

# IWA GAPTRACKER SURVEY RESULTS



**INLAND  
WATERWAYS**  
ASSOCIATION

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## **INTRODUCTION**

IWA's Gaptracker survey was launched in May 2018 and responses were sought via IWA's website, through social media, at events and via the waterways press. IWA branches also responded collectively to the survey. Responses received up to January 19<sup>th</sup> 2019 have been analysed as part of these findings and any future responses will be monitored at a later date.

In total, 461 comments were received relating to 9 different navigation authorities. Whilst Canal & River Trust waterways comprise 65% of the navigable connected waterway system, 87% of the comments received as part of this survey related to those waterways.

An overwhelming number of responses were about the 3 basic facilities; water, rubbish and portable toilet emptying, with very few people commenting on other types of facility such as showers, toilets and electric charging points. Overflowing bins dominated the responses relating to rubbish facilities with mention of recycling facilities (or lack of) being very small in comparison.

This analysis looks at the findings from the survey in detail with conclusions made throughout and recommendations summarised at the end.

## 1. WHICH NAVIGATION AUTHORITIES ATTRACTED COMMENT?

Of the 461 comments received, 402 related specifically to Canal & River Trust with Environment Agency navigations attracting just 25 comments. 14 comments related to the whole waterway system. A breakdown of comments received by Navigation Authority can be seen in Table 1.

**TABLE 1 – GAPTRACKER RESPONSES BY NAVIGATION AUTHORITY**

Navigation Authority	Number of responses	Percent age
Canal & River Trust	402	87.2%
Environment Agency	25	5.4%
General (all nav. authorities)	14	3%
Bridgewater Canal Company	9	2%
Middle Level Navigations	4	0.87%
Scottish Canals	3	0.65%
Other	2	0.45%
Basingstoke Canal Authority	1	0.22%
Broads Authority	1	0.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gaptracker responses by Navigation Authority

- Canal & River Trust
- Environment Agency
- General (all nav. authorities)
- Bridgewater Canal Company
- Middle Level Navigations
- Scottish Canals
- Other
- Basingstoke Canal Authority
- Broads Authority

## 2. MORE FACILITIES PLEASE

63% of responses expressed a desire for more facilities. Nearly one third of comments referenced all facilities, but those that did specify a type of facility focused on portable toilet emptying.

Of the 97 comments about rubbish disposal, 72 were about rubbish disposal in general and a further 25 were specifically about recycling. 54 comments were about water points.

5 comments were about fuel/electricity - 3 comments on electricity supply points and 2 comments on the supply of fuel (1 each on petrol/red diesel). There were 6 comments about showers (all requesting new facilities rather than commenting on existing) and 5 comments about toilets (4 about state of existing facilities and 1 requesting new).

Most of the comments about existing rubbish facilities were about overflowing bins, suggesting either overuse by non-boaters or unsatisfactory contract emptying arrangements.

There were very few comments about pump outs, reinforcing the view that most people regard this as something to be provided by third parties such as marinas and boatyards and not by navigation authorities. IWA would support this view.

The canals with the highest number of requests for new facilities are the Grand Union Canal, the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Trent & Mersey Canal.

Middlewich, Plank Lane on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Hurlston Junction and Barbridge Junction received the highest number of requests for new or replacement facilities.

**TABLE 2 – NUMBER OF RESPONSES BY TYPE OF FACILITY**

Facility type	Number of responses	Percentage
All facilities	136	29.50%
Portable toilet emptying	125	27.10%
Rubbish	72	15.60%
Water points	54	11.70%
Recycling	25	5.40%
Pump out	17	3.70%
Other (non facilities)	15	3.25%
Showers	6	1.30%
Toilets	5	1%
Electricity	3	0.65%
Fuel	2	0.45%
Composting toilets	1	0.20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>100%</b>

Number of responses by type of facility  
(all navigation authorities)

■ All facilities      ■ Portable toilet emptying  
■ Rubbish      ■ Water points  
■ Recycling      ■ Pump out  
■ Other (non facilities)      ■ Showers  
■ Toilets      ■ Electricity  
■ Fuel      ■ Composting toilets

Recycling wasn't mentioned as much as it might have been – only 4.7% comments related to this, compared to 5.4% of comments about all navigation authorities, but those who did comment on this facility felt very strongly about it. One comment referred to *“Hundreds of recycling-less miles”*.

