

AINA CASE STUDY

TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Montgomery Canal: Powys Canal Tourism Project



The Powys Canal Tourism Project worked with a variety of waterway related businesses

European Interreg funding provides a legacy for further development

The Powys Canal Tourism Project, a three year scheme supported by European Interreg IIIB funding, was developed to diversify tourism in the wider corridor of the Montgomery Canal in mid Wales. The project aimed to develop networks, create linkages and maximise economic gains from the sustainable development of the waterway.

A range of successful outputs were achieved including:

- A business survey to provide a baseline for further initiatives
- Creation of a small business network to support joint marketing of the canal
- Development of farm-based tourism via a number of local accommodation providers
- Links with a commercial environmentally-friendly horse drawn holiday boat
- Surveys for towpath and circular walks
- Towpath access improvements
- New stiles and better signage
- A series of education work sheets
- Development of the Severn Way Partnership – a long distance riverside trail
- Environmental enhancements in tandem with local Community Councils
- Community involvement, e.g., angling events, litter picks, volunteer work
- Work with the Friends of the Montgomery Canal

A project officer was employed and considerable time and effort was devoted to developing additional funding applications to support on-going implementation work. As a result of the Interreg project, more than £700,000 has been secured for tourism related work including:

- A scheme to deliver a range of towpath improvements in Llanymynech and Berriew
- Access to Water – improved canoe access and a complimentary Explorer's Trail
- A project called 'Adfywio' to develop improvements to the towpath in Welshpool town centre, work at a canalside nature reserve, establishment of in-channel nature reserves and the creation of circular walks

The Explorer's Trail promotes the canal to ramblers, family groups, cyclists and canoeists and aims to encourage wider discovery of the waterway corridor via a 'mix and match' approach to visitors and tourists. Maps indicate locations for cycle hire, the launch of canoes, local bus routes and walks to sites of heritage interest. Links to Offa's Dyke and other trails are promoted and six carefully prepared routes show visitors how to enjoy both the canal and its hinterland.

Despite its isolated nature, the Montgomery Canal has successfully benefited from a partnership approach to tourism development which supports rural regeneration and encourages a range of organisations to continue their locally based work.