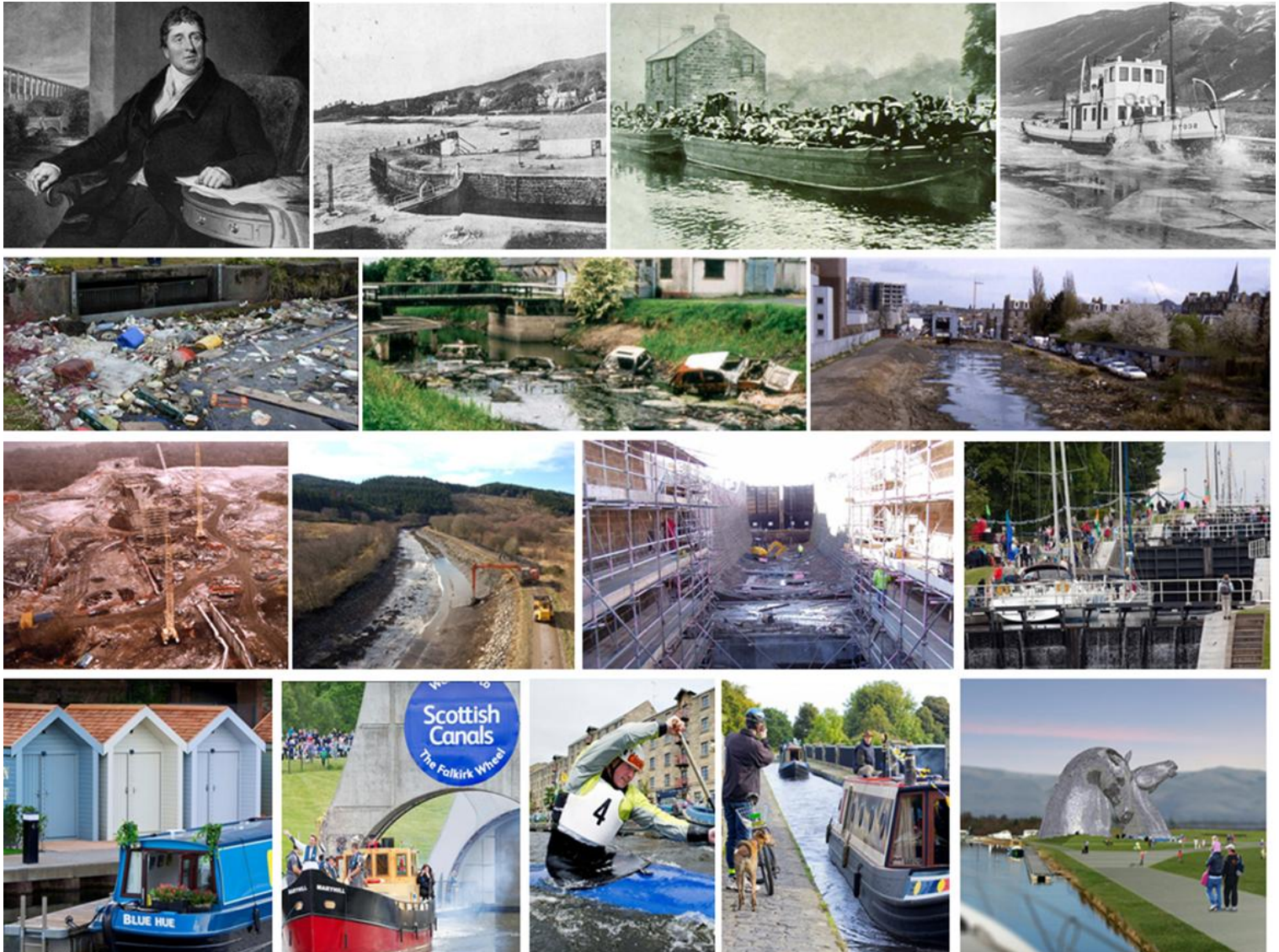




**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

## **MAKING THE MOST OF SCOTLAND'S CANALS**



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## Foreword



For many decades, our canals were largely unloved and sometimes neglected assets. It is a changed picture today, with the canals restored and revitalised. Public awareness and use of Scotland's canal corridors for healthy and sustainable travel has grown considerably in recent years, as anyone who has visited our canals recently can confirm. Effective partnerships have formed between our canals organisation, local authorities and the voluntary sector along the canal corridor, and together they are delivering very positive changes to canal-side communities.

We have come a long way, but there is much more to be achieved.

