

STRATFORD TO WARWICK WATERWAY – THE AVON EXTENSION

THE NAVIGATION CASE

1. It is a vital, currently missing, link in the AINA proposed enhanced national inland navigation network, which will link the estuaries of the Mersey, Humber, Severn and Thames and the Wash and English Channel by broad navigations. Much of this broad navigation exists. Just a few short sections are missing.
2. The Avon Extension link will create valuable new cruising rings in the Midlands, and attract more visitors to the area.
3. A narrow indirect canal route from Stratford to Warwick exists, but this involves climbing 35 locks to Lapworth, and descending 23 locks to Warwick. The Avon route is shorter with savings in water and maintenance.
4. The Avon plus the extension would be the only broad navigation from the non-tidal river Severn to the rest of the broad national navigation network.
5. The engineering is straightforward. The waterway exists. 6 locks are needed to reach Warwick; a further 4 to reach Radford Semele, beyond Leamington or climb directly to the Grand Union Canal. A short canal will bypass the shallow loop below Barford.

CONTEXT

1. The national interest in waterway restoration and enhancement since WW2, with a surging increase in the last 10 years.
2. The Government's aspirations as set out in the daughter white paper "Waterways for Tomorrow", DETR, June 2000.
3. Advice to Government from the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC) in "An Undervalued Asset" 1996 and report 1997.
4. The IWAAC report "Towards Greater Social Inclusion", 2001.
5. The Government's wish for greater public access to the countryside.
6. The IWAAC assessment of all restoration and enhancement proposals, which awards the Avon Extension 'national priority'. IWAAC 2001.
7. The report of the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) "A Vision for the Strategic Enhancement of the Inland Navigation Network". November 2001.
8. The success of the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) in promoting and jointly financing numerous restorations and enhancements.
9. The yearly increase in the number of licensed boats for leisure, for youth groups and handicapped people, and for tourism, etc.
10. The current visionary and exciting plans of both British Waterways and the Environment Agency, building on their recent successes.
11. This extension has the support of BW, EA, IWA, IWAAC, AINA, UANT, LANT, the Waterways Trust and many other bodies.

LOCAL WATER RELATED BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. Greater public access, both on and beside the river, to a beautiful national resource, currently largely inaccessible except at St. Nicholas Park or by paid entry to Warwick Castle and Charlecote Park.
2. A boost to tourism. Warwick and Stratford are concerned about a decline in visitors. This waterway corridor linking the towns, Charlecote Park, Hampton Lucy Mill and Warwick Castle would be a major new tourist attraction.
3. Given the co-operation of landowners and public authorities, riverside paths could be made accessible to walkers, cyclists and wheelchairs, with picnic and wildlife observation sites.
4. Being by water and simply watching boats is an attraction for all ages.

5. The river could become a greater leisure resource for many activities, e.g. angling, canoeing, rowing, sailing and wildlife observation.
6. The opportunity could be taken to enhance the rowing course facilities at Warwick. Sea Scouts and Cadets could have direct access to more of the river and the national network.
7. The economic benefits of more visitors and water-borne tourism will be seen by local businesses, restaurants, pubs and shops. The development of boat-related enterprise will create employment.
8. Given the co-operation of landowners, the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and other environmental interests, existing sites could be enhanced and new ones created to give a diversity of wetland habitat.
9. The river could provide educational and personal development opportunities for all age groups.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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