



**NEWBURY**  
Town Council

## **Newbury Town Design Statement**

# **Canal Corridor**

**December 2019**





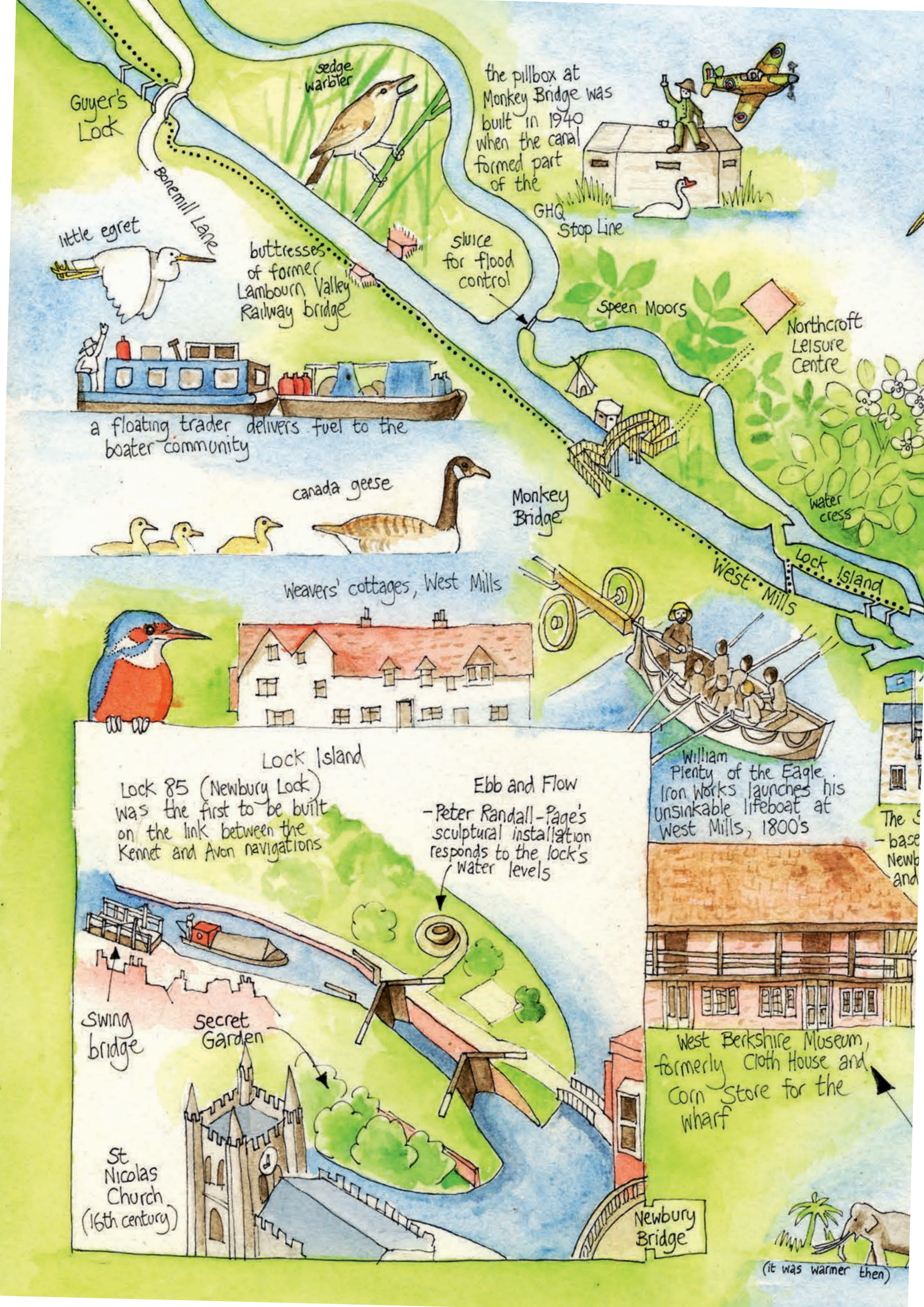




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Guyer's Lock

Bonemill Lane

sedge warbler

the pillbox at Monkey Bridge was built in 1940 when the canal formed part of the

GHQ Stop Line

little egret

buttresses of former Lambourn Valley Railway bridge

sluice for flood control

Speen Moors

Northcroft Leisure Centre

a floating trader delivers fuel to the boater community

canada geese

Monkey Bridge

Lock Island

Weavers' cottages, West Mills

West Mills

Lock 85 (Newbury Lock) was the first to be built on the link between the Kennet and Avon navigations

Ebb and Flow - Peter Randall-Page's sculptural installation responds to the lock's water levels

William Plenty of the Eagle Iron Works launches his unsinkable lifeboat at West Mills, 1800's

The S - base Newb and

swing bridge

Secret Garden

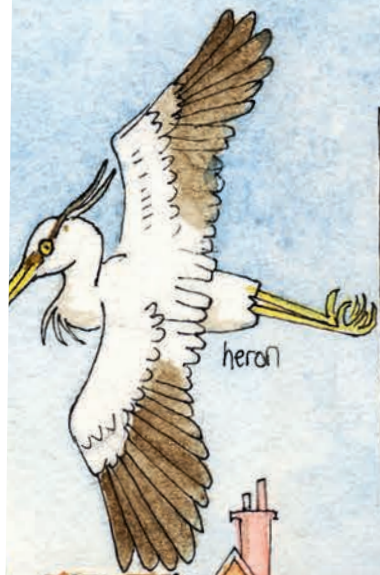
St Nicolas Church (16th century)

West Berkshire Museum, formerly cloth house and corn store for the wharf

Newbury Bridge

(it was warmer then)