Devolution and the subsequent transfer of responsibilities to Scottish Ministers first opened up the potential and allowed us to invest in our historic canals. Then in July 2012 we delivered a further major change in how our canals are managed when the remit of the canals organisation was altered from one covering the whole of GB to one solely in respect of its Scottish assets and functions. This very significant milestone means that we now have a board appointed by Scottish Ministers and the policies and activities of Scottish Canals, as it is known, can be wholly focussed on what is best for Scotland. This stands us in good stead in taking forward the next chapter in the life of our canals.

This paper sets out our determination to continue activity to take good care of these historic assets and our aspiration to maximise the benefits that our canals can offer Scotland.

Keith Brown, MSP  
Minister for Transport and Veterans

## Introduction

In 2002, the Scottish Government set out its long-term aspirations for Scotland's canals. This was at a time when work to reverse decades of neglect was still underway. The canals were recognised as important national assets which made a significant contribution to the Scottish economy and which would be a vital part of Scotland's future. The Scottish Government wished to encourage their full and sustainable development for the benefit of the widest possible range of people.

This document updates these aspirations, based on knowledge and experience gained in the intervening period, with a view to ensuring that the momentum achieved in the restoration and renaissance of the canals over the past decade not only continues but increases over the next decade.

Scotland's five canals are some of the most famous and historic in Great Britain, and were originally built between 1768 and 1822 as transport routes. Most of the canals are scheduled monuments of national importance: as such they are not only recognised as part of Scotland's rich heritage but safeguarded for generations to come.

In the Highlands, the majestic Caledonian Canal slices through the Great Glen linking four natural lochs, including Loch Ness. The Crinan Canal in Argyll has been described as 'Britain's most beautiful shortcut'. These canals are important transit routes for yachts accessing our west coast sailing waters.

In the Lowlands, navigation rights on the Forth & Clyde and Union canals ceased in the early 1960s, leading to deterioration of the assets. These canals were brought back to life through the major Millennium Link project. The three-year construction programme commenced in 1999 and made the two centuries-old waterways navigable once more, created the iconic Falkirk Wheel which links the two canals, and provided a catalyst for regeneration across the 68 mile lowland canal corridor. This rebirth was greatly assisted by devolution of canals to Scottish Ministers, which enabled the Scottish Government to provide sufficient grant-in-aid for the maintenance of the canals and to set a clear and comprehensive policy for the future of Scotland's canals and the contribution sought from them.

The Monkland Canal largely made way for the M8 however there remain two watered, but non-navigable, sections.

The Scottish canal system is supplied by 21 reservoirs. In addition the canals' assets comprise 1,500 hectares of land and water, 88 locks, 98 road bridges, 77 accommodation bridges, 50 foot bridges, 8 railway bridges and 2 towpath bridges. The canals pass through 9 local authority areas.

Further background about the legislative framework, activity over the past decade and the Scottish Government's policy framework for all Scottish public bodies is provided at Annexes A to C.

## **Our Aspirations**

### **Aims**

Our canals are an asset that we wish to use wisely in order to enhance the future quality of life for Scotland's inhabitants and to help create a more successful, sustainable country. We look to build on the encouraging start made in the past decade in revitalising our canals and in gaining wider public benefits from them. We wish to encourage their full and sustainable development in the future in a way that impacts positively across the widest possible range of people (whilst ensuring that safety issues remain to the fore).

This can be done by continuing to develop the role canals, both urban and rural, can play in delivering wider public benefits and by working in strong partnerships with others to secure those benefits.

The Scottish Government encourages Scottish Canals and its partners – in the public sector, private sector and third sector - to continue to build on their relationships and to identify and exploit productive new contributions from canals in the delivery of the Scottish Government's Purpose.

Scottish Ministers wish Scottish Canals to continue to lead in the development of the canals, taking full account of the role and legitimate interests of the Scottish Government, as set out in this document, given the use of public money through grant, and the public assets involved.

Scottish Canals will continue to receive government grant to meet its statutory duties and help progress new initiatives but are also encouraged to develop new and existing earned income streams.

### **Principles**

The following principles provide a framework for achieving our aims for Scotland's canals:

#### **1. Valuing the heritage of our canals**

Preserving our canals in good and if possible improving condition, ensuring that the integrity and appearance of these historic structures are maintained - development should not damage or detract from their original design. As Scheduled Monuments they require particular care and attention, with use of appropriate materials and techniques.

We encourage Scottish Canals to continue to work closely with Historic Scotland to help deliver a canal system that contributes positively to the commercial and recreational life of Scotland, whilst acknowledging the important industrial legacy bequeathed to us.

