

11. Land ownership

Landownership Requirements – Work Package 17

There are two landowners involved. These are :-

Mr J Ward, the owner of the Humber Arm, is very keen to capitalise on it and put it to good use. He has mentioned the possibility of a marina. However as the arm is not through channel and has space to turn boats around at the terminal, it could provide the same mooring facilities without going to the expense of creating a separate facility. He has already said that he would finance the materials to restore the wharf buildings and bridge if the Trust provides the voluntary labour. The Trust volunteers have already carried out work to tidy up the wharf area and the bridge and intend to do further work next year. This poses the question of ultimate ownership of the arm when completed; the Trust or the present owner. This will need to be negotiated and made clear with legal agreement before the Trust advances too far down this route. In the area of the embankment, the owner breeds birds for shooting and during the season his gamekeeper organises and arranges the shoots. He therefore prefers not to have work carried out during the shooting season.

The other landowner is a Mr O'Neill who owns the section on the main line. He has been contacted and is supportive.

Landownership Requirements – Work Package 18

Two landowners are involved in this length. They are:-

Mr Phillips, who owns the length from bridge B20 to B21. Mr Phillips has been contacted by the Trust to ascertain his views, but it is believed that he will not be supportive.

Mr D Sankey, the owner of the length from B21 to the boundary of Kinley Farm has been contacted by the Trust and he is prepared to discuss the issue.

Landownership Requirements – Work Package 19

Two landowners are involved in this length. They are:-

The transport company (Mr Waters) mentioned above, which has moved to larger premises in Telford, still owns the wharf area; warehouses; and wharf access from the public road on the south side. The owner of the transport company, although contacted on a number of occasions, has not yet given a view. He has applied for planning permission to convert the warehouses and surrounding wharf areas for housing, which the Trust and English Heritage have opposed.

The second owner (Mr D Crow) owns the stretch up to the east basin and also the west basin and all the land surrounding the area owned by the transport company, other than land attached to privately owned houses adjacent to the wharf. This owner is very supportive.

Legal Position

The Trust should always attempt to acquire the lengths required by negotiation if possible. Several of the landowners are already supportive of the proposal as they envisage direct benefits from the restoration of the Canal. If, however, one or more landowners are reluctant to open negotiations with the Trust, the Trust, in full consultation with British Waterways and the local authority, should look at the opportunities for acquisition contained in the Transport and Works Act 1992 or other legislation.

Landowner Requirements – Water Balance

The land owner who holds the extraction licence on the Humber Arm is supportive but the Environment Agency will need to be consulted in terms of it being the source of supply for this project length.

12. Regeneration and tourism development opportunities

Introduction

This section of the canal contains two groups of historic buildings. The first at Wappenshall is of national importance and forms the basis of an exciting development, which will be a great attraction to visitors. The second at Lubstree wharf includes a transshipment shed and engine house which lie at the end of the Humber Arm. The two groups are linked by 4.388km of canal and the intention is to restore both sets of buildings and the connecting waterway as a discrete package.

In tourism terms there are significant opportunities to create 'centres of interest' at both groups of buildings and develop water and land based recreational activities between the two. The proximity of Hoo Farm (an established tourism attraction) to Lubstree presents the possibility of a new green transport link to this important attraction.

It is envisaged that the development of this package will be led by the restoration of the buildings at Wappenshall to create a 'canal hub' as advocated by the Inland Waterways Advisory Council in its 2005 document 'Just Add Water'. Wappenshall lies conveniently half way between Norbury Junction and Shrewsbury and will become a significant stopping off point along the route. However any development should be sensitive to the needs of adjoining properties.

This section of the report should be read in conjunction with the sections on Heritage Restoration Opportunities and Leisure and Educational Opportunities.

Strategic Vision for Tourism

The proposed developments along this section of the canal are complementary to Shropshire's Tourism Strategy published in 2003. The Strategic Vision for Tourism in Shropshire was outlined as follows: -

'The Vision is to establish Shropshire as a high quality rural tourism destination that uses the area's distinctive landscape, environment and heritage assets to provide unique opportunities for relaxing, short leisure breaks for couples and activity focused family holidays.

...The strategy foresees the development of a range of new rural products and packages based on Shropshire's high quality landscape, environment and heritage assets.'

