

CALDER FUTURE

A partnership to improve the River Calder, its tributaries and bank-sides.



Project Summary

The aim of Calder Future is to facilitate the involvement of local people and partners in projects to improve the waterways in Calderdale. The project is about giving people the opportunity to conserve the rivers and canals and create places that local people want to live, work and play beside.

Calder Future is a partnership between local community volunteers and agencies with responsibility for the river environment. All organisations involved, large and small, work collectively to improve the environment of the river, its tributaries and canal corridors within Calderdale.

The Calder Future Partnership creates solutions to problems on the waterways and provides opportunities for local people to get involved in improvement projects along the whole Calder Valley from the source of the Calder in Todmorden to Brighouse.

Aims

➤ *Environmental*

To implement long term sustainable improvements, including tree planting to improve flood defences and sustainable urban drainage systems beside the river. Protect and enhance biodiversity through planting and controlling invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam. To ensure continued improvements in water quality and reduction in solid waste on and around the river.

➤ *Economic*

To act as a focus and catalyst for regeneration and economic activity along the river corridor, including the identification of opportunities for leisure and tourism. To work with businesses based along the waterways through the River Stewardship scheme to improve their environmental performance.

➤ *Social*

To increase access to the river. To involve local communities in activities related to river improvements which in turn improves health and wellbeing.

How was Calder Future started?

In 1997 the Calderdale Sustainability Forum recognised a need to look at the River Calder as a positive feature of the valley. It had been short of investment and neglected for decades. At an open day in Spring 1998, organised by Green Business Network, Friends of the Earth and Northern Naturefriends, over 100 people from assorted organisations came together to look at how an action partnership could be formed to improve the river. There is now a formal Calder Future Calderdale Partnership Agreement signed by the partners in July 2005.

Partners in the Project

Calder Future is a partnership organisation involving Calderdale Council, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Treesresponsibility, Northern Naturefriends and Calderdale Friends of the Earth, plus countless community groups and individuals.

Funding Sources

As part of their investment to the partnership, both the Environment Agency and Calderdale Council agreed to part fund the costs of the Partnership Co-ordinator. Since the signing of the Partnership Agreement Calder Future has been working closely with British Waterways and has put in place a Service Level Agreement to manage three canal side sites. This also helps to fund the position of a Volunteer Co-ordinator. We receive funds for project work from various charitable organisations, local town and parish councils and the landfill tax credit scheme.

Outcomes

In strategic terms Calder Future is working closely with the local authority to ensure that the waterways are central to policy making. This includes, promoting increased access to the river banks for the public, sustainable drainage systems (permeable surfaces) and the appropriate orientation of new development to face the river. Calder Future also works on a strategic basis with groups such as the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance - a bold, long term plan to regenerate the five

townships of Walsden, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd and Sowerby Bridge.

Due to the close proximity of the canal to the river Calder Future is working in partnership with British Waterways. In 2005 Calder Future established a pilot project with the organisation which works with volunteer groups to manage a number of their sites.

Our development of community interaction with the river and canal has seen hundreds of people and a wide number of organisations involved in the annual 'Calder Future River Day'. Individuals have become involved in litter picks, planting and other hands-on activity. Community groups have developed their own visions for the local river environment and have worked with Calder Future to deliver these. For example, a group in Brighouse has created 'pocket-park' by the riverside and have planted wildflowers and installed benches on the Calder-Hebble navigation at Armytage Road. We have active groups in Todmorden, Sowerby Bridge, Brighouse and Eastwood, all of whom have created their own wish lists for the river, many of which are being or have been implemented.

Calder Future has successfully re-launched their River Stewardship Scheme. This project has received funding from HBOS to work in partnership with the Green Business Network to carry out free environmental audits. These audits will help small and micro businesses situated along the river and canal to save money, reduce the impact they have on the environment and encourage them to 'adopt' an area of riverbank.

Future plans

Over the coming years we aim to strengthen our relationship with Kirklees and Wakefield to ensure that there is a whole river-length policy. We want to ensure that all communities that are based on the waterways of Calderdale have an opportunity to promote and take part in improvement schemes the length of the valley.