## **2. Fulfilling statutory and regulatory obligations**

Each of Scotland's canals is unique in its own way, serving different purposes and meeting different demands. Common to all, however, are the statutory and regulatory obligations. We expect these obligations to be met as a fundamental responsibility of the board of Scottish Canals.

In simple terms this means that proper resources are applied to ensure the safe navigation of the canals for leisure and freight as appropriate for their classification. Other regulations ensure that the natural environment including our water resources are protected and used wisely.

## **3. Risk management and safety**

There is inherent risk associated with water-based infrastructure assets such as canals and reservoirs, as well as public and employee safety in and around the water environment.

Although we recognise that it is not possible to totally eliminate these risks, we expect Scottish Canals to apply the highest possible standards of care to the management of all canal operations to ensure risks to the public are properly managed. We also expect the public to use the canals in a responsible manner.

## **4. Increasing awareness of the potential contribution which canals can make**

Boats add colour and interest to the canals. We wish to see further growth in the numbers of boats navigating our canals, and encourage both Scottish Canals, boaters and other parties to work together towards exploiting opportunities to achieve this.

The Scottish Government greatly values the cross-cutting opportunities that the canal corridors present to further our overarching purpose of delivering economic growth for Scotland. We expect the board of Scottish Canals to continue to build on the foundations laid to date for the canals' contribution to be maximised.

A challenge for Scottish Canals will be to maintain a balanced portfolio of projects across a range of important areas such as navigation, tourism, regeneration and housing, freight and renewables and also geographically across the canals.

Scottish Canals should utilise its resources wisely over time, balancing risk and reward, but always in line with the objectives of the Scottish Government.

## **5. Delivering a high quality experience**

Our canals offer the potential for a wide and varied range of user experiences, whether on water or on land. We expect Scottish Canals to offer high quality services and to adopt an open and honest approach to engaging with all customers and stakeholders, and to actively seek feedback.

There has been a significant increase in use of our canals, both on land and on water, for recreational purposes in recent years. This is welcomed but can lead to tensions between different types of user. There is no hierarchy of activity in the canal corridors – with fair and open access to all exercising permitted types of use.

Managing competing and sometimes conflicting activities will require Scottish Canals to apply innovative solutions and excellent communications to manage user expectations.

We encourage all user groups to work constructively with Scottish Canals to increase levels of understanding that no one type of activity has priority and to minimise potential conflict by encouraging mutual respect.

Scottish Canals should sustain appropriate arrangements to ensure access to both the board and the management team of Scottish Canals, allowing proper customer and stakeholder engagement.

We encourage Scottish Canals to continue to develop its website and other means of customer interface, adopting policies for open and proactive publication of relevant information.

## **6. Working through partnership and collaboration**

The restoration and renewal of Scotland's canals has been achieved through extensive partnership and collaborative working across the public, private and third sectors. Users and local communities have also played important roles. It is essential that this partnership approach continues at both a national and local level to ensure that the momentum is maintained for the next phase of the canals' evolution.

Research, development, innovation and knowledge partnerships will be of particular relevance in asset management, harnessing the potential of the canals in renewable technologies and the productive use of water as an asset.

## **7. Monitoring and measuring outcomes**

Given the varied range of activities undertaken on our canals, we encourage effective monitoring and measuring of outcomes achieved, so that that benefit gained from initiatives can be assessed and demonstrated.

## Legislative Framework

Since July 2012, Scottish Canals has been the trading name of the British Waterways Board, operating solely in respect of its Scottish assets and functions.

The Transport Act 1962 established the British Waterways Board as the GB-wide organisation with statutory responsibility for operating and maintaining the nationalised inland waterways for which it acted as navigation authority. The organisation was charged with stewardship, development and growth of our canals, ensuring that they were not only managed efficiently, safely and effectively but that commercial opportunities which generated an income were exploited for the benefit of wider navigational and safety functions.

The Transport Act 1968 recognised the changing role of canals and rivers at a time when their use for freight distribution was in decline and the waterways leisure industry was in its infancy. It classified the nationalised inland waterways in use at that time as either commercial (available for the commercial carriage of freight) or cruising (principally available for cruising, fishing and other recreational purposes). The Caledonian and Crinan Canals were classified as commercial waterways. The Union, Forth & Clyde and Monkland Canals were described as remainder canals - to be dealt with in the most economical manner possible consistent with the requirements of public health and the preservation of amenity and safety, but not maintained for navigation. In 2011, in light of their reopening, the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals were upgraded to cruising status, placing a statutory obligation on the canals organisation to maintain these in a suitable condition for use by cruising craft.