The County has three active canals – the Shropshire Union, the Llangollen and the Montgomery. The long-term ambition of linking Shrewsbury to the network at Norbury Junction via Newport will create a new cruising waterway with significant benefits for this part of Shropshire. The area to the North of Telford has few major attractions and is largely rural in character. The development of a centre of activity at Wappenshall will create a new destination for visitors and strengthen the appeal of the

well-established Hoo Farm attraction. It will give the urban area of Telford a new focus for tourism to balance that in the Ironbridge Gorge to the South of the town

The Wappenshall to Lubstree section of the canal is a short distance from the urban populations of 250,000 people who live within Shrewsbury and Telford. Slightly further a field there are major concentrations of population in Staffordshire, Wolverhampton and the Black Country. The Wappenshall buildings are described as of national interest so there will be a wider market of people interested in canal restoration who will want to come and visit the completed project. This market can be reached via the popular canal and waterway magazines and websites.

To be a successful tourism venture the Wappenshall to Lubstree section needs to satisfy the needs of visitors. These are many and varied and best approached by segmenting the various groups of people who are most likely to enjoy what is on offer.

Restoring the past

Britain's strength as a tourism destination has been largely built upon its past from Stonehenge and spectacular cathedrals and castles to the 20th century phenomenon of The Beatles. Industrial and transport heritage has been a growing sector with numerous steam railways, aircraft, motor and maritime museums being established around the country. Shropshire has considerable assets in this field including the RAF Museum at Cosford, the Severn Valley and Telford Steam Railways, the canals described above and the World Heritage Site at Ironbridge Gorge.

The restoration of the Shrewsbury and Newport Canals will complement this offering to visitors and provide not only a superb heritage attraction but also new opportunities to enjoy the county's rich countryside. Green or sustainable tourism is at the heart of Shropshire's future tourism initiatives. In short this means developing attractions and services to visitors where they have a positive impact upon the environment and local host communities.

The proposals to restore the buildings at Wappenshall and Lubstree and the canal between are described in Section 13 of the report. Once restored they represent a new tourism facility, which will enable visitors to understand the history of the canal and in particular the buildings, basins and canal features which they can see. It is hoped that many will be inspired to seek out other sections of the canal to see what remains. The most interesting sites are at Norbury Junction, Newport, the aqueduct at Longden on Tern and the Flaxmill area of Shrewsbury.

This report examines the tourism impacts, which accrue in first phase after the two sets of buildings and connecting canal route have been restored, albeit isolated from the rest of the network. In second phase, boat traffic will be arriving from Newport and Norbury Junction and in the third phase boats will be able to proceed through this section westwards to Shrewsbury.

Proposed Upgrading of Wappenshall Junction



The subsequent creation of a marina village at Wappenshall has been put forward for consideration in the Telford and Wrekin Local Development Framework by a private developer.

Using the Hub approach

In order to properly understand the regeneration and tourism benefits of the proposal it is necessary to adopt the hub approach advocated by the Inland Waterways Advisory Council in the report 'Just Add Water'. This looked at waterway revival schemes and identified locations where the canal offered significant economic benefits over and above those associated with the restoration itself. It proposed that where there were groups of buildings in settlements but also outside there were opportunities to develop new amenities not only for visitors but for local residents as well.

The report said that the hub is: -

'Envisaged as an integrated site providing a range of products and services – both commercial and not-for-profit activities – managed under an umbrella banner and targeted at members of the local community and visitors.'

To describe the various elements of a hub a grid is used to map commercial and not-for-profit activities and weight them according to their usefulness to local community and visitor markets.

In the Wappenshall to Lubstree section of the canal the centre of activity is the wharf at Wappenshall with the outlying part of the hub being located at Lubstree. As this section will be regenerated as an isolated part of the bigger Shrewsbury and Newport Canal story it is important to take an integrated approach to its development.

In brief the proposals for this section of the canal are as follows: -

- Bring back into water the Wappenshall east basin initially.
- Develop an adjacent car parking area with landscaping.
- Restore the main warehouse at Wappenshall to provide on the ground floor a reception, canal shop, cafeteria and kitchen to sell refreshments. On the first floor to create an exhibition/interpretation area about the history and environment of the canal and other Telford/Shropshire canals. The lower ground floor where the canal flows through will be restored with its original architectural features.
- Restore the second and smaller warehouse at Wappenshall to provide on the ground floor new Trust offices and work area. On the first floor it is proposed

to provide an education and training facility for school groups and volunteers with kitchen and toilets.

- Restore the main line of the canal eastwards from Wappenshall to the junction with the Humber Arm and the Humber Arm itself to a navigable state with adjacent towpath.
- The transshipment warehouse and engine house at Lubstree Wharf will be restored as a heritage building. The ground floor could serve as a gallery space or boat repair or even be used as offices for the Trust thus freeing up space at Wappenshall. The upper floor could be converted for use as flat for the gallery tenant or as a holiday flat.
- Create a green footpath route along the tow path from Wappenshall to the tourist attraction at Hoo Farm.