Examples from other comments received: *“Most of the elsan facilities were scruffy and poorly maintained, many of them seemed to be seldom cleaned or were so poorly maintained as to be impossible to look clean.”*

*“The problem that seems to be universal is a shortage of rubbish bins, or at least a dearth of emptying them promptly, and above all a lack of recycling facilities. It seems to me astonishing, given CRT's role in well being etc, that both of these deficiencies, which would not be acceptable in normal domestic situation, prevail on the very waterways we are trying to preserve and protect.”*

*“The Nene has lost so many of its facilities including moorings, water and elsan points and waste disposal.”*

## **2.1 WHERE SHOULD THE NEW FACILITIES GO?**

Listed below are the waterways where new facilities have been requested or suggested, each receiving 5 or more comments:

- Ashton Canal (5 requests)
- Bridgewater Canal (8 requests)
- Caldon Canal (4 requests)
- Coventry Canal (7 requests)
- Droitwich Canal (6 requests)
- Grand Union Canal (30 requests)
- Kennet & Avon Canal (24 requests)
- Lancaster Canal (5 requests)
- Lee Navigation (16 requests)
- Leeds & Liverpool Canal (16 requests)
- Leeds & Liverpool Leigh Branch (5 requests)
- Llangollen Canal (9 requests)
- River Great Ouse (6 requests)
- River Nene (7 requests)
- Rochdale Canal (15 requests)
- Shropshire Union Canal (13 requests)
- Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal (7 requests)
- Trent & Mersey Canal (25 requests)

3 or more requests for facilities were received for the following specific locations:

- Barbridge Junction – water and portable toilet emptying requested (6 requests)
- Cassiobridge Lock, Watford – water and portable toilet emptying requested (3 requests)
- Droitwich – water, rubbish, portable toilet emptying (4 requests)
- Fazeley – all (3 requests)
- Feildes Weir Lock, Lee Navigation – all (4 requests)
- Glasson Docks – all (3 requests)
- Hurlston –all (3 requests)
- Middlewich – All facilities (11 requests)
- Newbury – all (4 requests)
- Plank Lane Lift Bridge – all (6 requests)
- Semington, Kennet & Avon – all (4 requests)
- Thatcham – Kennet & Avon – all (4 requests)
- Wigan – all (3 requests)

### 3. IT'S ALL ABOUT BASIC FACILITIES

The three basic facilities - water, rubbish and portable toilet emptying attracted 84% of all comments – equal to 388 comments. This number indicates a strong demand for basic facilities. Table 2 above shows that very few people commented on other types of facility such as showers, toilets and electric charging points.

**TABLE 3 – BASIC VERSUS OTHER FACILITIES**

Facility type	Number of responses	Percentage
All facilities	136	29.50%
Portable toilet emptying	125	27.10%
Rubbish	72	15.60%
Water points	54	11.70%
Total basic facilities	388	84.2%
Other facilities	73	15.8%

Basic versus other facilities

■ Basic facilities - water, rubbish, portable toilet emptying ■ Other facilities

*“We found it hard to do the South Pennine Ring and stay clean!! Nothing in Manchester at all... Come on CRT - we need basic facilities so we can enjoy these fantastic waterways.”*

