

**LOUTH  
NAVIGATION  
TRUST**



**Registered charity No. 1057398**

# **Louth Navigation - a view of the future**

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## **1. Louth Navigation Trust**

The Louth Navigation Trust was founded in 1986 and is now a registered charity. It has no paid staff, with all its work being carried out on a voluntary basis.

Having been involved with Groundwork Lincolnshire in the restoration of the Navigation Warehouse at the Riverhead, where the Trust's Head Office is now situated, the Trust is now concentrating on the restoration of the canal for navigation. To this end it is urgently seeking funding for a feasibility study to look at the economic, environmental, engineering and social aspects of restoring the canal.

Among other matters with which the Trust becomes actively involved with include:

- Rubbish clearance from the canal
- Educational talks and walks
- Towpath mowing and general repairs
- Provision and maintenance of signage
- Walks brochures
- Involvement with planning issues

The Trust's main aims are as follows:

- Preserve, conserve and restore the canal, its associated buildings and locks.
- Implement an economic, environmental and social study of the canal corridor, as a preliminary to the phased restoration of the canal for navigation.
- Promote the leisure and recreational use of the canal and towpath.
- Promote the sustainable regeneration of the Riverhead area and canal corridor.
- Provide and promote education for the community about the past history, heritage, and future plans, relative to the canal and its environs.
- Identify and promote economic, environmental and social projects along the canal corridor.

The Trust pursues a policy of actively involving the community and seeks to form partnerships with others, in the public and private sectors, to achieve its aims.

## **2. Historical background.**

The Louth Navigation canal, currently un-navigable, extends from the Riverhead, Louth, 12 miles to Tetney Sands, where it discharges into the mouth of the River Humber.

The Navigation opened in 1770, as a means of promoting trade by moving goods by water, as an alternative to the tracks transgressing the Middle Marsh, many of which were impassable in the winter months. Eight locks, six of which were built with unique barrel shaped walls, were incorporated along its length, to overcome the c.50 ft. differential in levels from Louth to the sea.

The canal was designed to take sea going vessels capable of carrying cargoes of up to 150 tons. These craft carried a diversity of goods, mainly involving the export of wool and corn, and the import coal and timber.

There were regular weekly services to ports such as Hull and a fortnightly service to London. Many of the beautiful Georgian houses in Louth were built from the profits generated by the canal.

Extremely successful in its heyday, it quickly became Louth's economic engine. Its demise began when the railway operators took over the canal lease in 1846 and by increasing tolls, directed goods onto the railway.

The canal eventually closed in 1924 when the locks, together with the Riverhead area, fell into dereliction and decay.

### **3. Current uses.**

Its principal uses are as a water resource, with water being pumped from it into Covenham reservoir (this water is mainly used by the Humber bank industries) and as a drainage and flood relief channel, with seven pumps along its length lifting water from the adjacent field dyke systems into the canal.

The Witham & District Joint Anglers Federation fish the stretch between Austen Fen and Tetney Lock, which is kept well stocked with freshwater fish.

A few people use the 11 miles of towpath, much of which is maintained by the Trust, for walking.

### **4. Recent developments**

At the Riverhead in Louth the Navigation Warehouse, a Grade 2 listed building, built in the 1770's as a wool and corn store, was restored in 1998/9 to high environmental standards by a partnership between the LNT and Groundwork, Lincolnshire.

This has become, as planned, the catalyst for the beginning of the renaissance and regeneration of the Riverhead area and some fine examples of this can now be seen in the area. The Louth Playgoer's opened a £1.9 million theatre complex in 2002, some 250 metres from the warehouse. Developers have obtained Planning Permission for the erection of 80 housing units 300 metres distant. The Woolpack PH, adjacent to the warehouse, has built a new extension to cope with increased trade, incorporating a restaurant, kitchen and toilets. The 'sister' warehouse on the opposite bank of the canal has been converted into one prestigious dwelling and two new blocks of flats have been erected 75 metres to the west of the warehouse.

