

AINA CASE STUDY

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Stourport on Severn canal basins



The Clock Warehouse was refurbished as a key landmark at the centre of Stourport Basins

Heritage-led regeneration improves the watersides in an attractive Georgian town

Stourport Forward Market Towns Programme was a four-year regeneration project which brought key partners together to improve and promote the setting of Stourport's historic canal basins. These were originally built to link the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal with the River Severn and the Georgian town then developed around the wharves and quaysides.

The basins have evolved into a well known visitor attraction but it had long been recognised that improvements were needed in order to conserve and manage their heritage and architectural interest. More than £650,000 was provided by Advantage West Midlands who funded and monitored a programme to rejuvenate the basins, and this helped generate an additional £3.5 million through match funding to transform the area into a major heritage destination.

External areas were improved to allow access for all, and lockside areas landscaped and re-laid as appropriate. Riverside and towpath walkways were resurfaced and footpath links to the town improved. New railings, fencing and signage was installed and interpretation provided. A cafe was created in a refurbished waterways building and others premises were given facelifts or new uses. An old in-filled basin was reopened and now forms the setting for new housing and mooring facilities.

Following restoration, the site was relaunched through a locally-driven arts-based festival, which provided another focus for leisure and recreation in Stourport. The work has re-engaged the town with the basins, attracted additional visitors and improved the quality of visits through interpretation and improved access. In addition both local people and tourists are now better educated about the story of the town and its waterways, and there has been an increase of around 225,000 new visitors per annum with yearly visitor spend of £1.7 million per annum helping to create or secure jobs.

The work around the basins cost £3.2 million, including a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £1.1 million. Complimentary work included a design guide to take forward further improvements in the town and a website to promote tourism growth.

The successful completion of the projects led to Stourport First gaining recognition in the West Midlands Market Town Awards and the national BURA Waterways Renaissance Awards. In addition, following a public vote, the work won Best Heritage Category in the National Lottery Awards.