



## HARNESSING GROWTH: bringing benefits back to the waterways

### 1. Introduction

### 2. Scope

### 3. Putting it into practice

### 4. Ways of generating income and sharing in benefits

### 5. Case studies

## FOREWORD

While public use and enjoyment of Britain's inland waterways has increased sharply over recent years, it is not always the case that navigation authorities themselves have benefited from the increased use of their assets. Indeed, increased use by its nature results in increased management and maintenance required to sustain and improve the waterways to the correct standard. Navigation authorities need to be able to tap into the increased benefits that have arisen from the regeneration of the nation's waterways in order to become more economically sustainable in the future.

This document outlines ways by which navigation authorities can generate income and share in the benefits that the waterways offer by identifying existing and potential opportunities to make the most of their water space and assets. Examples of the wide-ranging opportunities that exist are illustrated through case studies which show practical and cost-effective schemes and ideas where navigation authorities have worked, in partnership with others, to generate income and achieve growth.

The document also compliments previous AINA material and guidance (available at [www.aina.org.uk](http://www.aina.org.uk)) designed to attract visitors and encourage them to make more of our waterways.

By adopting these approaches, and developing further initiatives to share in the benefits that their waterways provide, navigation authorities can demonstrate their own abilities to raise income for essential projects and to assist in the leverage of

additional, often much larger contributions, from external organisations and funding agencies.

The document will be kept 'live' on the AINA website such that it can be supplemented with more case study material over time. I hope all members will provide the information to keep the guidance updated, and that we will all share in the ensuing benefits in time.

Julia Simpson  
**Chair**

## 1. Introduction

Britain's waterways have undergone a resurgence which has seen them transformed into a nationally recognized asset of major importance.

This means that navigation authorities are now the guardians of increasingly popular and well used destinations, attracting millions of visitors all year round. Over the years AINA has worked closely with its members, providing them with guidance aimed at increasing the number of visitors to the waterways and supporting them in their efforts to improve their facilities and standards of customer care.

The benefits of living and working alongside our waterways have been heavily documented and the major investment and subsequent profits that have been achieved by developers are huge.

However, increased activity on this unique waterway infrastructure brings with it a high cost: more visitors means that higher safety standards need to be implemented and that there is an increase in maintenance activity.

Consequently, navigation authorities have not always shared in the benefits and the increased facilities may not always bring sufficient income to cover the additional expenditure required.

Proactive steps need to be taken, therefore, to ensure that navigation authorities take a share of the profits being made and the benefits achieved.

This guidance document aims to provide navigation authorities with innovative yet straightforward schemes that demonstrate how they can continue to provide their customers with the facilities that they have come to expect and deserve, whilst at the same time minimizing the effect on resources in the future.

The case studies demonstrate the various ways which different navigation authorities have generated income and worked with others to achieve benefits in kind.

## 2. Scope

Waterways and navigations have grown into important local and national multi-use facilities, for a large variety of user groups - individuals, clubs, groups and corporate organisations. However, the support infrastructure needed to ensure the continued operation and maintenance of this important resource has not kept pace with the new benefits provided.

This means that navigation authorities will have to take a more proactive approach in obtaining necessary support and funding for their future operations.

The long term strategic issues of funding and legislation are outside the scope of this project. This guidance aims to help navigation authorities to identify, and, more importantly, take advantage of local opportunities to generate income and benefit from the increase use of the waterways.

To achieve this it is useful to break down the tasks into four parts: i) undertaking a survey, ii) identifying the opportunities, iii) identifying the types of benefits that might be achievable, and lastly, iv) building on all three to develop a strategy.

### 2.1 Undertaking the survey

Before launching into any project, the appropriate groundwork is necessary. Navigation authorities should undertake a quick and simple survey of their waterways to identify what users need, what they want and what their interests are, and to record this information in a table backed up by a plan.

Current resources such as marinas, café's, towpaths (and condition), moorings, access points, car parks, wi-fi points and other such facilities should be identified.

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The information gathered can be recorded on a colour-coded map of the waterway, section by section, each colour representing the type of benefit that could be achieved.

See Section 2.3 for examples of the benefits.

## 2.2 Identifying the opportunities

Once a detailed survey/plan has been done its results should help to identify any gaps in provision and highlight where new opportunities could be developed or where the current provision could be supported by others (for example, rubbish clearance funded by the local authority or water level management/flood control carried out by the Environment Agency).