### **5. Future potential**

The Louth Navigation canal, together with its hinterland or 'corridor', is viewed as the greatest single undeveloped asset in East Lindsey and its restoration would represent a focus for a large new inland

tourism market, capturing an increased share of the A, B, C1 socio economic groups, who would be attracted to the area by the presence of the navigable waterway, boating and numerous related activities. Its restoration would have a significant impact on the problems related to the current seasonality of employment (boating is an all year round activity) and the limited range of attractions in the area.

The restored waterway, with its historically unique barrel sided locks, would present a new, major tourism product in the area and produce substantial, sustainable, benefits to the economy, environment and the community.

The first step towards unlocking this potential is clearly seen as the implementation of a Feasibility Study to consider the implications and allow informed decisions to be made regarding its restoration.

## **6. Restoration Feasibility Study**

The feasibility study was completed and officially launched in January 2006.

## **7. No Content**

## **8. Economic potential**

The development of leisure and recreational pursuits within the canal corridor, is seen as having the potential for being a valuable, high quality, tourism product, complementing rather than competing with existing businesses. It would provide for increased trade in existing businesses and opportunities for new start up businesses. The possibilities in this latter context include enterprises such as catering, boat hire, boat yards, boat building, chandlery, regattas, accommodation, craft workshops, gift shops, camping and caravan sites. The creation of a quality marketing brand image for the project will encourage inward investment.

The provision of a boatyard at Tetney Lock, capable of providing sheltered moorings and related facilities, would be a considerable asset to coastal mariners. This may be of interest to the Humber Mouth Boat Club, currently using seasonal mud berths some 2 kilometres away on the beach at Humberstone, together with other craft involved in local, coastal or continental navigation.

British Waterways are also involved with a Heritage Coast initiative with the aim of producing a Maritime Trail which will present an opportunity of linking Hull Marina and other marinas, docks, and boat clubs, with the seaward end of the Louth Navigation at Tetney Lock. Some 50 coastal boat and yacht clubs (see Appendix 'D') on the Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk coastlines could access the facilities and this initiative will increase the boating opportunities of craft using the waterways that discharge into the sea in this area.

The proprietors of the Sportflyte boat building business alongside the canal at Austen Fen have indicated that they would take advantage of the navigable canal to expand their operation.

The Riverhead area in Louth could also accommodate moorings and related boatyard facilities (on the south bank) together with other enterprises as it did in the past.

It would also assist in addressing the economic problems created by the uncertain future of agriculture, with EU policies resulting in reduced subsidies, €v £ sterling currency fluctuations and lower world commodity prices, by offering alternative commercial options to farmers within the canal corridor through agricultural diversification. The subsidised Farm Business Advice Service and Rural Enterprise Scheme could assist farmers in this context.

Such increased economic activity would lead to new jobs being created in the Louth TTWA. A symbiotic commercial relationship between the waterway users, farmers, villages and Louth would quickly follow. This would also impact on waterside property prices.

Commercial development should be controlled and managed in a way that would not present a threat to the natural, historic and cultural environment.

Consideration should be given to the use of the canal as a commercial waterway, with all the environmental advantages attached to such use.

Three possibilities have been identified. The first is a foregone conclusion, the other two worthy of further research:

- Boat hire and boat trip businesses
- Consideration may also be given to the water transportation of waste to a Humber bank incinerator, as a long-term plan to cover the eventual closure of the Louth waste tip.

- As a result of the reduction of the capacity and planned closure of the Bardney Sugar Refinery, it may be that the transportation of sugar beet by water to the Newark Refinery, via the River Trent, may present a viable alternative for East Lincolnshire farmers in the Middle Marsh area.

## **9. Social potential**

The restoration of the canal and its unique barrel sided locks would ensure the preservation of the heritage of this industrial archaeological landscape and the educational and cultural values associated with it, whilst retaining the qualities of a peaceful and tranquil landscape.

Such restoration could provide recreation and leisure facilities to include:

- walking, utilising the 12 miles of towpath (a public footpath) with the various circular routes emanating from it
- consideration of a cycle path alongside the towpath, linking Grimsby and Cleethorpes, via Humberstone with Louth, thereby promoting sustainable, green, transport
- boating, with all the associated back up facilities
- fishing in a well stocked fishery
- picnicking, barbecuing, camping and parking areas
- birdwatching, enhanced by the creation of new wetlands and flood plains

All these facilities to be well signposted and accompanied by strategically sited interpretation panels.