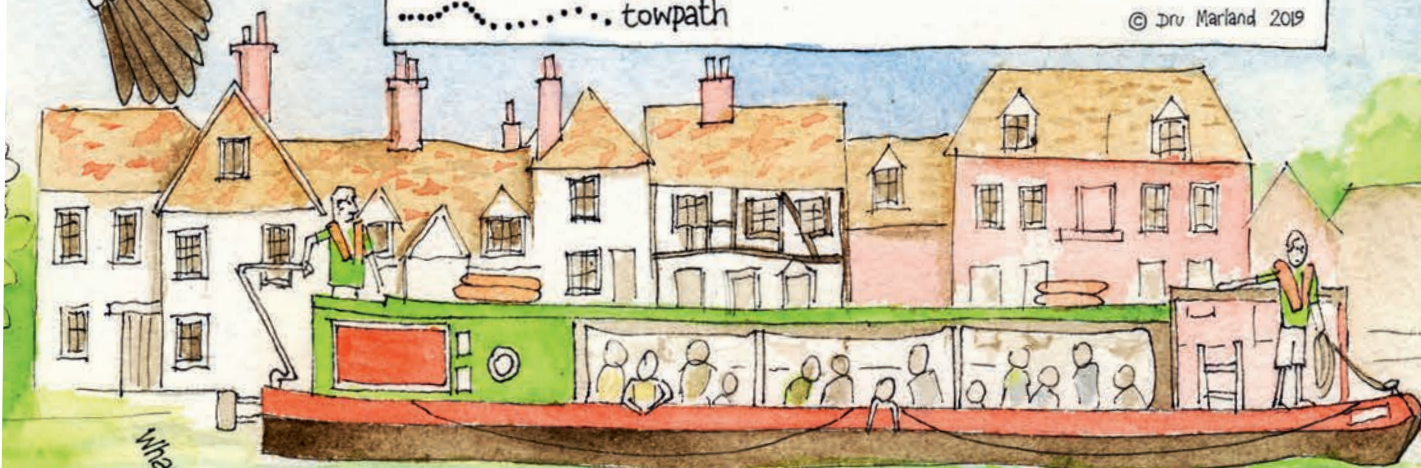


heron

# NEWBURY canal corridor

..... towpath

© Drv Marland 2019



Jubilee, the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust's boat, passes West Mills

Newbury Bridge  
Victoria Park

the Wharf  
Stone Building for KACT's Newbury branch - tea shop information centre

Newbury's first power station at Greenham Mills 1904 - initially water powered

Newbury Chandlery - Greenham Island Boat Services

Greenham Lock Marina



Pike

Newbury's marinas provide mooring for over 150 boats

Ham Manor Marina

Newbury Boat Company



Lampbourn

Ham Mill

Ham Lock

Ham Bridge

Whitehouse Roving Bridge

Sir John Knill arrives in Newbury with a cargo of salt from Northwich, to keep the navigation open - February 1950 - nb Columba

purple loosestrife

butterbur

tusk of a straight-tusked elephant of the late Pleistocene - found in the Kennet



# 1 Introduction

The Kennet & Avon Canal is an important leisure, tourist and recreation asset for the Town of Newbury. It is a green corridor of immense wildlife and biodiversity value for the town. The Canal provides important health and wellbeing benefits to the community, in terms of mental and physical health and its widespread use, especially by young children, older residents and as lunch spots for local workers. The canal also has a value as a place where people tend to gather or pass through, therefore helping to build a stronger sense of community.

It flows from west to east through Newbury and the area around Newbury Bridge and Newbury Lock in the town centre is probably Newbury's best known landmark.

The Canal plays a large role in defining the character of the town. The towpath provides a route through town that can be accessed easily from anywhere in Newbury and provides a safe walking and cycling route from Newbury to Thatcham and beyond. Visitors and residents alike are drawn naturally to the Canal. Parts of the towpath are very busy such as from Victoria Park up through West Mills. Stretches on either side are quieter, but everywhere on the Canal is an escape from busy roads and it offers various places of peace and the opportunity to slow down.

The scenery is varied along the route with plenty of moored boats to admire on the eastern side towards Greenham, an attractive park vista at Newbury Wharf alongside Victoria Park, a narrow stretch with some attractive buildings up to Newbury Bridge, the industrial heritage fascination of Newbury Lock, and the peaceful vista of West Mills, a quite remarkable haven given its proximity to the town centre. The canal has a welcoming aspect for those visitors disembarking from the bus and coach station, whilst giving an unusual and picturesque route into town.

Despite being peaceful, the Canal Corridor is a vibrant place. Throughout the year Canal boats come into town whether they be hire boats bringing holiday makers, enthusiasts for whom the Kennet & Avon is a special place or the growing number of people that make the Canal their home and travel along it. Watching boats is always a popular activity for visitors especially at Newbury Lock where they can see 18th century technology still in use to lift or drop boats around 1.5 metres.

The Canal is multi-functional and has a variety of users. It is especially popular with canoeists who train for a series of important races leading up to the world class Devizes to Westminster race every Easter. With their smart new centre, Newbury Canoe Club does a great job of getting people old and young afloat on the Canal. And

the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust provides public boat trips to nearly 5,000 people each year on Newbury's own passenger boat, Jubilee.

The Canal also attracts anglers to fish its clean and well stocked waters but the fish stocks are at constant attack from predators such as crayfish, cormorants and otters as well as illegal fishing. On the towpath, cycling is very popular both for leisure and as a safe and relaxing way to travel for work, school and shopping. Many people include the Canal in their daily itinerary to walk alongside or just sit, slow down and relax. The Canal, like all waterways, is a great aid to wellbeing and a means of encouraging people to enjoy the environment of Newbury

The Canal has been a great asset to the community since the River Kennet Navigation opened in 1723. It is a fascinating mix of industrial heritage, natural environment, leisure opportunity and part of the town's infrastructure. A journey over the 2-mile stretch from the town's eastern boundary at Ham Bridge to the western boundary above Northcroft reveals a fascinating mixture of all these aspects. It is beautiful in its diversity and balance. But it needs to be carefully protected in order to maintain that balance of beauty, nature and leisure.