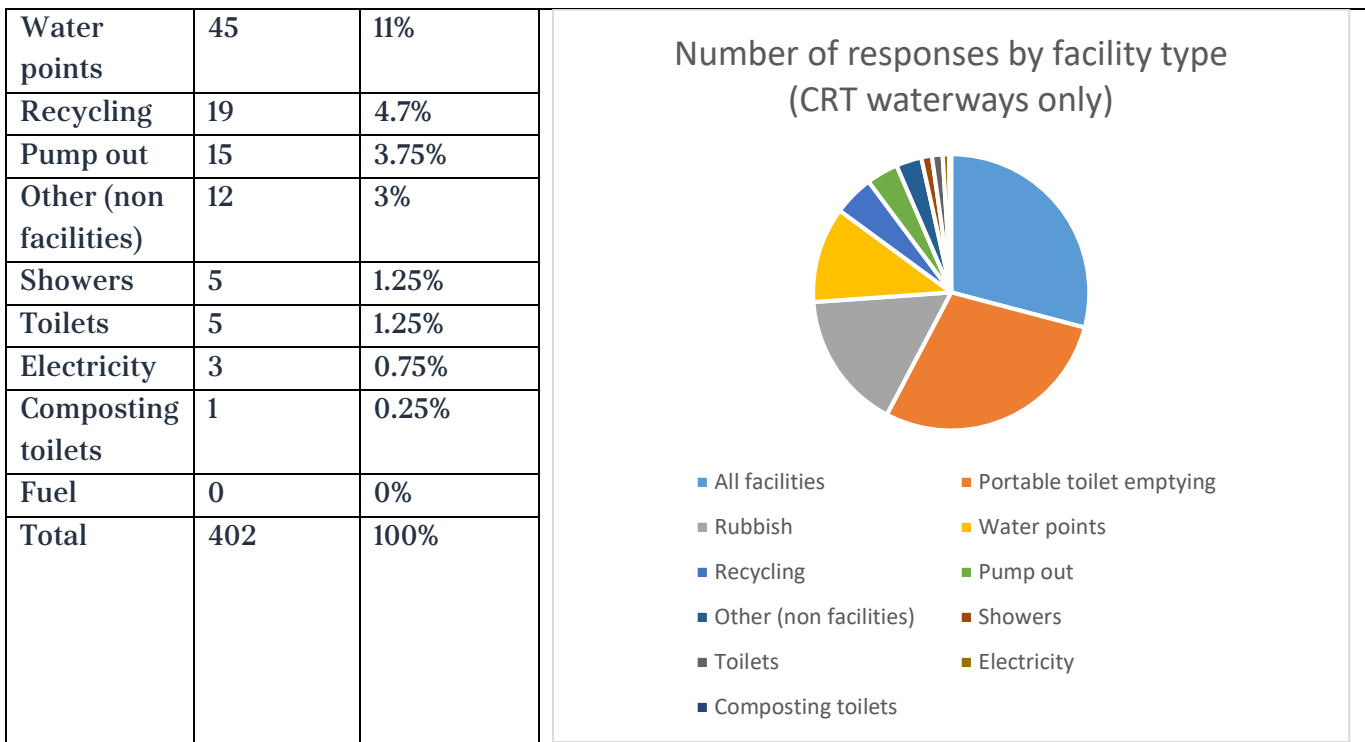
#### 3.1 CANAL & RIVER TRUST

402 replies related to CRT with the vast majority (342 / 85%) relating to the 3 basic facilities of rubbish, water and portable toilet emptying. Portable toilet emptying was the most talked about issue including complaints about rinse hoses, with hoses either missing, too long or too short.

Of the 84 comments about rubbish disposal, 65 were about rubbish disposal in general and a further 19 were specifically about recycling. 45 comments related to water points. Of “other” facilities provided by CRT, 5 comments each were received about showers and toilets and 3 relating to electricity charging points.

**TABLE 4 – NUMBER OF RESPONSES BY FACILITY TYPE ON CRT WATERWAYS**

Facility type	Number of responses	Percentage
All facilities	117	29%
Portable toilet emptying	115	29%
Rubbish	65	16%



### 3.2 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Only 25 responses relating to EA waterways were received, and further work is planned to get more responses on these waterways before feeding back to the Environment Agency.

