

AINA CASE STUDY

TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Overwater Marina, Shropshire Union Canal



“Our environment is your environment”

Overwater Marina, next to bridge 80 on the Shropshire Union Canal, opened in 2010. The facilities and surroundings have all been designed to provide safe and attractive moorings within a range of habitats to enhance the environment and biodiversity. The marina is a short walk from Audlem village and is surrounded by pleasant Cheshire farmland.

Overwater has been keen to promote responsible and sustainable boating and they are proud to announce that “our environment is your environment”. The marina has been audited by The Green Blue - a joint British Marine Federation and Royal Yachting Association initiative and the facilities have also achieved the ICOMIA Clean Marina standard. Recycling banks are provided and safe battery disposal is also available on site. The shop stocks environmentally friendly boat cleaners and chemicals. The main building is heated by a ground source heat pump and solar panels, which provide hot water for showers and heat for underfloor heating.

Behind each set of moorings a series of shallows have been created for fish to spawn and the marina edges have been softly engineered to encourage butterflies and dragonflies. More than 8,000 hedge plants and around 200 hundred trees have been planted on site and a range of wildflowers flourish on an island.

Facilities for boaters include 16 amp electric plug-ins, water taps on every bollard, full length jetties, ample space for navigation and a wide marina entrance. Refuelling and pumpout facilities are provided and a workshop, boat painting and hardstandings are also available.

The marina was part financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and was delivered with support from the Northwest Development Agency and DEFRA. Its success has been celebrated through a number of early awards, including the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce best start-up business in 2011, a Marine Industry Environment Award in 2011 and top recognition in the Yacht Harbour Association Gold Anchor Scheme.

Overwater Farm (originally called Over the Water because it can only be reached by crossing the canal, the River Weaver or an adjacent brook) continues as an active dairy enterprise, and participates in Natural England's Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme. A range of on-farm conservation measures are undertaken and visitors are welcome to learn more about farming and the environment.