Balance and respect amongst the many different users is key. Boaters, canoeists, cyclists,



anglers, walkers, residents along the corridor, birds, fish and plants can all co-exist and enjoy the Canal in harmony for most of the time. But that depends on goodwill, sensible planning approaches and light regulation. (Users should be aware of the “Share the Space” and “Drop the Pace” guidance.) The canal can be enjoyed by all of us and we have a duty to conserve and protect it for future generations.

Caring for the waterway itself and the structures such as Locks and weirs is the responsibility of the Canal & River Trust which owns the Canal. The Trust needs support and encouragement in its work and funding along with the help of a growing number of volunteers. The Canal also needs to be protected from inappropriate development alongside it. This might be industrial but more commonly it can be residential proposals that fail to make the best of the Canal-side setting or seek to restrict use of the environment by others. The beautiful housing either side of the West Mills swing Bridge is an example of how it can be done well. Developments below Victoria Park and below Greenham Lock will need to be carefully examined to ensure they enhance and not damage the Canal-scape.

There is also a challenge to home and other property owners along the Canal Corridor to recognise their good fortune as custodians of this special place. Improvements from planting

to painting need to be sympathetic with the setting.

The Canal brings economic growth and supports jobs mostly for the leisure industry. Research in 2010 showed that along its 87 miles, the Canal supported 1300 jobs and brought £55m of economic benefit each year.

The history and use of the river and Canal by individuals and many different groups makes it of vital importance to the character of Newbury.





# 2 History



The River Kennet has been important to the West Berkshire area since prehistoric times, with nationally-significant finds from the Mesolithic period along the valley from Hungerford to Woolhampton. Newbury grew up at an obvious bridging point of the River Kennet which meandered and spread through the shallow valley on its way to join the Thames at Reading. Two mills were sited on the Kennet in Newbury by the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 (Town Mills and West Mills).

In the early 18th century, industrialisation and economic growth created a demand to move goods more efficiently by water, rather than the poor roads of the time. This trend started by making rivers navigable. Locks and weirs were built to create a consistent depth of water and channels were dug to shorten the natural meanders of rivers. In 1715, an Act of Parliament was passed to make navigable the 18½ mile stretch of the River Kennet from Newbury to Reading. Work began despite considerable opposition from the mill owners, shopkeepers and trader of Reading who saw their status as the inland port for the area being undermined. By 1723, the navigation was complete with 21 turf side Locks to carry boats down the 42 metre drop to Reading, and 11½ miles of new cuts to shorten the river.

The Kennet & Avon Canal was extended further west from the 1790's, opening throughout in 1810. The canal became the main trade route between Bristol and London and Newbury became a busy inland port. Trade consisted mostly of meal, flour and cheese from Newbury towards London with return cargoes of groceries, coal, timber and heavy goods such as iron. By 1760 the improvements that had been made to the navigation allowed the development of the 'Newbury Barge' which was 33 metres long and carried 128 tons.

By 1788, Canals were being built all around the country. A group formed under the chairmanship of Berkshire MP Charles Dundas promoted a Canal from Newbury to meet the River Avon Navigation at Bath. Newbury Wharf was the furthest inland navigable



point from the Thames until 1794 when work started on the creation of the Kennet & Avon Canal link to Bath. The canal became the main trade route between Bristol and London and Newbury became a busy inland port. After an Act of Parliament in 1794, work began from the Newbury end. There were challenges over the route, the water supply and engineering but the Canal finally opened in 1810, thus connecting London with Bristol.

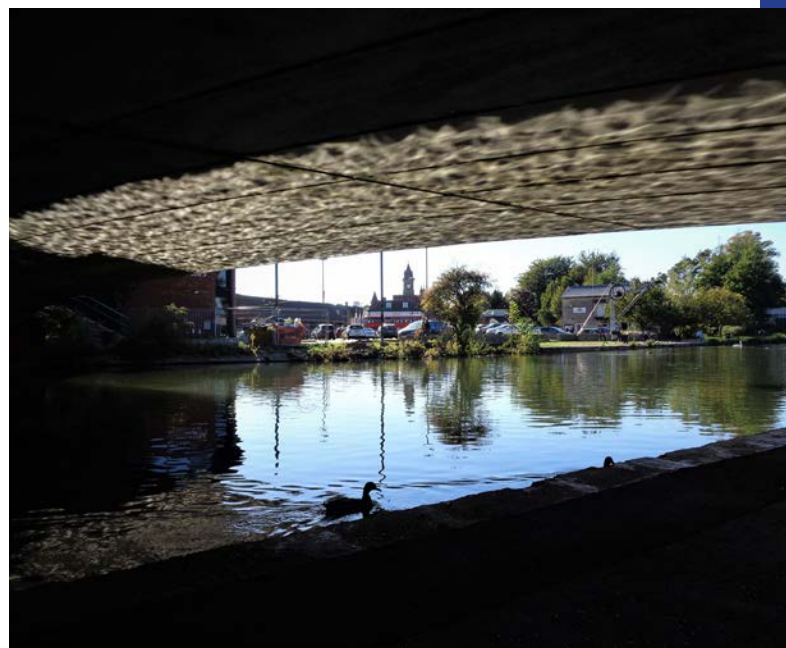
By this connection, and by opening up Berkshire, Wiltshire and Somerset to trade, the Canal was successful for around 40 years. At its height, around 342,000 tons of cargo were carried each year. Newbury became a busy inland port.

A large basin was dug at Newbury Wharf to allow the loading and unloading of boats and in the 18th century the Wharf became a large complex of warehouses, workshops, offices, stables, store yards and docks with a crane to load and unload cargo.