**TABLE 5 – OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES ON ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WATERWAYS**

Facility type	Number of responses	Percentage
All facilities	7	28%
Water points	6	24%
Rubbish	4	16%
Portable toilet emptying	3	12%
Pump out	2	8%
Recycling	2	8%
Other (non facilities)	1	4%
Electricity	0	0%
Fuel	0	0%
Showers	0	0%
Toilets	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>



### 3.3 BRIDGEWATER CANAL

All but 1 of the 9 comments related to the lack of basic facilities along the canal (water, rubbish and portable toilet emptying), with the ninth relating to unavailability of an existing facility.

**TABLE 6 – OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES ON THE BRIDGEWATER CANAL**

Facility type	Number of responses	Percentage
Portable toilet emptying	6	66.6%
Rubbish	2	22.2%
All facilities	2	22.2%
Water points	1	11.1%
Totals	9	100%

### 3.4 MIDDLE LEVEL NAVIGATIONS

The 4 comments received relating to the Middle Level Navigations were all suggested locations for new facilities. This will be fed back to MLC as this ties in well with their new powers following the Middle Level Act. Further work is to be carried out with local IWA branches to identify any other locations.

### 3.5 SCOTTISH CANALS

The only 3 comments on Scottish Canals' waterways related to existing facilities at Auchinstarry. This will be relayed to Scottish Canals.

### 3.6 BASINGSTOKE CANAL

1 comment received, about fuel (diesel).

### 3.7 BROADS

1 comment about the general availability of facilities.

### 3.8 OTHERS

2 "other" comments were received (Beverley Beck and Yorkshire Derwent) – both relating to requests for new facilities.

## 4. WATERWAYS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

The Ashton and Droitwich canals came out top of the survey in terms of the number of comments received compared to the length of waterway, followed by the Lee Navigation.

The two locations with the highest number of concerns or complaints raised about the existing facilities were Great Haywood at the junction of the Trent & Mersey and Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canals, and Horton Bridge on the Kennet & Avon Canal.

### 4.1 OVERALL COMMENTS BY WATERWAY

The following waterways occurred most frequently in the survey results. The table shows waterways with 5 or more comments received, and is ordered by the highest frequency of comments per mile of waterway:

Waterway	Navigation Authority	Number of comments	Length of waterway (miles)	Comments per mile
Ashton Canal	CRT	6	6.7	.89
Droitwich Canals	CRT	6	7.5	.80
Lee Navigation	CRT	19	26.2	.72
Rochdale Canals	CRT	19	33	.57
Birmingham & Fazeley Canal	CRT	10	20.4	.49
Kennet & Avon Canal	CRT	35	75.5	.46
Shropshire Union Canal	CRT	28	66.5	.42
Llangollen Canal inc arms	CRT	20	48.8	.40
Grand Union Canal	CRT	50	133	.37
Trent & Mersey Canal	CRT	34	93	.36
Coventry Canal	CRT	12	32.6	.36
Caldon Canal	CRT	7	20.3	.34
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal	CRT	14	46.1	.30
Oxford Canal - north	CRT	6	22.7	.26
Lancaster Canal	CRT	11	44.5	.25
Bridgewater Canal	BCC	9	39.1	.23
Macclesfield Canal	CRT	6	26.3	.22
Oxford Canal - south	CRT	10	49.5	.20
GU Leicester Section	CRT	9	49.1	.18
Leeds & Liverpool Canal including Leigh & Rufford Branches	CRT	24	142	.16
River Nene	EA	10	60	.16
Worcester & Birmingham Canal	CRT	5	30.5	.16
River Great Ouse	EA	7	74.8	.08

Somewhat surprisingly in London the Paddington Arm and Regents Canal received only 2 comments between them, while the Lee Navigation had 19 comments.

