



The Lagan Navigation - Useful statistics

The Lagan Navigation was one of the most successful commercial navigations in Ireland and boasts the only flight of 4 locks (Union Locks, Lisburn) in the Irish waterway network. These locks lifted the barges 26 feet over a distance of 100 yards. See below for update on the Union Locks project. The remains of the Lagan Navigations canalised sections is one of the region's best assets as it passes through the cities of Belfast and Lisburn, traverses through rolling countryside and picturesque villages entering Lough Neagh, the largest freshwater lake in the British Isles.

From Belfast to Lough Neagh the Lagan Navigation travels East to West, 27 miles with 27 locks, 20 road bridges, 12 footbridges and 1 Railway Bridge. It passes through four Local Government areas – Belfast, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Craigavon and three Counties – Antrim, Down and Armagh. There area some 6,000 acres of public parks and open spaces, including The Lagan Valley Regional Park within the Trusts Operational Area shown below.

The Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 (HMAO 1995) gives the Department of the Environment a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of historic monuments. Historic monuments are scheduled for their protection from alteration or destruction through the aforementioned Order. The Lagan Navigation has been valued as a feature of industrial heritage worthy of statutory protection and as such is scheduled as per Article 3 of the HMAO 1995. The scheduled area includes the following features:

- The canalised sections of the River Lagan
- The towpath
- All locks and gates
- The abutments of bridges crossing the Navigation, but excludes the bridges themselves
- Wharves, basins and passing points

As a scheduled monument within the planning policy framework of Planning Policy Statement 6 “Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage”, the canalised sections of the River Lagan and navigation are afforded protection as an archaeological monument of **Regional Importance**, (as per Policy BH1 of this planning statement).

The route of the Lagan Navigation passes through **48** of the most deprived Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland;

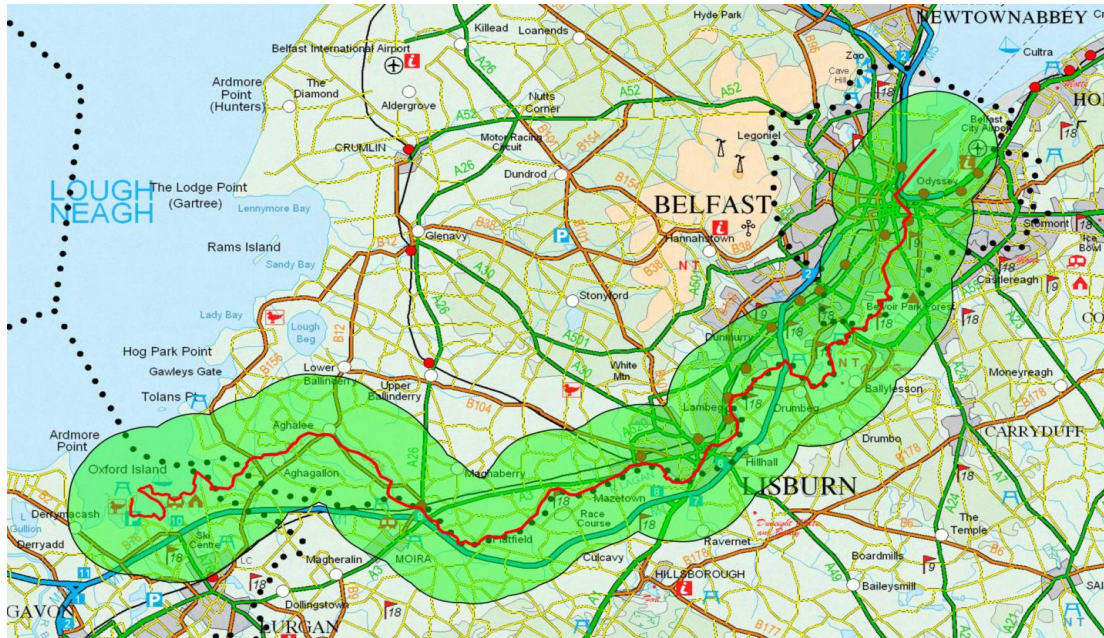
- 31 SOAs in the top 10% most deprived in NI;
- 10 SOAs in the top 20% most deprived in NI; and
- 7 SOAs in the top 30% most deprived in NI.