In 1841, the Great Western Railway opened between London and Bristol. This immediately created competition for the Canal. In 1851, the railway company bought the Canal and a long slow decline started. By 1852 the Great Western Railway had taken most of the canal's trade. Within a hundred years, virtually all evidence of the former basin had disappeared under tarmac and concrete, and much of the canal was disused and threatened with closure. The Canal made its last profit in 1878. Trade continued, often over shorter journeys well into the 20th century and the Canal played an important role as a defensive "Stop Line" when Britain was under threat of invasion, during the Second World War.

In the 1950's the protests and actions of John Gould, and a handful of Newbury traders, averted closure of the canal and sparked four decades of restoration. This culminated in HM The Queen re-opening the canal in 1990.

The last through journey by a narrowboat was in 1951 and the Canal quickly fell into disrepair. A group of traders and enthusiasts including Newbury businessman, John Gould, MBE, campaigned to prevent formal closure and a petition to the Queen in 1955 attracted publicity to the cause. But a 1958 Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry concluded that there was 'no justification' for restoring the Kennet & Avon. The founders of the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust disagreed and, following the charity's formation in 1962, started campaigning and working practically to restore the Canal. This continued over 3 decades and



culminated in HM The Queen re-opening the canal in 1990. Without the herculean efforts of John Gould MBE and other Kennet & Avon Canal Trust volunteers the town would probably not have the asset of which it is so justly proud. Since then the Kennet & Avon has enjoyed a second life as one of southern England's most important leisure facilities. In 2018, the waterway is becoming part of 'The Great West Way' a new tourism initiative promoting visits along the Corridor between London and Bristol.



# 3

## The Character

The Canal dances with the River Kennet as it travels from west to east through Newbury. From Northcroft down to Newbury Lock, the Canal carries around half of the river's flow. They then join back together to race under the narrow Newbury Bridge down to Newbury Wharf and Victoria Park. They then split for the journey to Greenham into a river channel, a Canal and a Mill stream. Once again, they join forces to carry on down to Ham Mill before, finally splitting into a peaceful (and fish filled) river and a straight Canal cut.

This diversity of water is reflected in the habitats seen along the Canal which in some places has the effect of occupying a very wide strip of land. The land above Northcroft opposite the towpath is difficult to access and an important strip of rural habitat. From Northcroft down to Newbury Lock, an area of lush water meadow attracts an incredible range of wildlife.

Through town, the hard banks and buildings are less friendly to wildlife but there's plenty of fish and water fowl for visitors to feed including Newbury's well know Mute Swans usually to be found at the Wharf. Below Greenham Lock and on down to Ham Bridge the wide verges of the Canal provide a great wetland habitat for wildlife. These wetlands encourage a diverse range of plants and insects which in turn lead to birds and mammals. Careful visitors walking the Canal have a good chance of spotting a Kingfisher, Britain's most colourful bird which nests all along the Canal and has even been seen fishing by Victoria Park. Herons fishing in the shallows are increasingly common as are Red Kites wheeling overhead with their distinctive cry. At dusk the bats emerge from their roost in an old pill box by the Monkey Bridge and fly along the Canal enjoying the insects. With care, the endangered water vole can be seen at the eastern and western end of town. And above Northcroft, there are otters, rarely seen but enjoying the feast of fish.



### From the Town Centre to the western town boundary

The landmark Bridge in the Town centre was built between 1769 and 1772. It is a Grade II\* listed building and joins the north and south aspects of the town. It overlooks where the Canal and river converge and flows eastwards towards Thatcham and Reading.

Several yards going north on the west side is a path leading to the Lock, Stock and Barrel public house and on each side of the path are historic buildings, such as Cote Brasserie (originally a building of the 1490's, with later alterations), and Newbury Building Society which was built by 1791. Access to the Canal is under a concrete Bridge and across a wooden foot bridge skirting the Lock, Stock and Barrel on the right. The newly improved path slopes up to the first Lock while on the right hand

side is the River Kennet flowing east. Volunteers from the community are working on the Secret Garden project taking place on Newbury Lock Island, where John Gould and his wife are interred (The Globe Garden). This garden, to the south of Newbury lock, was the garden for the long-established Globe Inn, which stood where Lloyds Bank stands now, with a footbridge across the mill-race to the rear, connecting it to the garden (This Globe Inn was demolished in the 19th century, and the name then transferred to a new building in Bartholomew Street).

It is now the site of the Secret Garden which promotes community and celebrates the relationship between the canal and the people of Newbury on the lock side. Behind the walls the garden provides a space supporting those in need - working against loneliness in our



community, as well as promoting well-being and ecological education. The footprint of the lock-keeper's cottage can also be seen on the island. Over the swing bridge the towpath then heads west, passing the historic Weavers Cottages and a number of modern 20th century houses. There are many mooring points, some occupied by narrow boats. The towpath surface deteriorates but it is still comfortable to walk and cycle on. Following the canal westwards, the vista changes.

Past the Lock on the right side is a stand-alone feature entitled Ebb and Flow, part of Newbury Town Council's Town Trail an ambitious, long term project to create a trail of public art with the theme of 'Flow', reflecting the town's pride in its heritage and ambitions for the future. Ebb and Flow is a sculpture by Peter Randall-Page, which fills and empties with the movement of water through the Lock. It comprises an attractive, large granite bowl, 2.4 metres in diameter and weighing 7 tonnes, set at the centre of a spiral granite path leading down from the Lock. The bowl is connected to the Lock by underground piping which activates the sculpture by natural water pressure. When the Lock fills, water flows into the bowl and then empties away as the level of the Lock water goes down.



The towpath continues westwards with the Canal on the south side and moorings for many narrow boats. Across the Canal are the historic buildings in West Mills, some of which are over 400 years old and the most prominent feature is the 16th century Grade I Listed building, St. Nicolas Church. The towpath terminates at a wooden swing Bridge with a road turning north around buildings associated with the former mill, which ends at a residential property with no access to the northern aspect of the Canal and river.



