

AINA CASE STUDY

PLACE MAKING AND SHAPING

West Dunbartonshire: animating the canal



Increasing activity on and alongside the Forth and Clyde Canal at Clydebank

A 2005 study to identify ways of increasing activity on and alongside the Forth and Clyde Canal at Clydebank showed it was bordered by poorly-defined incidental space which was under-used and did not relate to either the newly restored waterway or existing urban areas. Further analysis led to two main development projects: the redesign of the north bank at Clydebank shopping centre, bringing improved linkages and opportunities to use the canal for recreation, and the installation of a new canopy over the footbridge linking the north and south malls of the shopping centre. The design for this was inspired by a swan in flight and replaced an unpopular 25-year-old metal lattice frame.

Community benefits included improvement of the towpath as a safe off-road route, installation of landmark artworks, and access, seating and signage improvements. The works have all encouraged greater of the canal corridor and pride and confidence in the area has continued to grow.

The work was instigated by a working group, established at the outset, to bring together all parties interested in the regeneration of the canal in West Dunbartonshire. This was led by West Dunbartonshire Council, with the support of Scottish Enterprise, Clydebank Rebuilt, British Waterways Scotland, the Waterways Trust and West Dunbartonshire Greenspace. All had land ownership interests in the canal corridor, and particular emphasis was placed on community involvement. Actions were identified in a study, *Animating the Canal*, and though work was progressed through working group meetings, it was essential for the lead partner to maintain a clear strategic overview.

Each partner had project responsibilities, e.g., the local Council sourced funding, regeneration agency Clydebank Rebuilt managed the footbridge works and organised community events, and the Waterways Trust accessed charitable organisations and carried out schools outreach work. An ability to identify and clearly define roles and responsibilities was essential as the project developed.

It was recognised that without public support the project could not have been successfully completed, and momentum was required to sustain progress to enable delivery within a number of fixed-term timescales. Accountability to elected members and funders was essential, and regular progress reports were made through design forums and public events such as a canal carnival.