

AINA CASE STUDY

TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Driffield Navigation: East Yorkshire



Riverhead at Driffield is now the focus for the next stage of the navigation's regeneration

A waterway corridor study acted as a catalyst for external funding and ideas for future development

Driffield is a small market town in East Yorkshire, linked to the River Hull by a navigation built in the 1760s. The Driffield Navigation Trust and the Driffield Navigation Amenities Association have traditionally been dominated by boating interests, but in recent years efforts have been made to recruit members with a broader range of skills and interests, and this enabled the Trust to consider the future potential of the navigation and a waterway corridor study was arranged.

In 2003 East Riding of Yorkshire Council commissioned the study, on behalf of the Driffield Navigation Trust and Driffield Area Partnership, to examine the feasibility of reopening the navigation. The long term objective was to identify ways to regenerate the full canal corridor in order to attract visitors and tourism spend to help to replace the jobs lost through agricultural decline.

The existing route and condition of each section of the navigation were examined in detail, followed by an outline of the historic and current legal frameworks. Engineering issues were appraised to the channel, locks, bridges and footpaths, and were costed in detail.

An intensive press campaign kept the general public aware of the study, including three information boards erected to highlight the history and heritage of the navigation. Leaflets promoting newly created walking routes were distributed and it is anticipated that further work will be undertaken by volunteers.

The study led to the renovation of two locks, new bridge works, safety measures, and the temporary employment of a canal manager. In 2010 plans for the regeneration of the area around the head of the canal were displayed at a public exhibition. A Trust spokesperson said: "We hope we can use this vision to inspire various funding bodies to support the excellent work done by our teams of volunteers over the last 40 years."

The study cost £36,000, but initially opened access to £265,000 of funding from external sources such as SRB and European LEADER+. East Riding Council have since developed an inland waterways project which aims to more closely link communities across the region with their canals, rivers and navigations, and new ways of partnership working are being developed. The programme for this project developed from a series of workshops and meetings held in 2009.