Over the swing Bridge the towpath then heads west, passing the historic Weavers Cottages and a number of modern 20th century houses. There are many mooring points, some occupied by narrow boats. The towpath surface deteriorates and is in need of improvement to encourage greater use by people of all mobility levels. Following the Canal westwards, the vista changes. On the south side are the allotment gardens and then the lengthy gardens of Russell Road, which are below the level of the Canal bank. These gardens have in the past flooded from Canal water but subsequently the banks have been strengthened so that flooding risk has diminished. On the northern side the housing gives way to green recreational area where the Northcroft Cricket ground is located.

A relatively new pedestrian and cycle Bridge, the Monkey Bridge, straddles the Canal and links the Northcroft Recreation Centre with Russell Road by a pathway going north and south. At this point there is a Community Notice Board. There are also signs indicating the towpath is used by both cyclists and pedestrians. Further west is a late 20th century elderly persons' development with amenity areas adjacent to the Canal. Past this residential building are more 19th century residential properties with long gardens extending down to the towpath, followed at the end of Russell Road by 1980's-built properties, some of which were constructed on the alignment of the Lambourn Valley Railway, opened in 1898 and dismantled in the late 1970's. Immediately to the west of the residential area are open fields, used for sheep pasture, which extend into the Enborne Parish Council area. On the northern side of the Canal to the west of the Monkey Bridge, there is a small area of land used by houseboat residents, with a wartime pillbox being a prominent feature visible adjacent to the Bridge and bordered by a fenced area used for animal grazing. The River Kennet spurs off to the north, with the marshy land between the river and the Canal to the west being important for retaining water in the event of flood conditions. A short distance on the northern side is the remains of the Bridge and embankment which carried the Newbury to Lambourn railway across the Canal. The Town Council's boundary is roughly at this point.





## From the Town Centre to the eastern town boundary

The only access to the Canal Towpath just north of the Town Bridge (Bridge 60) is a sloping path between the former Ginsters' Pasty Shop (now closed) and Costa Coffee in Northbrook Street. At this point there is no towpath on the southern side until the Wharf area. The Canal itself runs through a single arch of the Bridge but it widens subsequently. As the towpath does not continue under Town Bridge (Bridge 60), the horses towing the boats had to go up the alley and across Bridge Street. You can see where the towropes wore away the bricks on the corner of the passageway.



The vista opens up to the attractive and well-kept Victoria Park on the left and the open area of the Wharf on the southern side with the Library and Stone building highlighted. The Stone Building is home to the Newbury Branch of the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust and houses the Teashop by the Canal, which is open daily for light refreshments, cakes, sandwiches, etc. Upstairs is the John Gould room, which serves as a multi-function room. Designed as a Canal Information Centre, there are information boards explaining the canal from past to present and other information material for visitors to peruse.

The Trust's trip boat, The Jubilee, operates from the Wharf. It is maintained and run entirely by trust volunteers. Jubilee is a narrowboat and provides public trips from April through to October on Thursdays and at weekends. Special themed trips aimed at children such as



With the exception of the 18th-century Old Rectory, the buildings on the north side are modern and bounded by railings while on the southern side of the Canal can be seen the backs of shops and restaurants.

There is a need to protect these aspects to ensure that they are in keeping with a Conservation Area. Further along the southern side are restaurants and pubs with open areas for customers to sit out and admire the Canal and the narrow boats as they pass up and down the Canal.

Continuing along the northern side of the towpath is the Waterside Centre owned by West Berkshire Youth. Working with Bradfield College they have plans to redevelop this facility for use by youth groups in the town. The modern architecture of the Camp Hopson furniture department blends in well. The towpath then narrows and pedestrians and cyclists have to negotiate the narrow path under the single carriageway Bridge linking Park Way with the Wharf. A signboard stating cyclists should dismount is usually ignored. On each side of the middle column of the Bridge are sited the plaques of Newbury Borough Council (abolished 1974) and Newbury District Council (abolished 1998) which gives it an identity.



Pirate, Halloween and Santa trips are run during school holidays. In addition, the boat is available for fully-crewed private charters for birthdays, anniversaries, work and social events, etc. See Jubilee's dedicated website for more information: [jubilee.katrust.org.uk](http://jubilee.katrust.org.uk)

At the convergence of paths leading into Victoria Park is a notice board produced by the Canal & River Trust which gives information about the Canal. Passing Victoria Park, the towpath veers right and passes under the A339 Bridge and the path becomes a rough earth and stone pathway. There is a weir on the left of the Canal which is where the river separates from the Canal. On the southern bank is the Police Station and now defunct Magistrates Court building and the new Canoe Club building and canoe store. With the development of the new canoe club building the club will increase its membership and develop a strategy for canoeing in the Newbury area. Further improvements to the boat store and the wharf adjacent to the club will also be sought.



On the northern side of the Canal a path the towpath continues past the now low-lying river bounded by trees, including a magnificent tall Weeping Willow. On the northern bank of the river can be seen the Parsons allotments and the southern end of the London Road Industrial Area. The southern bank widens and this is where the narrow boats are laid up at the jetty and maintenance area.

Further on a large wooden Bridge straddles the Canal suitable for pedestrians and cyclists. This gives access to the area of Greenham Mill which has been extensively developed with modern blocks of flats.

The towpath begins under the road Bridge and leads to the Wharf. Despite there being a car park in the background, this an attractive area. The Stone Building is a 19th century Grade II listed Building, formerly a granary and is now used as a café and information office. Tables and chairs are deployed outside along the towpath and with flower boxes and hanging baskets, this makes an attractive scene. On the towpath Wharf is sited a wooden crane which was salvaged from the former railway goods yard by the Newbury Society for use by Canal boats. It was rebuilt by the late Charles Hoyle from beams left lying by the Stone Building and handed over to West Berkshire Council in June 2006. The towpath terminates at this area and a path curves around the attractive Remembrance/Peace Gardens to end at the Wharf toilets.