Responsibility for Scotland's canals transferred to Scottish Ministers in 2001. The British Waterways Board continued to operate on a GB-basis, but received policy direction and direct grant-in-aid from the Scottish Government in relation to its statutory functions in Scotland. In addition, it generated income from its commercial activities. Grant-in-aid to the canals has totalled over £150m since 2001-02, with successive governments being highly supportive of the canals. This direct investment acted as a stimulus for other public and private sector investment.

In July 2012 the UK Government transferred the British Waterways Board's assets and functions in England & Wales to a new waterways charity. The British Waterways Board still exists in relation to its Scottish assets and functions, now operating as a self-standing body within the Scottish public sector with a board wholly appointed by Scottish Ministers and an opening balance of £30m. This change means that corporate policies, resources and activities can now be determined wholly by Scottish considerations.

In addition to its underpinning legislation, Scottish Canals is required to comply with a wide range of statutory duties and legal requirements covering aspects such as heritage, reservoir safety, water quality and asset management. More information about the legislative framework is available at:

<http://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/corporate-home/about-us/our-structure-and-governance>



## Progress - The Restoration and Renaissance of our Canals

Our first canal policy document - *Scotland's Canals: an asset for the future* – published in 2002 identified policy decisions in the following areas as having the potential to have a significant impact on the sustainable development of our canals: regeneration, planning and development, public access, integrated transport, environment and tourism. Partnership working, especially with the public sector, was seen as key to achieving the desired outcomes. It identified a need to increase awareness of the canals and to promote voluntary sector and community involvement.

This original policy statement has stood the test of time well and served as a very useful starting point. Scottish Canals found it to be a valuable guide for its own work and for establishing partnerships in both the public and private sector. We have learned much since 2002. Good progress has been made on many of the aspirations, though inevitably with the rate of advance varying and with scope to do more.

A fuller report on progress with the various aspirations in the 2002 policy document will be published separately by Scottish Canals.

Since 2002, major Scottish Government investment through grant-in-aid enabled the canals organisation to progress repairs and improvements to the canal infrastructure, eliminating safety backlog arrears and providing a safe and secure infrastructure. This has, in recent years, given the organisation capacity to not only maintain the infrastructure in sound condition, but to start working towards delivering wider social and economic benefits.

Examples of **infrastructure developments** over the past decade include:

- completion of the 10-year lock stabilisation programme on the Caledonian Canal, safeguarding its future
- Edinburgh Quay – transformation of the Edinburgh terminus of the Union Canal into a thriving cosmopolitan environment with commercial office space, restaurants, apartments and public space
- Port Dundas, Glasgow – creation of 300 metres of new canal, a mooring basin and two lock structures between Speirs Wharf and Pinkston Basin in Port Dundas
- Falkirk Wheel visitor centre
- Bowling Harbour – boat removal, creation of a public events area, new moorings and car parking, the construction of a new boat storage area and facility block

- Auchinstarry, near Kilsyth - development of a moorings basin with the amenity of the Boathouse Inn
- Southbank Marina in Kirkintilloch
- investment in modern services and facilities for boaters
- as part of the Helix project the construction of a 1 km canal extension to the Forth & Clyde Canal at Grangemouth - offering improved access with the potential for an increase in boat numbers on the canal

Scotland's canals, and the Forth & Clyde Canal in particular, run through some of the most deprived communities in the country. The 2002 policy document recognised the importance of partnership working, particularly between Scottish Canals and other public sector organisations, in stimulating the regeneration and economic development of neighbourhoods along the canals which are blighted by high levels of unemployment, increasing migration, major environmental challenges and a shortage of high quality, affordable housing.

Since 2002 Scottish Canals has worked with local authorities, public sector organisations, private sector partners and the third sector to raise awareness of the contribution the canals make to Scotland's economic and social prosperity as well as to stimulate economic regeneration in key locations. This partnership-led nodal strategy has delivered regeneration and place-making along the canal corridors, with strategies being developed or delivered along the Glasgow branch of the Forth & Clyde Canal, between Grangemouth and Falkirk and around Strathleven (between the Forth & Clyde Canal and the proposed Lomond Canal) and masterplanning underway for the gateway to the Crinan Canal at Ardrishaig.