The Lagan Canal Trust and its Trusts Operational Area

The primary objective of the Lagan Canal Trust is to reopen the Lagan Navigation from Belfast Harbour to Lough Neagh. The main programme of proposed works is circa £100M to be delivered over 15 years. The Trust and its partners are the focus of guardianship of a 300-year-old living and working heritage and we do all of this with sustainability in mind to ensure that our outstanding national asset is well-kept for future generations to enjoy.

The rationale in developing an operational area, show on the plan below, is the opportunity it presents for bringing together public and private sector interests and those of the communities (some 300,000 people) along the 64 square miles into a focussed, dedicated zone where social well-being is supported by a vibrant economy sustained by a healthy environment. There are 141 schools with the Operational Area with 35K+ pupil population and 7 railway stations which provide ready access to green spaces, rural and urban pursuits. This combines the potential for community, economic, physical and environmental regeneration and conservation.

The Operational Area highlights the role the re-opening of the Lagan Navigation will have in linking, through Lough Neagh, the inland waterway system on the island of Ireland North and South to maximise the tourism and economic potential of over 600 miles of waterways – connecting the Eastern seaboard in Belfast to the Western seaboard in Limerick. The plan below shoes the route of the Navigation and Operational Area.



Plan showing the Trust Operational Area in green with the line of the Navigation in red

THE TRUSTS OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Ensure that all our work is informed by and fits with the Programme for Government and addresses the objectives of our Departmental, current and potential partners and stakeholders;
- ✓ Contribute to addressing poverty, social exclusion and climate change.
- ✓ Develop an important historic and cultural asset which is recognised locally, regionally and nationally as having the potential to make a significant contribution to Northern Ireland's economy;
- ✓ Ensure that the Trust is resourced to deliver a complex programme of work;

We will achieve these through;

- ✓ Conserving, managing and interpreting the natural, built, cultural and industrial heritage of the Navigation;
- ✓ Develop a digital history of the Lagan Navigation – 'Just Add Water'
- ✓ Restoring the historic structures of existing locks whilst enabling their use through providing new lock gates and safety structures (under consent);
- ✓ Reinstatement of towpaths and creation of new paths along the whole length of the Navigation between Belfast and Lough Neagh;
- ✓ Connect and extend the National Cycle Route Number 9 through the Operational Area giving wider connectivity throughout Northern Ireland;
- ✓ Facilitating linkages between the Navigation, communities and public transport; and between existing facilities and additional ones e.g. links to villages in rural areas;
- ✓ Re-watering the canalised sections along the Lagan through reinstating or repairing the weirs associated with each lock and lateral canal built in the 18th century to enable navigation;
- ✓ Providing a new cascade weir and new lock at Stranmillis to replace the existing pen weir structure (the former lock at this point is lost beneath development) and enable navigation from the tidal Lagan to the river;
- ✓ Providing a new section of river and canalised navigation between Sprucefield and Moira to replace the section of the Navigation overlaid by the M1 Motorway. This will include a canalised linkage to the Maze Long Kesh Site;
- ✓ A programme of silt removal and dredging to reinstate a channel for boat passage;
- ✓ Contribute to community health and well being opportunities through greater access to leisure, sporting and recreational pursuits;
- ✓ Provide a range of additional facilities for visitors, walkers and cyclists and mooring points along the Navigation to enable boat usage and other water bases activities, features and attractions;
- ✓ Clearly defining the potential for positive social impact in local communities;
- ✓ Fully examining the potential the re opening of the Navigation could have on climate change in the Lagan Valley working with a European initiative which seeks to design natural water retention measures in flood plains.
- ✓ Conduct a 2 year, 2014-2016, proof of concept pilot for The Waterways College (TWC) to drive formal, volunteering, educational and community outreach programmes which address the heritage and environmental skills deficit in Northern Ireland.