(The eastern section between the Football Club and Ham Bridge is due to benefit from investment by the Canal & River Trust, using allocated



Section 106 money, in an improved surface which will make it easier to access for all manner of Canal visitors)

The Didcot, Newbury & Southampton Railway (1882-1964) used to Bridge the Canal at a point just west of where Dunelm Mill store is now located. The angled metal supports on the north side of the towpath indicate the former boundary fences. The embankment which ran between the Canal and the London Road near to Skylings was removed in the 1990's.





# 4 Related Buildings

## Listed Buildings

- Newbury Bridge, 1769. Architect Fuller White; built by James Clarke of Newbury. This has been frequently used as a symbol of Newbury, and views of the bridge should be protected.
- Newbury Lock, 1796.
- West Mills: Nos. 3 (St. Nicolas House), 4, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15-16 (former Coxedd's Almshouses),
- 17-18 (former Pearce's Almshouses),
- 19, 20, 21, 22 (former "Club House"), former 23-29 (Weavers' Cottages), and 32 West Mills.
- St. Nicolas Church (Tudor: 1520-c.1534).
- Bridge Street: No. 1 (Arigato), no. 2 (Griffins).
- Northbrook St: No. 1 (pasty shop), Old Rectory (behind Costa, behind 2-3 Northbrook Street)
- Mansion House Street: rear of buildings on North side, Nos. 4 & 5.
- Market Place: rear of buildings on North side, Nos. 26 (Old Waggon and Horses), 28-30 (NatWest Bank), 32, 34.
- Rear of Buildings on North side of Wharf Street, Nos. 1 & 3 (Slug & Lettuce), No. 5.
- Wharf House (former Kendrick House).
- The Granary (West Berkshire Museum).
- The Stone Building, Newbury Wharf.
- Stowers, London Road
- Newbury Manor Hotel (former Millwaters)

## Non Listed Buildings

(a selection only)

- Narrow Boat (former White House) pub
- Former Magistrates Court
- Police Station
- Canoe Club
- Newbury Library
- Waterside Centre
- 1-3 Mansion House Street
- Costa (rear part, behind 2-3 Northbrook Street but overlooking the canal).
- Newbury Building Society, Northbrook Street (locally listed).
- Town Mills flats.
- Housing at site of former West Mills mill (including former Granary).
- Bridges: A339 (Howard Humphreys & Sons, for Berkshire County Council, completed 1965); Park Way bridge; the West Mills swing bridge and footbridges at Greenham Mills and Monkey Bridge (Northcroft).

## Demolished Buildings

- Lock Cottage
- Bankside House (W. H. Smith etc. printing works, replaced by Nicholas [sic] Wharf)
- Town Mills
- West Mills





# 5 Special Canal Significance

- The canal corridor overlaps with three conservation areas: Newbury Town Centre (March 1971); Kennet & Avon Canal East (March 1983) and Kennet & Avon Canal West (March 1983).
- Newbury Lock. First lock on the Kennet & Avon Canal proper, opened 1796.
- Lock Island (and the surrounding walls).
- Newbury Bridge
- Crane on Newbury Wharf. From the Goods' Yard of Newbury Railway Station, installed as a symbol of the former importance of Newbury as an inland port. Erected 1983, re-erected after restoration 1996. Handed over by the Newbury Society to West Berkshire Council in 2006.
- Marina, Greenham Mills.
- Moorings.





# 6 Recommended Design Guidelines

The Town Design Statement strives to make sure any new waterside development seeks to enhance the wider waterway Corridor and protects the intrinsic qualities that the Canal Corridor offers. (Many of the design guidelines listed below are from guidance issued by the Canal & River Trust whose valuable input is very welcome.)

Measures and designs that enhance the Canal Corridor can help to promote the utilisation of the waterways by new and existing communities. This has the potential to enhance the wellbeing of people who live and work in Newbury.

Each waterside location needs to be considered individually, with no single design approach being appropriate in all locations. The following guiding principles should be taken into account so that, where appropriate, new waterside development should:

- Positively address the water
- Integrate the towing path and open up improve access to all of the waterway
- Link waterside space and the water space
- Use the water space itself
- Incorporate access and other improvements
- Engage with and tease out the qualities and benefits of being by water
- Reflect the scale of the local waterway Corridor to the wider neighbourhood
- Improve diversity of indigenous flora and fauna
- Improve aesthetics and vistas and sensuousness of the space (smell, sound)
- Not increase domestic or industrial noise
- Be carbon neutral/ zero carbon over 20 years (including inbedded carbon)
- Prioritise walking and cycling
- Increase provision of quiet and safe place
- Include a plan to demonstrate that the proposal will minimise the light impact on the environment/ ecology of its surrounds
- Encourage environmentally friendly materials



## Housing in and adjacent to the Canal Corridor

There is scope potential for building redevelopment especially on the eastern northern side of the Canal below Victoria Park east of the A339 as the light industrial areas of Newbury give way to housing. Done well, this will enhance the Canal, but it is vital to preserve the green character of the Canal Corridor by not building too close to the water.

A. All new developments on the Canal Corridor should respect the height, proximity to the Canal, and design of existing buildings, along with the effect on public access to the Canal. Every effort should be made to enable and encourage residents of new residential developments to use sustainable modes of transport, including cycling and walking along the Canal towpath, for their local journeys wherever possible

B. The rising height of recent developments mean that even buildings outside the canal corridor may have an impact.



## Newbury Wharf

C. Any new basin on the Wharf should be a working basin, designed to respond to the needs of Canal users, especially those with narrow-boats (and preferably designed by them) as well as the Canal & River Trust. It should not be simply an ornamental feature designed to enhance the setting of commercial development.

D. A Conservation Area Appraisal should be in place before the development of Newbury Wharf is considered. The Appraisals need to attach special importance to buildings and structures which have a historic relationship to the river and Canal, such as the Granary, and the Stone Building.

As the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust wrote in response to the Arundell House proposals in 1989, "There can be no doubt that a basin should be provided but it should be one of sufficient size to give off-river short-term moorings not only to visiting boaters but also to owners of local craft..."

