

AINA CASE STUDY

THE WAY FORWARD

Chesterfield Canal Partnership



Partnership drives waterway restoration and helps other groups learn the benefits of working together

An effective partnership has been formed to complete the restoration and development of the Chesterfield Canal which will deliver wide ranging environmental, social and economic benefits to communities along the waterway.

Their work aims to bring back full navigation, protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built heritage of the canal, improve public access and improve local quality of life. An annual work programme is developed by a working and steering groups which have adopted three core strategies linked to restoration, access and communication.

The Chesterfield Canal Trust had long lobbied for a formal partnership, which commenced in 1995 and has employed a development manager from 2004. Core partners include the Chesterfield Canal Trust, District and County Councils, British Waterways, Environment Agency, Wildlife Trusts and the Inland Waterways Association.

Derbyshire County Council, which owns eight kilometres of canal, leads by example and carries out active restoration and development work through a positive 'can do' attitude. Their Countryside Service provides long term management support to the development manager who takes both strategic and day-to-day lead in most affairs. Nottinghamshire County Council part funds staff, develops its length of canal, improves access and integrates the corridor into complimentary strategies. District authorities develop Area Action Plans and partner regeneration work with the private sector.

Lessons to be shared with other canal partnerships include the need to encourage work towards shared long term goals, knowing that the project is larger and more important than any short term hiccups. Feasibility studies need to be in place before new partners can be expected to support the work, whilst small scale works always help maintain a belief that progress is being made. The partnership has also found that promotional work can communicate a vision and spread the word about progress. A groundswell of public opinion helps, supported by recognition from awards.

Above all, patience and determination are crucial to waterway partnerships and the Chesterfield team have learnt that lead organisations must recognise that the best results cannot be achieved without the contribution of all partners. The Partnership is now developing an exit strategy by setting up Community Interest Company to generate funds for long term maintenance.