Although canals were originally significant transport arteries, they now have a broad range of uses. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code, introduced by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, gave everyone a statutory right of access to most land and inland water and has been instrumental in encouraging a wider range of uses and more people to enjoy recreational and leisure pursuits along the canals. These include:

- walking & cycling – towpaths form part of Scotland's cycling and walking networks, both regionally and nationally, and there has been a surge in usage of the canals for both activities. This contributes towards delivery of the Scottish Government's health and sustainable transport targets
- paddlesports – in recent years there has been a considerable growth in paddlesport activity in Scotland, which led to the development of the Great Glen Canoe Trail along the Caledonian Canal. This has added another aspect to Scotland's outdoor tourism offer. A new paddlesports centre at Port Dundas is also under development
- tourism – the Falkirk Wheel and Caledonian Canal are recognised as 'must see' international tourist destinations. Exploring the canals by boat, boot and bike has become increasingly popular

- third sector – there has been a growth in the use of the canals as an important educational and environmental resource as well as the location for community-based events. Scottish Canals, working with the Scottish Waterways Trust (a waterways charity), has also used canals to engage communities in relation to Scottish Government targets such as healthy living, active travel and education

## The Scottish Government's Policy Framework for Scottish Public Bodies

The Scottish Government's Purpose is "to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth."

The canals form part of the Scottish public sector landscape, and so have a part to play in working to this purpose and delivering specific Ministerial priorities and objectives. Possibly uniquely within Scotland, the canals are in a position to contribute to all 5 of the Scottish Government's Strategic objectives, though focusing primarily on one or two:

- Greener - the canals provide a "green corridor" through our cities (and across Scotland), and protect and cultivate the biodiversity of aquatic and wildlife habitat along the canal. There are 22 Sites of Special Scientific Interest on or within 500m of a canal. The canals are mostly Scheduled Monuments
- Healthier - the canals and their towpaths facilitate opportunities to their local communities for healthy activities such as walking, cycling, jogging, canoeing and rowing
- Safer and stronger - the recent investment in the canals has led to local communities gaining pride in "their" canal, leading to increased use, improved safety and leisure and community activity based around the canal
- Wealthier and fairer - Scottish Canals is active in the regeneration of both urban and rural canal-side communities. It is also involved in the tourism market
- Smarter – Learning opportunities provided to local schools and community groups across a range of topics, including heritage, environment, and healthy activity

Sixteen National Outcomes describe what the Government wants to achieve over the next decade, articulating more fully the Government's Purpose. They help to sharpen the focus of government, enable priorities to be clearly understood and provide a clear structure for delivery. Our canals mainly contribute, often through partnership with the surrounding local authorities, to the following National Outcomes:-

- we value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations

- our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs
- we have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
- we live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need
- we live longer, healthier lives

Fifty National Indicators enable the Scottish Government to track progress towards the achievement of the National Outcomes and ultimately the delivery of the Purpose. These indicators covering the key areas of health, justice, environment, economy and education measure progress. Scottish Canals has assessed that, through partnership working, there is scope for the canals to indirectly contribute to a significant number of the 50 indicators.

The Scottish Government places considerable importance on corporate alignment and accountability across the central government sector and has issued a set of Corporate Expectations, applicable to all Scottish public bodies.

This includes requirements:-

- to align operations, business planning and objectives to the Purpose and the National Outcomes
- to establish an effective, clear and transparent corporate governance structure to fulfil these priorities
- to put in place a financial system that is clear and transparent to ensure the proper use of public funds and subsequent scrutiny of same
- to work with the Scottish Government to develop a shared understanding of the joint priorities over the medium term to contribute towards delivery of the National Outcomes
- to ensure that individual bodies' corporate communications and engagement strategies fully reflect these

Bodies are also required to align their activity and strategy with the priorities set by Ministers in the current Spending Review, taking account of the impact of their actions on total public spending.

Already closely aligned to the Purpose, Scottish Canals, as a body new to the Scottish public sector, is working toward meeting the full set of Corporate Expectations.

Further copies of this document are available, on request, in audio and large print formats and in community languages (Urdu; Bengali; Gaelic; Hindi; Punjabi; Cantonese; Arabic; Polish).

اس دستاویز کی مزید کاپیاں آڈیو کیسیٹ پر اور بڑے حروف کی چھپائی میں اور کیوئی کی زبانوں میں طلب کیے جانے پر دستیاب ہیں، برائے مہربانی اس پتے پر رابطہ کریں:

এই ডকুমেন্ট-এর (দলিল) অতিরিক্ত কপি, অডিও এবং বড়ো ছাপার আকারে এবং সম্প্রদায়ের ভাষায় অনুরোধের মাধ্যমে পাওয়া যাবে, অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন:

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