## **10. Environmental potential**

The sympathetic restoration, conservation and maintenance of the waterway's built and natural environment would result in its preservation for future generations and raise the area's profile as a tourism venue.

The built environment includes the canal, locks and other associated buildings of an industrial archaeological value. The barrel sided locks are a unique feature, constructed in the reign of George 111. (The beautiful Georgian architecture of Louth is largely attributable to the wealth accumulated from canal trade by merchants and farmers)

The natural environment could be enhanced and habitats improved by the selective planting of indigenous wild flowers, trees and shrubs along the canal corridor, to make a wildlife corridor. The creation and stocking of a fishery, where none currently exists, between Alvingham and Riverhead. The creation of a wetland at Keddington and flood plain at New Delights, would act as a flood defence mechanism and attract a wide variety of waders and other wildfowl.

Following an environmental impact assessment as a part of the overall canal study, the aim would be to promote green tourism, combining the efficient use of resources, minimising waste and the avoidance of pollution.

The current monitoring by the Environment Agency of the water in the canal will continue to improve its quality, particularly that section where effluent is discharged into it from the Keddington Sewage Farm.

## **11. Management**

It is suggested that the project be initially progressed by a Steering Group led by Groundwork Lincolnshire and comprising the Louth Navigation Trust; ELDC; LCC; Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board.

The formation of a Management Consortium or Company will be necessary for the ongoing management of the project before, during and after restoration

## **12. Support**

The following all support this initiative:

- DETR Waterways for Tomorrow 2000
- ELDC Economic Development Strategy 2001
- ELDC Tourism Strategy 2001 - 2005
- Lincolnshire Waterways Development Framework 2002>
- Countryside Agency Coastal Forum 2002>
- Louth Market Town Initiative 2002>
- British Waterways: Heritage Coast Maritime Trail 2002>
- EMDA Economic Strategy for East Midlands 2003/10
- Louth Regeneration Partnership
- Louth Civic Trust
- Local Community

## **13. Aims and Objectives**

1. Identify potential funders and make applications
2. Secure the necessary funding
3. Agree a programme of work with Consultant
4. Instruct Consultant to carry out the work
5. Work proceeds with agreed Client/Consultant meetings taking place

6. Analyse and evaluate the completed study
7. Produce a Strategy and Action Plan
8. Form a Management Consortium or Company to progress and manage the Project

Louth Navigation Canal: Location Map



Yorkshire & Lincolnshire Coastal Map



Lincolnshire & Norfolk Coastline



**Appendix ‘D’ Yacht Clubs**

- 1 Aldeburgh YC
- 2 Alexandra YC
- 3 Arlesford Creek Boat Owners Association
- 4 Association of Nene River Clubs
- 5 Bawdsey Haven YC
- 6 Blakeney Sailing Club
- 7 Boston Motor YC
- 8 Bradwell Cruising Club
- 9 Brancaster Staithe Sailing Club
- 10 Brandy Hole YC
- 11 Bridgemarsh Island Cruising Club
- 12 Brundall Motor YC
- 13 Colne YC
- 14 Deben YC
- 15 Doncaster Sailing Association
- 16 East Anglian Cruising Club
- 17 Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club
- 18 Glandford Boat Club
- 19 Grimsby & Cleethorpes YC
- 20 Harwich & Dovercoat Sailing Club
- 21 Haven Ports Yacht Club
- 22 Hull Sailing Club
- 23 Humber Cruising Association
- 24 Humber Mouth YC
- 25 Humber Yawl Club
- 26 Kessingland Sea Sailing Club
- 27 Kingston upon Hull YC
- 28 Leeds University Sailing Club  
Lowestoft Cruising ClubMaldon Little Ship
- 29 Club
- 30 Orford Sailing Club
- 31 Orwell Yacht ClubPin Mill Sailing Club
- 32 Ripon Motor Boat Club
- 33 Royal Harwich YC
- 34 Royal Norfolk & Suffolk YC
- 35 Royal Yorkshire YC
- 36 Saltfleet Haven Boat Club
- 37 Scarborough YC
- 38 Skegness YC
- 39 Southwold Sailing Club
- 40 Stour Sailing Club
- 41 Trent Boating Association
- 42 Trent Offshore Group
- 43 Welland YC
- 44 Whitby Boating Association
- 45 Whitby YC
- 46 Witham Sailing Club
- 47 Woodbridge Cruising Club
- 48 Yare Sailing Club
- 49 York Motor YC
- 50 York University Sailing Club

