

OUTDOOR LEARNING ON THE KENNET & AVON CANAL¹

A youth engagement programme run by the Canal & River Trust has succeeded in making waterways more relevant to young people living near the Kennet & Avon Canal.

Collaborating with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, the project targeted people aged nine to 18 who were experiencing difficulties, disadvantage or vulnerability. Pupils from a local primary school, who struggle with a formal classroom setting, benefited from weekly outdoor activities based in and around the natural environment. Another group took part in school holiday activities through a local police charity, while a third group were young carers involved in the practical or emotional support of parents, siblings or other family members.

The activities included boat trips, learning how to operate locks and den building, all of which helped youngsters with their self-esteem and confidence, communication skills, attitude, aspiration and resilience to learning through challenges.

The programme also created positive student/adult relationships. Young people left with a greater awareness of the waterways plus new skills, including safe use of tools and controlled risk-taking.

¹ Young Volunteers and Waterway Restoration – Engaging the Next Generation. Canal & River Trust and The Inland Waterways Association 2022.



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