KEY OPERATIONAL FOCUS

1 Discover Waterways Lisburn project

The major elements of the project being brought together in a masterplan a draft of which completed in April 2015 and will, with further detailed consultation, form the basis of the Trusts planning, Scheduled Monument and Listed Building Consent applications. Following an initial public and statutory consultation the elements of the project are;

Navigation House

Built in the 1800s for the Manager of the former Lagan Navigation Company the house has been empty for some years. It was listed in June 2012 and bought for use by the Trust in June 2014. The site, adjacent to Union Locks, will provide offices for the Trust and form the basis of a teaching and learning hub for The Waterways College with programmes and projects related to the re opening of the Navigation. Work will commence to refurbish the house and grounds in early 2015. Work to be undertaken in the project includes;

- restoration of Navigation House stables to provide a home for the Trust, The Waterways College, a digital interpretation of the history of the Navigation;
- potential acquisition and restoration of the Lock Keepers Cottage to form a café and other facilities;
- work to bring the extensive gardens, circa 1 acre, into public use for the first time;
- restoration and re- watering of the Union Locks, the only staircase locks on the inland waterways of Ireland;
- repairs to the weir and re opening of Becky Hoggs Lock;
- development of a wetland in the Dry Cut area;
- connectivity of the upper and lower footpaths at Union locks 'Dry Cut' at Union Locks via a footbridge/boardwalk;
- access via a new, disability compliant, pedestrian route to Navigation House from the lower footpath- this will impact considerably on remaining land usage within Navigation House garden;
- disabled and a small number of staff car parking at Navigation House;
- development of 3 car parking sites at Blaris Road, the rear of the Premier Inn and adjacent to Becky Hoggs lock;
- access from the rear of the Premier Inn, Hillsborough Road to the tow path at Union Locks;
- a new walking and cycling route at Old Warren and beyond to afford better connectivity and access to the towpath;
- new foot/cycling paths to extend the National Cycle Network Route No 9;
- public art and interactive outdoor installations;
- Specialist clearance work and security fencing is complete at Navigation House and work to reinstate the gardens began in April and presents the Trust biggest opportunity to attract volunteers to support our work;
- The Trust will occupy the house as caretakers.

2 Lagan Gateway Project, Stranmillis

Belfast City Councils very ambitious plans to restore and reopen lock number 1 and provide a footbridge over the Navigation has received support for c£3M investment from its elected members. This is an important step in the re opening of the River Lagan for navigation and walking routes connected to local facilities.

3 The Industry Lighter, Lock No 3 Shaws bridge

The former Castlereagh Borough Council, now Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland, the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, DCAL, and a number of funders worked in partnership to bring the derelict 'lighter' (the local term for a working barge) to lock number 3. Now available as an educational facility and for hire the boat animates the story of industrial heritage on the Lagan Navigation.

4 Demonstration projects

The Trust has devised a number of ways to related strategy to sustainable actions. We have developed three demonstration projects which show how combining the objectives of local communities and the Trusts objectives can bring real value to each. We are doing this through a number of demonstration projects. Our three chosen areas for demonstration are;

- **Locks no 24, 25 and 26 Aghagallon**

The community group and the Trust submitted a successful joint funding bid to Craigavon Borough Council to examine the feasibility of clearance of vegetation in and around the three lock chambers in the locality and potential upgrading of the tow path in this area with a connection to village services for visitors. Resident's objectives are to increase

visitor numbers to boost economic activity in the village and for greater access to the Navigation. The Trust objective is to re open the Navigation along its 27 mile route and to influence economic vibrancy and to increase access by local communities.

Recognition of the perilous state of the three Scheduled Monument locks in the Village Planning Area, numbers 24, 25 and 26 – Goudy, Fegans and Cranagh respectively has gained funding from Craigavon Borough Council to carry out a technical feasibility looking at joining the towpath to the village. Tenders for the study saw contractors and volunteers on site in March 2015 with a report on viability by April.

- **South Belfast Partnership**

Early stages of engagement but first thoughts include how we can combine our objectives to give greater access to the River and influence development of facilities to support this. The Trust is working with the Blackstaff Community Group to research the potential for a riversides walk to connect the River Blackstaff to the Lagan Towpath.

- **Potential for and EU demonstration project in the Lagan Valley to address climate change adaptation**

The Trust is keen to explore the potential to address climate change - conserving water in times of flood to release during dry months to ensure that water levels and the quality of water are maintained in the network. Working with a number of agencies, NIEA Stormwater Management Group, Ulster, Queens and Trinity Dublin Universities it has been recognised that the Trust in partnership could potentially contribute to alleviating flooding in the Lagan Valley and to meeting European environmental objectives. This project could bring savings for the public sector in terms of floodwater saved from treatment at sewage works. DOE Minister Durkan has given this research project his endorsement. An expression of interest in the EU LIFE programme on Climate Change Adaptation fund was lodged in December 2014. The project has now been progressed to the next stage of full application which is due in July 2016.

