.

##### 2.3 Is the partnership formalised through a legal agreement?

The partnership was not formalised through a legal agreement, although the partnership progressed its work by agreement through minuted working group meetings.

#### 3. The Key Members of the Partnership

- *West Dunbartonshire Council*: long term member and lead partner
- *Clydebank rebuilt*: long term member and lead partner
- *Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire*: short term member, funder of the initial study that catalysed the *Animating the Canal* project
- *British Waterways Scotland*: long term member
- *The Waterways Trust*: long term member with additional responsibility for extra funding and for community and schools projects
- *West Dunbartonshire Greenspace*: long term member with additional responsibility for schools projects and access improvements

#### 4. A Brief Description of the leadership arrangements

The lead partner is West Dunbartonshire Council and Clydebank rebuilt also took on some leadership role project managing specific areas of work.

The Council, as lead partner, was chosen because it had sourced and accessed the primary funding for the project and therefore carried the greatest responsibility.

The partnership leader's role included:

- chair of the *Animating the Canal* working group
- co-ordination and delivery of all the projects
- management of the funding allocation
- formal reporting to Council Committees and to funders
- two-way information flow between the partners and the business and residential community

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## Case Study 5

### 5. A Brief Description of how the partnership was created

The partnership was created following the production of an initial study 'Animating the Canal' commissioned by Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire. The partnership was created with public bodies that had land ownership interests in the canal through West Dunbartonshire, or had specialist knowledge of assistance to the partnership.

### 6. A Brief Description of the key contribution of each member of the partnership

#### 6.1 Member 1, West Dunbartonshire Council

Co-ordination of projects ensuring delivery within timescales  
Manage funding allocation to each project  
Source funding through submission of funding applications (e.g. ERDF and Cities Growth Fund)  
Deal with any problems arising and seek solutions

#### 6.2 Member 2, Clydebank Rebuilt

Project manages the north canal bank and the bridge canopy projects  
Key organiser of community consultation events  
Lead organiser of schools projects (e.g. artwork, maps and signage)  
Raised the profile of the projects (e.g. by staging an architectural competition for the bridge canopy project)  
Raising the profile of good design in Clydebank by reputation

#### 6.3 Member 3, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire

Funded and promoted the initial study for the *Animating the Canal* project  
Helped set up the steering group and working arrangements  
Consultee role for the duration of the project  
Hosted steering group meetings  
Originally recognised the value of improving the setting of the canal to business

#### 6.4 Member 4, British Waterways Scotland

Advisory role on technical and navigational matters  
Contract management of a project on British Waterways owned land (towpath improvements)  
Liaison with existing canal user groups

#### 6.5 Member 5, The Waterways Trust

Ability to access funding opportunities that were not available to the other partners because of the Trust's charitable status  
Experience of similar projects in other locations  
Experience of outreach work especially with schools and other charitable organisations

#### 6.6 Member 6, West Dunbartonshire Greenspace

Co-ordinated and undertook selected access improvements  
Experience of outreach work in schools  
Opportunity to use local trainees

### 7. What are the top three issues which have had to be addressed in order to create a successful partnership and how are they managed?

#### 7.1 Issue 1

Ability to identify and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners. This was managed by agreement at the initial stage when the partnership first met.

#### 7.2 Issue 2

Constant communication between partners, especially through regular working group meetings. This was managed by the lead partner who was also required to act as overseer of all the other partners' roles.

#### 7.3 Issue 3

The partners' enthusiasm and commitment to the same goal and to keep the momentum up against obstacles.

### 8. What are the key lessons to be learned from this partnership?

#### 8.1 Lesson 1

Without involvement from the public the project could not have been delivered because it came from their ideas (through previous research and consultation). The partners could not have delivered it on their own without a public mandate.

#### 8.2 Lesson 2

Momentum is required to sustain progress to meet delivery within the timescale since the funding was a fixed-term opportunity.

### 8.3 Lesson 3

Accountability to elected members of the Council and their constituents, and to funders, is essential. Reports on progress were made formally and informally through Design Forum meetings, formal reports to Council Committees, and public events such as the Canal Carnival.

## 9. What are the Key Generic Lessons for a successful partnership?

There are four key generic lessons to be drawn from the *Animating the Canal* partnership. These are:

- Regular and frequent **communication** between partners and meaningful two-way communication with business and resident community
- Enthusiasm and **drive** to keep projects moving along
- It is necessary to take **decisive** and speedy action from time to time to deal with issues as they arose
- It is essential for the lead partner to have a **clear strategic overview** in order to be able to make informed decisions that will prevent the partnership from straying from its path.

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