Source: Royal Yachting Association
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**Appendix ‘E’ Demands Forecast**

	user	persons per boat	daily boat movements	total daily persons	<u>Estimated average 1st year usage</u>		
					weekly	No of weeks	annually
<b>Boating</b>		2.5	10	30	210	52	10920
<b>Fishing</b>				25	233	39	9087
<b>Walking</b>				25	88	52	4576
<b>Cycling</b>				21	147	52	7644
<b>Visiting</b>				50	350	52	18200
						<b>Total:</b>	<u>50427</u>
						<b>Target:</b>	50400
						<b>Bal'ce:</b>	27

  

	<u>Estimated monthly usage</u>												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
<b>Boating</b>	164	328	546	874	1092	1092	1747	2184	1638	546	546	164	10920
<b>Fishing*</b>	273	273	273	0	0	636	1817	1817	1545	1090	909	454	9087
<b>Walking</b>	114	137	229	458	458	458	686	778	686	229	229	114	4576
<b>Cycling</b>	191	229	382	764	764	764	1147	1299	1147	382	382	191	7644
<b>Visiting</b>	455	546	910	1820	1820	1820	2730	3094	2730	910	910	455	18200
<b>Total</b>	<u>1197</u>	<u>1513</u>	<u>2340</u>	<u>3916</u>	<u>4134</u>	<u>4770</u>	<u>8128</u>	<u>9173</u>	<u>7746</u>	<u>3157</u>	<u>2976</u>	<u>1379</u>	<u>50427</u>
%	2.37	3.00	4.64	7.76	8.20	9.46	16.12	18.19	15.36	6.26	5.90	2.73	100.00

\* Coarse fishing season June 16 to Mar 14

**Appendix ‘F’ Jobs Forecast**

Location	Employment	Phase 1 Riverhead - Ticklepenny			Phase 2 Ticklepenny - Alvingham			Phase 3 Alvingham - sea			Total Jobs			Total equiv. full time jobs
		Full time	Part time	Temporary	Full time	Part time	Temporary	Full time	Part time	Temporary	Full time	Part time	Temporary	
Louth area	Accommodation	2	2		2	2		4	4		8	8	0	
	Catering	2	2		2	2		4	4		8	8	0	
	Shops	2	2		2	2		4	4		8	8	0	
Riverhead	Boat Club		1					1			1	1	0	
	Boat hire	1	1						1		1	2	0	
	Boat repair & sales	1	1					1	1		2	2	0	
	Chandlery							1	1		1	1	0	
Alvingham	Trip boats	1	1					1	1		2	2	0	
	Accommodation				2	2		1	1		3	3	0	
	Catering				2	2		2	2		4	4	0	
Firebeacon	Shops				2	2					2	2	0	
	Boatbuilding & sales							2	2		2	2	0	
Tetney Lock	Boat hire							1	1		1	1	0	
	Boat repair & sales							1	1		1	1	0	
	Chandlery							1	1		1	1	0	
	Trip boats							1	1		1	1	0	
Various	Boat Club							1	1		1	1	0	
	Caravan & camp sites				1	2		1	2		2	4	0	
	Canal management	1	1					1	1		2	2	0	
	Canal maintenance		1		1	1		1	1		2	3	0	
	Contractors			30			30			30	0	0	90	
<b>Totals</b>		10	12	30	14	15	30	29	30	30	53	57	90	67
Indirect local supply & service jobs created [26.6% of equivalent full time jobs]													18	
Jobs induced by new tourism employees spend [11.6% of equivalent full time jobs]													8	
<b>Total</b>													<b>93</b>	

Notes: (1) Phases are for suggested possible interpretation only.

(2) Equivalent full time jobs are derived from calculating 4 part time jobs as equivalent to 1 full time job, temporary jobs being omitted