## 4.2 ISSUES WITH EXISTING FACILITIES – SPECIFIC LOCATIONS MENTIONED MOST OFTEN

The following facilities received 3 or more comments:

- Auchinstarry – Forth & Clyde Canal – 3 (water/portable toilet emptying)
- Barbridge Junction – 3 comments about all 3 basic facilities
- Batchworth, Grand Union Canal – 3 comments about all 3 basic facilities
- Berkhamsted – 3 comments all about portable toilet emptying
- Fenny Compton – 3 comments on recycling/rubbish
- Galgate Marina – recent loss of access to existing facilities following sale of marina
- Great Haywood – 6 comments, 5 of which about portable toilet emptying
- Hatton – 4 comments, all about portable toilet emptying
- Hawkesbury Junction – 4 comments, 3 of which are about rubbish
- Horton Bridge, Kennet & Avon – 6 comments, 3 about rubbish and 3 about water
- Hurlleston, Llangollen Canal – 7 comments, 5 of which are about portable toilet emptying
- Kinver, Staffs & Worcester – 4 comments about rubbish/recycling
- Minworth, Birmingham & Fazeley – 3 comments (rubbish/portable toilet emptying)
- Wheaton Aston – 3 comments about portable toilet emptying

The facilities at the top of Hurlleston Locks on the Llangollen Canal, which have been closed since May 2017, were reported in both categories (“issues” and “facilities required”), giving a total of 10 comments about this location. It is clearly important that CRT arranges for the reinstatement or replacement of these facilities as a matter of urgency.

## 5. OTHER ISSUES RAISED

Some of the comments received by respondents identified other issues:

*Rinse Hoses: “Lack of rinse hoses at all the Elsan Disposals on the Coventry Canal – and others within the former Central Shires patch. This is not only an inconvenience to boaters, but also reflects on the cleanliness of these facilities – when compared with all others, where an acceptable solution to the ‘Water Directive problem’ has been implemented.”*

*Moorings at facilities: “Sanitary stations/facilities - are often short of mooring space - Willington and Nantwich spring to mind, the former is hopeless if you're heading in the wrong direction with a longer boat as the moorings mean you'd overlap with permanent moorers, it's on the offside and room for one boat only.”*

*Portable toilet disposal standard: “I would like to see some sort of common standard at Elsan. Some are so high you break your back lifting a full cassette up, some have percussion taps that allow so little water through that you need to stand there with your hand on the tap for 5 minutes or more to get sufficient water to flush the cassette, some have taps so close to the top of the Elsan hopper that the angle you need to hold the cassette means half the water goes on the floor. All this applies to fairly new facilities as much as old.”*

*Idea for new facilities: “Whynot tie up with caravan/motorhome organisation to create centres which both can use and pay a small fee for. Better chance of getting it off the ground than trying alone. After all both communities would like similar facilities and need more.”*

## **IWA RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **BASIC FACILITIES ONLY**

Our findings from this survey suggest that waterway users are most interested in the three basic facilities of water, rubbish disposal and portable toilet emptying. This would indicate that any new facilities built by navigation authorities can be of a much simpler design than some of the current buildings. This should be news to their ears as a simpler provision would be much cheaper to maintain. In fact, the 3 basic facilities do not need to be in buildings at all. Some of the best portable toilet emptying points are of a design which is open to the elements; taps are best free standing and adjacent to the water's edge to avoid hoses trailing across the towpath; and rubbish bins or skips should be inside locked roof-less compounds or accessible only by water.

### **NO MORE THAN 5 HOURS CRUISING TIME**

Basic facilities should be provided in sufficient locations that it will take no longer than 5 hours (under normal boating conditions) to cruise between them.

### **FACILITIES AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY**

The basic facilities of water, portable toilet emptying and rubbish should continue to be provided by navigation authorities, and should be available 24 hours a day at no direct cost to boaters (but should be paid for out of licence/registration fee income).

If third parties such as marinas are providing the facilities, to fill in the gaps between navigation authority provided facilities, these should also be accessible 24 hours a day and at no charge.

### **RUBBISH FACILITY ACCESSIBILITY**

Rubbish bins or skips, provided for the use of boaters by the navigation authority, should be in locked compounds, or accessible only from the water. This would cut down on the amount of rubbish being left by non-boaters and should reduce the problem of overflowing bins.

Litter bin and toilet provision for use by the general public is an issue that navigation authorities should work with local authorities over, but is not something that IWA would expect navigation authorities to fund.