Community involvement is a necessary part of establishing successful partnerships. One of the best ways to garner ideas is through a group 'brain storming' session - you will be surprised at the number of useful suggestions that can be generated from this exercise. Testing some of these possibilities may produce benefits in the future. Once the potential opportunities have been highlighted a small number of the most successful ideas can be developed into actual schemes, providing substantial additional benefits and support over the long term.

## 2.3 What kind of benefits can navigation authorities pursue?

All too often the first inclination is to think immediately of obtaining direct funding, yet other equally important methods of support may be easier, both financially and politically. These are:

Benefits in kind	Indirect benefits	Direct benefits
<p>free bin bags litter clearance equipment materials joint working along boundaries</p> <p>All of these can provide substantial benefits at reduced or minimal costs.</p> <p>Developing good relationships and partnerships with local authorities and adjoining landowners is key to being successful in this area.</p>	<p>planning gain (this can be highly beneficial but involves working closely with local authorities to achieve it)</p> <p>individual agreements with developers, riparian owners or local authorities (these can provide access improvements for both navigation authorities and users alike, and provide funding towards specific projects such as major bank repairs or bridge replacements)</p>	<p>moorings and navigation licenses</p> <p>car park charges</p> <p>access licenses (including discharge pipes into waterway)</p> <p>service charges, etc</p>

Consideration should also be given to 'green' infrastructure opportunities.

Numerous case studies demonstrate how the waterway network can provide a significant resource for people to take exercise such as walking and for improving people's mental and physical health (particularly in urban areas). Long-distance paths, outdoor gyms, canoe touring routes, wildlife watching, the Sustrans national cycle network, etc., all bring benefits to communities living and working near the waterway network.

New facilities such as showers and visitor centres have been provided as part of these green open space sites. Whitlingham Country Park on the Yare in the Broads or Ferry Meadows Country Park on the Nene are good examples of green developments adding value to the appeal and range of amenities available to our boating customers and contributing towards reducing costs.

Also, by developing health, cultural and sporting facilities, navigation authorities can benefit directly from income derived from charging for subsidiary activities, for example on-site advertising, the leasing out of buildings for tourism-based services, tea-rooms, cycle hire, restaurants, accommodation etc.

### 3. Putting it into practice

The successful management of a waterway involves multi-tasking - from property development to grass cutting, from restoration to education, from navigation to cycling.

Finding resources to undertake routine day to day maintenance is much harder than finding money for one-off projects. After waterway restoration has been completed and the new developments and regeneration schemes are up and running, the navigation authority has to find ways of generating income to finance its day to day operations.

AINA members can demonstrate a wealth of experience in promoting, developing and enhancing the waterways and surrounding environment.

The ideas included in the table that follows are by no means exhaustive, but have been provided by AINA members to demonstrate how they have managed to either achieve an income stream, or shared in the benefits that have been generated by others.

For more detailed information on some of the examples included in the table, please go to Section 5 - Case Studies.

This guidance, together with detailed case studies will be included on the AINA website. If you have a unique way of generating income on your waterway, please contact the AINA office with details and they can be included in our online guidance. AINA would like to thank the members of the project team who assisted in the production of this guidance and to Defra for its continued support.

## 4. Ideas for income generation/sharing in benefits

Once the survey has been undertaken, it is then possible to create a strategic plan which will allow you to turn the opportunities into actual benefits. Some examples of ways of generating income and sharing in benefits are given here.

Type of benefit	Description
Benefits in Kind	<p>Keeping navigations clear from underwater obstructions is an important safety task and keeping banks and boundaries clear of rubbish helps to maintain the attractiveness of the waterway. However, the cost of removing such rubbish can add up. One navigation authority has managed to negotiate with its neighbouring local authorities for a joint agreement whereby the navigation authority staff collect the rubbish, but the local authorities provide skips for its removal and disposal.</p> <p><b>(See Case Study 6 for more information)</b></p>
Benefits in Kind	<p>For many people walking along pathways and countryside routes is a pastime that has become an integral part of their daily lives. By providing an opportunity for them to give donations navigation authorities not only benefit from the good will of the people concerned, but they also receive income enabling them to provide necessary customer facilities such as benches along the routes.</p>
Benefits in Kind	<p>Community police operate within city centres as part of their day to day business and where navigation authorities have an urban base it may be possible to tap into these resources by providing them with 'free' facilities such as car parking. The visual presence of community police on a regular basis at waterway areas can provide not only an increased level of protection for the waterway itself, but increase the feeling of security enjoyed by customers.</p>
Benefits in Kind	<p>Areas planted with flowers and shrubs not only enhance the actual site itself but also provide an opportunity for local businesses to become involved by sponsoring the planting schemes. This enables the business to demonstrate the positive role they play within the community whilst at the same time publicise their service to the many people enjoying the waterways.</p>
Benefits in Kind	<p>Waterways can provide unique filming location sites and income can be generated by actively seeking the involvement of film companies.</p> <p><b>(See Case Study 7 for more information)</b></p>

