

IWA Briefing 2011

THE INLAND WATERWAYS:

The New Waterways Charity
How to Get the Best for Your Waterways





Harry Arnold Waterways Images Ltd.

The Future of the Inland Waterways

The Government is abolishing British Waterways and the management and operation of its inland waterways network will transfer to a New Waterways Charity to be established on 1 April 2012.

Why should you be interested? Well...

People: over half the population lives within about 10 minutes of a waterway and there are more than 13 million visitors to the British Waterways network alone. These visitors go walking, jog, cycle, fish, use boats and make journeys to work or shops.



The waterways are free. They offer social cohesion and integration opportunities at low cost to the elderly, the disabled, minorities and

a chance to build better lives for groups such as those with learning difficulties or ex-offenders.

Regeneration: restored canals are a catalyst for regeneration in run down areas. Birmingham and Manchester are great examples. A cautious investment to benefit ratio is 1:6. It can be much higher when property and commercial development is fully realised.

Trade: the leisure and small commercial marine industry is worth over £3bn employing over 35,000 people.

The Environment: the built and natural environment has much to offer. Only the Church of England and the National Trust have more listed property than British Waterways.



The waterways are increasingly recognised as providing a range of valuable habitats supporting biodiversity.

Freight: waterborne freight is a small percentage of freight movement with potential to grow. It offers climate change and congestion benefits

How to Get the Best for Your Waterway

Defra's plans for financing the New Waterways Charity would make it a fragile entity. The All-Party Parliamentary Waterways Group took expert evidence on financing. The consensus was that there is a deficit of some £40m per annum to keep the network maintained. The Group submitted a Memorandum to Government with recommendations on how it should improve the viability of the Charity.

IWA believes that the range of options that Government should consider include to:

- Meet the past service pension liabilities of British Waterways.
- Provide a transition fund both to cover the costs for a successful launch of the Charity and the costs of promoting local involvement.
- Index the indicative funding.
- Provide certainty of funding beyond 10 years.
- Find funding for the cost of bridge repairs which has risen exponentially.

Localism

The New Waterways Charity will only flourish to its full potential if local people and organisation get involved, giving their waterways their full backing and support.

The new structure will create Local Waterways Partnerships and this will be the forum to develop local initiatives such as fund raising, co-ordinated and well managed volunteering and the local view on investment priorities. The input from Local Waterway Partnerships to both the Charity and to Local Enterprise Partnerships will be vital to care for the waterways in a manner that local people want, securing their engagement and ensuring that money spent delivers good value.



Do Your Bit

Whether you are a Member of Parliament, a councillor, a local user organisation or a local business YOU CAN DO YOUR BIT.

Lobby Government over proper finance for the charity; get involved with your Local Waterway Partnership; make sure that the Local Enterprise Partnership knows the value that waterways can deliver for economic development.

To find out more about your inland waterways contact the local IWA branch or IWA Head Office.

THE INLAND WATERWAYS:

The New Waterways Charity – Getting the Best



www.waterways.org.uk

Registered office: Island House, Moor Road, Chesham HP5 1WA
Tel: 01494 783453

The Inland Waterways Association is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee
Registered in England No. 612245. Registered as a charity 212342.

keeping our waterways  *alive*