E. In addition, the Trust made clear that the entrance/exit to such a basin should not be at right angles to the river.

F. Any development on the Wharf needs to respond sensitively to the Granary/ Corn Stores (West Berkshire Museum), and the east-facing Wharf House (former Kendrick House); and respecting views of the distinctive Granary.

## West Mills

The West Mills area, with a large proportion of listed buildings, is one of the jewels of Newbury in terms of history, architecture and atmosphere. This history is closely interwoven with that of the river and predates the creation of the Canal. A corn mill stood at West Mills, which was bought by Hovis in 1921 and sold in the 1950's.

In 1965 a fire destroyed some of the mill buildings; however the remains were incorporated into homes. The tall building was the granary.

It forms part of the Town Centre Conservation Area (created 1971), and the Kennet & Avon Canal (West) conservation area (created 1983), neither of which has ever had a Conservation Area Appraisal.

## General Character

G. The Canal still represents a sliver of countryside which reaches right into the town centre, and this ambience should be respected.

H. Surfacing the towpath should be carried out in a way and with materials which are sympathetic to the countryside ambience which generally prevails alongside the Canal, and (in most locations), park-like development with tarmacked paths and kerbs should be avoided.

I. At times the countryside atmosphere is achieved by a very narrow band of plants alongside the towpath. This needs to be protected and where possible enhanced.

J. Development should not detract from the character of the Canal and undermine its role in getting everyone to 'just slow down'. The towpath is a great and safe opportunity for cycling, however every effort must be made to encourage considerate cycling, at low speed, in the town area having regard to the safety and comfort of other Canal and towpath residents and users.

K. Access to the towpath west of Newbury Bridge gives a "reveal," with a narrow tunnel opening out suddenly into an area with grass and trees. Although seen by some as inconvenient, this makes a dramatic entrance to the Canal and should be protected. Additional signage would enhance the use of this access

L. Developments along the Canal Corridor should be designed so as to minimise the risk of anti-social behaviour and enhance public safety.

## Access

M. Current access points to the Canal should be protected. Additional access points should be considered on an individual basis.

N. Consideration should be given to competing users such as cyclists, runners and walkers; as well as those who are physically disabled. These should be balanced against each other, and due consideration given to the effect of access arrangements on the character of the Canal Corridor.



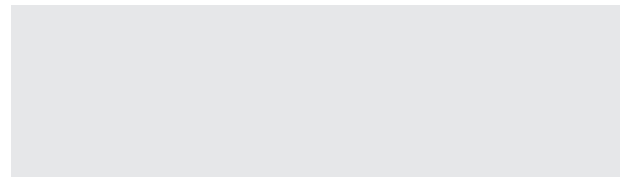
# Conservation Area Appraisals

36 years after designation, neither of the conservation areas Kennet & Avon Canal East (March 1983) and Kennet & Avon Canal West (also March 1983) has ever received a formal Conservation Area Appraisal.

West Berkshire Council's own website states: "The council has a duty to clearly define why an area has been designated as a Conservation Area, to outline its special interest, and to publish proposals for its preservation and enhancement. We use a Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) to achieve this. It helps everyone to understand the history of a particular area and why it is special. Once a CAA has been adopted by the council it then acts as a framework that guides future development in the Conservation Area."

No written description of the Canal conservation areas of any form currently appears on the West Berkshire Council website, although there is a link to a district map showing the conservation areas (which does not show the boundary between E & W).

O. A formal Conservation Area Appraisal should be produced for each of the Canal conservation areas in Newbury, highlighting non-listed as well as listed structures and raising their profiles in planning terms.





# 7 Design Principles

## A. Use of Planning Conditions

Applicants for planning permission for development in the Canal Corridor should be encouraged to include any waterway, towing path and environs lying within the application site edged in red on the location plan in order to ensure that:

- the extra liabilities and burdens placed upon the infrastructure are properly addressed;
- the waterway is not just treated as a setting or backdrop for development, and that instead the land and water are integrated and the waterway is treated as a useable space;
- the waterway, towing path and environs form an integral part of the public realm in terms of both design and management; and
- access to, along and from the waterway is improved, along with the environmental quality of the waterway corridor.

It is important to recognise that new waterside developments place extra liabilities and burdens upon the waterway infrastructure, in terms of ongoing management and maintenance, which cannot always be addressed by planning conditions. Engagement with the navigation authorities and Canal owners at the pre-application stage can therefore be crucial in order to identify the potential scale and form of these extra liabilities and burdens and to develop site-specific planning obligations requirements, where appropriate.

Local planning policies have a role to play in safeguarding waterways against being viewed solely as a setting or backdrop to new developments or an edge to policy designations.

## B. Community Involvement

Local authorities and navigation authorities should seek to engage local communities in the future planning of their local waterways, so as to secure community ownership and use.

(The Secret Garden Project is a small community project with volunteers from Newbury's West Field's Community Matters group. Set up in 2015, the aim of the Community Matters group, is to bring back a sense of community to the local area, to provide a support network for those who find themselves in need - a friendly face or a helping hand.

Community Matters have adopted the Globe Garden, the final resting place John Gould and his wife Winnie, and aim to create an area where local people can enjoy the beauty of the gardens, the canal and the safe spaces they plan to create - a secret garden

retreat where people can get together or find some peace on their own. Where adults and children can explore the beauty and natural surprises the garden will offer.

The Secret Garden Project is about coming together as a community & working towards creating a space that will be of benefit to everyone. The people involved are passionate about rescuing this hidden gem and sharing it with the town, to give people somewhere to rest, to learn, to partake & to grow.

Along with the Globe Garden the Secret Garden project, in collaboration with NTC and the CRT, are designing and developing the north side of Lock Island. The space will be opened up and made accessible to the whole community, with an education space close to the Lock, Stock and Barrel, and a community orchard to the west of the hard -standing.)