These are the physical elements of the scheme which, when completed, will allow for the development of a large range of activities and interests. It is the activities and interests which will drive the tourism impact of the scheme.

There is an overlap in many aspects of the scheme between the needs of visitors (who are away from their normal home environment) and the local community. This part of the canal is sparsely populated so for the purposes of this exercise the local community includes anyone who lives within 5 miles and people directly connected with the Trust including its members.

Prior to the completion of the works a wide variety of temporary jobs will have been created in restoring the canal and buildings.

The following table maps the different activities and relates them to type e.g. commercial and not for profit and by relevance to the community and visitors.

In the table - W = Wappenshall; L= Lubstree; C = Canal between

Commercial			
Local Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New recreation facility WLC • Fishing C • Canoeing C • Film/TV location • Cafeteria W • Canal shop/crafts W • Gallery/workspace WL • Local employment WL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tourism facility WLC • Car park W • Picnic area WL • Trip boat WL • Restaurant boat WL • Moorings WLC • Canal shop/crafts W • Gallery W • Cafeteria W • Bike hire W • Chandlery W • Hoo Farm link L • Working holidays W • Holiday flat L 	Visitor Needs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear country park C • Trust office W • Trust work base W • Education centre W • Community information W • Volunteer opportunities WLC • Meeting space • Walking and cycling C • Wildlife watching C • Painting/photography WLC • Restoring local heritage WLC • Heritage research W • Lifelong learning W • Play area W 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception W • Exhibition about canals W • Play area W • Picnic area W • Walking and cycling C • Canal trail - Norbury to Shrewsbury C • Wildlife watching C • Painting/photography WLC • Volunteering opportunities WLC • Pump out/re-fuelling W • Waste recycling W 	
Not for profit			

The commercial activities at the top of the table will generate revenue to enable jobs to be created and to support not for profit activities in the lower half of the table. Volunteer time will also come into the equation as a valuable resource.

Creating new spending opportunities at Wappenshall and Lubstree

The benefits of tourism flow from the spending by visitors on services and facilities, which will occupy their time. Providing these in a way that satisfies visitors will lead to repeat business and word of mouth recommendation. This is the best type of

marketing any attraction can have. Sustainable tourism is that which re-circulates the revenue in the local economy to the benefit of the local populace.

An example is the use of local produce in a catering facility. Local people should be employed if possible. The gifts and crafts on sale should be produced locally so that the money is retained.

Revenue can be generated at Wappenshall and Lubstree by a number of activities and it is important that the Trust controls as much as possible rather than franchising out facilities such as the onsite catering and retailing. It will also need to ensure that every visitor to the site contributes to its upkeep. There are a number of options to consider such as charging for car parking and mooring, charging to see the exhibition and ensuring that visitors know about the trip boat and other commercial activities. People do not mind paying modest charges particularly if the local community operates the project.

For example :-

Ticket Sales :-Potential paying visitors are estimated to be 30 - 35,000 pa. Average 32,500 p.a. at an average ticket price of £2 - **annual income - £65,000.**

Catering :- based on the experience at the Shropshire Hills Centre annual income could be about £75,000 pa. Against this must be offset employee costs of £38,000 pa, provisions and sundries £26,000 and other costs £4,000. This would create an **annual surplus of £7,000**

Retail :- The retail surplus at the Shropshire Hills Centre was £26,000 pa. However this is run as a franchised operation and if a deduction for the franchise operator is taken into account the surplus would probably be reduced to £15,000 pa. Retailing opportunities may be less at Wappenshall and the estimated annual **surplus could be £8,000.**

Trip and restaurant boats:- The trip boat could be run by the Trust, but the restaurant boat is likely to be franchised. The surplus for the Trust from the trip boat and the franchise from the restaurant boat could amount to a further **£8-10,000 p.a.**

Tourism markets

These will fall into a number of different types, e.g.

- Day visitors from home (250,000 people live in Shrewsbury and Telford)
- Staying visitors from out of county including visiting friends and relatives and commercial accommodation
- Education and special interest visitors.

Markets can be segmented by age group/stage of life thus: -

- Young people – school groups, university students
- Young married couples – no children
- Young families with children

- Single people
- Couples with grown-up children (empty-nesters)
- Older people aged over 60
- Groups e.g. special interest, WI, social clubs, friends.