5 Stakeholder Engagement and Management Programme

Keen to generate greater community and business involvement in the re opening project the Trust has established Stakeholder Groups which comprise tourism agencies, businesses, community and user groups to advise on the development of Navigation-related visitor and marketing of the potential to re open the Navigation. The first Stakeholder meetings with groups have taken place and this identified a number of common concerns and opportunities which are being addressed. The main outcome was the recognition that the Trust is developing a Stakeholder Engagement Programme to ensure that people are the focus of its work over the entire 15 year capital delivery programme.

6 The Waterways College

The Waterways College (TWC) is a two year pilot project which began in September 2014 will deliver waterways based traditional and new heritage and environmental learning opportunities. Unemployed people of all ages, volunteers, and educational and community outreach participants will have the opportunity to work on projects along the Navigation. The stakeholder engagement programme will inform development of TWC.

The 2 year pilot with Social Enterprise partner, Springvale Employment and Learning, will deliver some 150 formal learning and some 200 volunteering opportunities in the Lisburn/Belfast City Council Area. The pilot project will offer learning, employment and apprenticeships based on science, technology engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) subjects which are an objective for growth in the NI Programme for Government. The programmes will be delivered in two distinct strands;

Strand 1 formal learning targeted participants of TWC are;

- 16 – 24 year olds
- 25+ apprenticeships
- Long term unemployed
- 50+
- Re-skilling and up –skilling

Strand 2 social learning targeted participants are;

- Volunteers
- Pre 16 schools, colleges, universities, youth organisations, clubs
- Community groups and families
- Sporting clubs and organisations

The environmental led outcomes anticipated will focus on four priorities;

1. **Waterways Restoration, Conservation & on going Maintenance.** Our heritage assets reach or exceed the 'steady-state' model used by the Canal & Rivers Trust limiting deterioration and maintaining their relevance and significance;
2. **Learning, Outreach and Participation.** Positive STEAM and heritage outcomes and measurable social impact are achieved through enrichment and aspiration- raising activities and career guidance;
3. **Access & Interpretation.** Our heritage and waterways environment is well known, accessible, promoted and appreciated;
4. **Sustainability.** Our approach to heritage assures environmental and organisational sustainability and derives social, environmental and economic benefits.

7 Just Add Water project

Development of a digital history platform and bringing together the story of the Lagan Navigation through its 300+ year history the Trust will do this by;

- Developing a digital resource which promotes intellectual access to data
- Meta tagging data for use by the teaching profession
- Developing themes which will generate interest and are relevant to perceived audience
- Audience development across the 64 square mile Operational Area of the Trust
- Defining the roles which will support the reconnection of people with the Navigation
 - outreach workers
 - volunteers – research – web site management
 - local ambassadors to incorporate historical and cultural trails into the re opening capital works
- Articulating the legacy of skills in the community with a view to examining the coaching and mentoring potential of volunteers
- Animation of the project through events and pop up museums

In defining the potential of the virtual history project the Trust is working closely with Lisburn and Craigavon Councils. The project will capture and handle information on multi media format with the objective of developing a social and educational resource aligned to the National Curriculum.

Funding and Finance

The Trust has been successful in gaining grant funding in for the last three years, matched by partners, in the delivery of a number of smaller projects which contribute to the main re opening project. It will continue to seek European, National and local public and private sector funding for its projects work. In its Business Case to Government it will seek support from the Northern Ireland Assembly in the 2015/2016 and 2017/2020 Comprehensive Spending Review process. Our targeted funding focus in 2015 is;

- Submission of a c£1.8M EU funding bid to the LIFE programme to conduct a demonstration project to address climate change adaptation in the Lagan Valley;
- The Trust is preparing a matrix of funding bids for the Discover Waterways Lisburn project;
- Heritage Lottery Fund. The 'Just Add Water' digital history project of the Lagan Navigation is being prepared for a bid to HLF;
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Rural Development Fund in three areas;
 - A co-operation project with Scottish Canals and Waterways Ireland;
 - Rural Tourism
 - Rural Business Development
 - Interreg Funding for development of a Lagan Valley Greenway with cross border partners
- To further support the delivery of The Waterways College over the two year pilot;
 - European Social Fund
 - Wellcome Foundation
 - Sponsorship opportunities.