Indirect Benefits	<p>Flood defence plays an ever-increasing role in today's water management. The Environment Agency (EA) owns and operates a number of flood defence assets on non-EA managed waterways. It is possible for agreements to be reached with the EA by which navigation authorities can operate their flood defence/water level management structures on their behalf. Contracts can be negotiated which provide direct income to the navigation authority.</p> <p><b>(See Case Study 1 for more information)</b></p>
Indirect Benefits	<p>Annual agreements with fishing clubs bring in income. However, agreements could also include options for charging separately for fishing matches, special events and so on. By controlling annual agreements to this level the navigation authority derives an annual income but also keeps it in control of its navigation.</p>
Indirect Benefits	<p>Wetland fields owned by the National Trust cannot be used for development purposes and for most of the year these are by nature not accessible. However, these areas do have to be fenced, maintained etc., and schemes such as The Countryside Stewardship Scheme (or its successor) provide grant funding to help with costs.</p>
Indirect Benefits	<p>Some navigation authorities may own property which they do not use themselves but which is necessary for operational reasons. Such properties can be used to generate income and, if tenanted, benefit from being maintained and kept secure.</p>
Indirect Benefits	<p>Navigation authorities should charge an easement licence where permission is requested for the development of infrastructure such as the erection of scaffolding alongside a bridge or other structure, the building of mini turbine/hydro power schemes, the laying of water drainage pipes, telecoms cables etc</p>
Indirect Benefits	<p>Where offices are used only during weekdays car parks could be used for weekend hire - in an urban area it can be used for shoppers, and in the countryside for day trippers/tourists.</p> <p>Direct benefits Flood alleviation works are necessary to safeguard land and property and the costs associated with them are generally taken on board by third parties. By entering into negotiation with the third parties, it may be possible to benefit from improved or additional customer facilities such as landscaping and environmental works, provision of moorings etc.</p>
Direct Benefits	<p>Section 106 Agreements (S.106) are legal agreements between local authorities and developers, which are linked to a planning permission, known as planning gains. These agreements are drawn up when it is considered that a development will have negative impacts that can't be dealt with through conditions in the planning permission.</p>

	<p>For example, a new residential development places additional pressure on the existing social, physical and economic infrastructure in the surrounding area. Planning obligations aim to balance the extra pressure from development, with improvements to the surrounding area, in order that a development makes a positive contribution to the local area.  <b>(See Case Study 8 for more information)</b></p>
<p><b>Direct Benefits</b></p>	<p>'Hot spots' can justify investment by navigation authorities in improved customer facilities, and costs can be reduced by building partnerships with the local authorities and other stakeholders. The role of volunteer groups should not be discounted as they can play an important role once the development is completed by providing assistance with the day to day management of the new facilities, helping to keep maintenance costs down in the future.  <b>(See Case Study 9 for more information)</b></p>

## 5. Case Studies

The following case studies are examples of schemes and agreements that have been implemented by navigation authorities around the country. They reflect the benefits that can be achieved in all three categories of a) benefits in kind, b) direct benefits and c) indirect benefits. To view and/or download a case study as a pdf, go to the AINA website.

### 1. A contract for water level management

The Wey Navigations

### 2. The River Thames Alliance - Getting results through partnership

Environment Agency, The River Thames

### 3. Boating on the wild side - GOBA (Great Ouse Boating Association) 'wild' moorings

River Great Ouse

### 4. Collective non-power licence with the British Canoe Union

The Wey Navigations

### 5. Partnership working brings great benefits for the Broads Authority

The Broads Authority

### 6. A partnership approach to rubbish management

The River Cam

### 7. Primeval (ITV) - Impossible Pictures: Filming at West India Docks 2008

British Waterways, London Region

### 8. Section 106 Agreements - The Guildford towpath restoration project

The Wey Navigations



**9. New visitor moorings on the Llangollen Canal**  
British Waterways, Wales & Border Counties Business Unit

AINA 2008