Further segmentation can be carried out by purpose of visit.

- Out for a drive on a Sunday afternoon
- Need to get out of the bad weather
- Need to occupy the children.
- Have friends to stay.
- Towpath walkers
- Heritage buffs.
- Canal enthusiasts.
- Fishermen
- Social function (on restaurant boat)
- Coach parties.
- Educational groups
- Activity types – canoeing, cycling
- Artistic – painting, photography.

In what appears to be a straightforward regeneration project there are in fact many complicated customer/product relationships to manage. The key task for the Trust is to identify each one, deliver the product to the satisfaction of the customer at whom it is aimed on a consistent basis. The quicker the business develops the more economic benefits it will deliver to the local area.

It is difficult to predict spend per head by visitors at this point. However if the typical family group pays to park, has tea and cake and buys a guidebook or souvenir they will be likely to spend between £10 and £15 on their visit. The group is also likely to spend money on other items such as entry to Hoo Farm, a meal at a pub and fuel raising their daily spend to about £10 per head. Thus the economic impact to the area will be higher than the direct spend on the canal.

The volunteers who work for the trust will also spend money in the local area and some will stay in commercial accommodation as part of a working holiday.

Creating new products and services

In this section the key elements of the scheme are examined to demonstrate the variety of different users along this stretch of canal.

Starting at Wappenshall in the West and working eastwards the different commercial and not for profit elements of the scheme outlined in the hub diagram can start to be mapped. The economic benefits will be estimated in terms of jobs created, visitor numbers and other impacts. An imaginary tour has been devised to show what the new visitor experience will be like.

Wappenshall



Unrestored West Basin, skew bridge and main warehouse (Photo by Roger Dean geograph.org.uk)

An example of the tourism and leisure activities available

The project brings into public use two formerly private buildings (once part of a transport yard). Their setting between two basins and with the canal actually flowing under one provides much of heritage interest to the visitor. Once parked the visitor will follow the signs to the larger warehouse where simple interpretive signs will explain the leisure and educational opportunities on the site (including the café and all important toilets).

Entering the warehouse the visitor is met by an attractive reception and shop area, which leads through to the cafeteria area. The ground floor needs three members of staff to operate it. Access to the first floor is via a lift or stairs, which lead to the exhibition area. Here the economic and social history of the Shrewsbury and Newport Canals and other Shropshire canals is explained in an accessible and

entertaining way. The exhibition will feature display panels with maps and photographs and there is space for small artefacts and demonstration models to show, for instance, the working of locks. The way the warehouse used to operate is shown including views of the hoists and trap doors.

Outside it is possible to walk along the wharf-side to look at the boats. There will be a picnic area, seating and a play area for the children with slides and a climbing frame. Boats are moored here creating a timeless scene.

Educational groups can use the room in the smaller warehouse, which is also the base for the Trust's offices and volunteer facilities. The Trust's two permanent staff is based here.

Alongside the wharf is the waiting trip-boat, which can carry up to 30 people for a leisurely cruise along the canal. This needs a crew of two people including the skipper who guides the visitors on the PA system as they sail along the canal to Lubstree Wharf. He points out some of the man-made and natural features along the route. Some of the passengers may have bought inclusive tickets to Hoo Farm, a short walk on arrival at Lubstree.

At the Wappenshall Wharf, the catering staff is preparing the restaurant boat 'Marie Rose' for an evening's dining cruise along the canal. The four staff are getting ready to welcome 25 diners who have each paid £30 for tonight's cruise to celebrate a Telford resident's birthday. The chef prides himself on the use of local ingredients and even serves wine from the Wroxeter Vineyard.

Further along the Telford Sea Scouts are dragging their canoes out of the water after an afternoon messing around on the water. Their hired minibus is parked in the car park ready to take them home.

Coming along the towpath are the members of the Wolverhampton Ramblers Club who have been out for an afternoon stroll along the towpath having taken the earlier trip boat up to Lubstree. From the other direction one of the Canal Trust's working holiday groups are returning from a day helping to restore one of the bridges on the still to be opened Shrewsbury section.

Tomorrow the Telford Camera Club will be coming to walk the towpath on their annual wildlife photography competition. Next week the Shropshire Angling Championships take place with over 100 competitors taking part.

The canal-side barbecue for the Rotary Club of Newport is just one of 50 special events taking place along the canal this year.

At the end of the Humber arm the Lubstree transshipment warehouse has been restored as a gallery with living accommodation above. A couple from Birmingham have escaped to the country and now run a thriving business selling their canal prints both to customers who visit from the canal and through their website using their broadband connection.