## C. Consultation by Planning Authority

West Berkshire District Council should engage with any navigation authorities, Canal owners and others responsible for waterway infrastructure likely to be affected by development. They should be involved at an appropriate level and in a focused way in setting planning obligations policies and, where appropriate, in formulating site-specific planning obligations requirements

## D. Consultation by applicants for planning permission for development in the Canal Corridor

Applicants are encouraged to undertake pre-application discussions with navigation authorities and to include any waterway, towing path and environs lying within the application site edged in red on the location plan. and environs lying within the application site edged in red on the location plan.





## E. Policy Formation

Planning policies should take account of the following factors:

- There are different types of waterways, which have different characteristics and principal functions.
- Waterways are multi-functional by nature.
- Waterways are public assets accessible to local communities free of charge.
- Individual waterways, towing paths and water spaces are a part of a wider network that crosses administrative boundaries and cannot be viewed in isolation.
- There are particular land use implications and locational requirements arising from the inherent constraint of inland waterways being 'non-footloose' assets.
- Development and regeneration can impose burdens and liabilities upon the waterway infrastructure, facilities and environs.
- There is a need to provide essential boat services and facilities to support the use of waterways for navigational purposes.
- There is a need to address the characteristics of underperforming waterways.
- Waterways and towing paths are spaces in their own right, and not just settings or backdrops to development or edges to policy designations.

Reference: The Canal and River Trust

## F. Well Designed Places

The Canal Corridor is not simply an attractive backdrop for buildings, but an important space of public realm. Developments should engage with waterways and, where appropriate, open up access to, from and along them. Buildings that provide views over the waterway and include active uses (like shops or cafes) provide natural surveillance, helping people to feel safe when using the towpath or moorings.

## G. Heritage

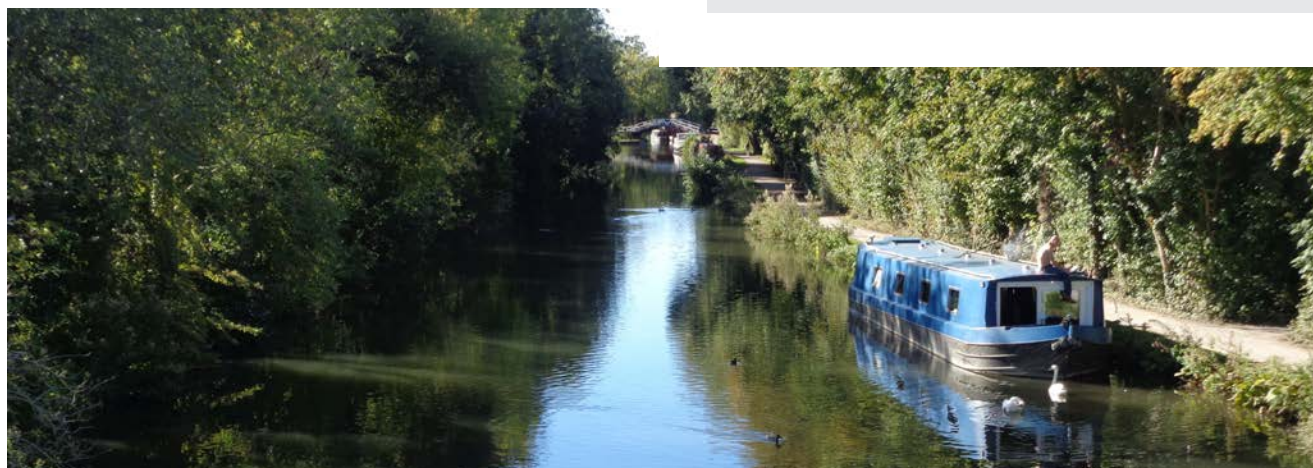
It's vital that new development protects, respects and enhances the heritage assets in the Canal Corridor so that they can continue to be enjoyed now and in the future.

## H. Sustainable Travel & Air Quality

Towpaths make excellent places for people to walk and cycle considerably. Not only is this great for recreation, it can be an attractive way for people to commute, reducing congestion, carbon emissions and poor air quality in the wider area and supporting people to lead healthier lives. There are also opportunities to use some waterways to transport freight, with some of the same benefits.

## I. Development on Canal & River Trust land

There may be opportunities to develop land owned by the Trust to create better waterside places. Where a development is proposed by a 3rd party on the Trust's land, such as new Bridges crossing their waterways or providing new utilities connections under the towpath, a commercial agreement will be required. The Trust's Code of Practice should be followed for works affecting their property



## Membership of The Newbury Town Council Canal Corridor Working Group

### 1. Newbury Town Council:

Councillors Gary Norman (Chairman), Martha Vickers, Roger Hunneman, Steven Masters, Tony Vickers and Vaughan Miller.

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive Officer

### Other interested Organisations:

The Canal & River Trust: Jane Hennell, MRTPI, Area Planner and Simon Kirby, BSc, (Hons), Customer Operations Supervisor

The Kennet & Avon Canal Trust (The Chairman)

Inland Waterways UK (Verna Smith, S.E. Region Chairman and Ellen Hawes)

West Berkshire Spokes: Clive Tombs and Josh Kerry

West Berkshire Ramblers: Graham Smith

The Newbury Society: Dr. David Peacock

West Berkshire Heritage Forum: Mr. Adrian Edwards

The Secret Garden Project: Sukey Russell-Hayward

Newbury Canoe Club: Ed Cooper

Newbury Anglers Association: Steve Todd

Newbury Boat Company: Emma Fearnley

Greenham Lock Marina: Peter Holland

### List of reference documents

**The Canal & River Trust:** "Guidance for Towpath Design", "Transforming Places", "Planning for waterways in Neighbourhood Plans"

**Inland Waterways UK:** "Policy Advice Note: Inland Waterways: Unlocking the Potential and Securing the Future of Inland Waterways through the Planning System"



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