An alternative scenario sees the ground floor newly converted to offices for the Trust with a holiday flat on the first floor.

The former engine house is being converted for use as an activity centre store and the privately owned wharf keepers cottage and office complement the other buildings creating an authentic canal-side scene.

Here people leave the canal and take the short walk along the new dedicated green way to Hoo Farm.

Mooring Opportunities

There is a great shortage of canal moorings in the West Midlands. British Waterways estimate that there is a national requirement for an additional 10,000 moorings over the next 10 years to meet growing demand.

The restoration of the Humber Arm will, once the canal is restored to Norbury and the section is connected to the main line, provide for about 100 canal side moorings on the arm. Canal bank moorings with relatively few facilities currently rent for about £1,200 p.a. per boat. The moorings on the Humber Arm will generate about £120,000 p.a. for the local economy.

Outputs

Jobs Created

In the first phase, 4 new businesses have been created and one organisation re-located to the site.

Construction Jobs (based on Atkin's estimate of 11.75 jobs per £1m of construction cost) – *61.5 jobs with a 80/20% split in favour of the local workforce*

New and relocated businesses

Café/reception at Wappenshall Wharf –	3 jobs
Trust offices –	2 jobs
Trip boat to Lubstree –	3 p/t jobs
Restaurant boat –	1 jobs and 3 part-time preparing food.
Gallery at Lubstree –	2 jobs

Additional staff resources are provided by Trust volunteers.

Total 8 full-time and 6 part-time jobs.

Other outputs

Informal visitors – it is estimated that the project will attract between 35,000 and 50,000 new visitors in its first full year of operation. The mean average expenditure is £9.96 per day per head making a total of *between £348,600 and £498,000* p.a. in the local economy. A significant proportion will be spent at the Wappenshall core site.

New fishermen on this stretch –

180

Educational visits –

40 schools and educational visits p.a.

Looking ahead

The picture painted above shows the kind of impact the proposals could have in the first phase.

In the second phase the canal would be fully open through Newport to Norbury Junction with boats cruising off the national network as far as Wappenshall. This would introduce new customers to the western extremity of the navigable canal and create new spending opportunities. Crews staying overnight will require pump out and watering facilities. The cafeteria could stay open in the evenings to provide food and drink and the restaurant boat could act as a floating pub/social centre with musical evenings on a canal theme.

Joining the national network would add a new business opportunity in the Humber Arm as this could be used as commercial moorings where local residents could keep their boats when not using them.

Long Term Moorings on the Humber Arm 100 @ £1,200 p.a. *£120,000 p.a.*

A marina village has been suggested at the Trench Arm and this would bring a new vitality to this arm with housing and mooring beside the canal. Such a development would prove popular with young Telford professionals seeking a rural lifestyle. The site is close to the northern outskirts of the town and only a mile or so from the Queensway ring road. Additional boat storage capacity could be created here. This project is dependant upon planning permission being granted, but, if approved, a Section 106 could provide the funding to connect the Wappenshall – Lubstree section to the Newport section.

In phase three, the canal would be open all the way to Shrewsbury making Wappenshall the halfway point between the Shrewsbury and Norbury Junction. This would bring a new stream of cruising customers as the canal would lead to a substantial destination especially if the plans for the Flaxmill come to fruition. This building is of global importance as it was the first iron-framed building to be constructed anywhere in the World. There are exciting plans to develop canal facilities right next to the Flaxmill making it one of Britain's foremost heritage and transport attractions.

Conclusion

This section of the canal has significant heritage assets, which will provide much interest when restored and open to the public. The restoration of two important groups of buildings in a rural setting will create a new focus for tourism to the North of Telford.

In spite of not being linked to rest of the canal system this stretch could become very popular for rural tourism activities such as walking, boating and enjoying the local wildlife. As well as benefits for visitors the local community will be able to enjoy its heritage as well as acquiring some additional social space.

The possibility of a new marina village on the Trench Lock has been raised and this scheme could have positive funding benefits for the canal's re-building programme.

Economic Opportunities for Farmers and Landowners

The restoration of the Shrewsbury and Newport canals into water and the subsequent establishment of navigation from the main line offer significant opportunities for adjacent farmers and landowners to diversify into a range of tourism related development opportunities.

There will be the opportunity to develop marinas, canal side moorings, craft and farm shops, chandlery, boat repair, bicycle and boat hire businesses to create an alternative stream of income to farming.