

A MILLION HANDS

SOCIAL ACTION ON WATERWAYS FOR ALL SECTIONS

- Develop dementia-friendly waterways with Alzheimer's Society
- Promote mental wellbeing and resilience with MIND
- Investigate the quality of your local waterway with WaterAid
- Experience waterways from another perspective with Guide Dogs
- Improve access to your local waterway with Leonard Cheshire Disability

In partnership with



Canal &
River Trust



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INTRODUCTION

Waterways are amazing places to carry out social action with your young people. With 50% of the population living within five miles of a Canal & River Trust waterway, you are probably closer than you think to 2000 miles of 200-year-old heritage. You can discover your nearest waterway at canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network.

Every journey starts with one step so this pack is designed to get your young people started and to literally 'Go Explore' but this is exploring with a difference.

This pack is about exploring a nearby waterway whilst thinking about the A Million Hands issues. You can do one or all of the 'Go Explore' activities with your young people and tailor how you do this to your section. Your young people should gather as much information as possible when out exploring, take pictures and really learn about the environment around them, especially if they plan to carry on through the pack to the Plan Action stage.

A great activity to follow on from exploring a local canal is to adopt an area of a canal. By adopting an area, you and your Scouts will visit it regularly and theme activities around the A Million Hands issues.

Before you go and explore here are some simple points you need to remember and include in your risk assessment when visiting your local waterways.

Stay safe

- **Stay Away From the Edge** of the waterway, bridge or lock. **SAFE** is a good acronym to share with your young people
- Plan a route before you go
- Consider the weather
- Wear good boots and take care on uneven ground
- Avoid contact with poisonous or biting insects and plants
- Manage contact with the public and dogs
- Take care and follow instructions using locks and bridges
- Avoid contact with canal and river water to avoid pollutants, submerged objects and Weil's disease

For information designed especially for 8- to 11-year-olds about planning a waterway, visit: canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

Go Explore – a waterway near you

Develop dementia-friendly waterways with Alzheimer's Society

Overview: Invite a Dementia Friends Champion to your weekly meeting to run a fun and interactive Information Session about dementia and how it affects someone. Use this knowledge to support your young people to do a dementia-friendly survey for your local canal or river.

Outcome: Young people will understand what dementia is, how it affects someone and what actions they can take on their local canal or river to help support people living with dementia to access the waterway.

Time: 2 hours (can be run over two meetings)

Equipment: Pens/pencils, copies of the Dementia-friendly Canal Checklist. The Dementia Friends Champion will bring all resources for the session.

Linked badges:



Activity instructions:

1. Login to amillionhands.org.uk and 'request a volunteer', or email scouts@alzheimers.org.uk to arrange for a Dementia Friends Champion volunteer to deliver the session to your Scouts during your weekly meeting.

We ask for at least six weeks' notice to organise for a Dementia Friends Champion Volunteer to visit, and we will do our best to match you to a volunteer on your preferred date.

If you would like to run additional activities to help your Scouts learn about dementia download the full A Million Hands resource pack for dementia at amillionhands.org.uk/resource.

2. In pairs or with the support of a leader, ask the young people to complete a copy of the Dementia-friendly Canal Checklist. Scouts can also take photos of features on the waterway, ones that are helpful and ones that may create difficulties for people affected by dementia.

Dementia-friendly Canal Checklist

Complete this checklist for your local canal or waterway. Tick all that apply and write notes or suggestions about what you could improve. You might decide to take photos of the issues.

	Signs are clear and give simple information at the right points Notes.....
	Signs are easy to read Notes.....
	Footpaths are wide, flat and well maintained Notes.....
	Bicycle lanes are separate from footpaths Notes.....
	The outdoor environment is welcoming and unthreatening Notes.....
	There is a variety of features that are practical and beautiful, such as trees and benches Notes.....
	There is seating available Notes.....
	The seating is sturdy with arm and back rests Notes
	The seating does not conduct heat or cold Notes.....
	There are useful landmarks to help someone navigate the area (a painting, plant or feature) Notes.....
	There is an accessible toilet Notes.....

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

Go Explore – a waterway near you

Promote mental wellbeing and resilience with MIND

Overview: Because spending time in green spaces and doing gentle exercise can reduce stress and help us to relax, a mindful walk along a local canal or river can be good for mental wellbeing.

Outcome: After trying mindful walking and talking about how it went, young people will have a greater understanding of how being in nature can promote mental wellbeing.

Time: 30 minutes

Equipment: None

Linked badges:



Activity instructions:

A mindful walk requires a few alterations to the way you might walk normally, encourage your Scouts to try these simple steps to help them understand how being outside and being active can help with positive mental wellbeing.

1. Find a canal, river or green space. When you get there, stop for a moment and take a deep breath.
2. Start walking slowly – try not to focus on getting somewhere quickly.
3. Really focus on each step you take. Notice which part of your foot touches the ground first, and feel the transfer of weight through your foot.
4. Think about the rest of your body – how are you holding your arms?
5. Notice the ground underneath your feet. Is it grass or earth? Does the ground feel soft?
6. Listen to the sounds around you – can you hear birdsong, wind rustling through the leaves, or the water flowing?
7. Notice any clouds in the sky, or trees and plants? Can you identify any of them? Can you feel rain, wind or sun on your skin?
8. Notice your surroundings. What water features can you see? Can you see a bridge, lock, weir or boats? After the group of young people have walked for a while, find somewhere quiet to sit and ask:
 - How did you find the mindful walk?
 - Did you notice anything new or different from usual?
 - Why are green spaces such as canals and river important for our wellbeing?
 - Are there any other ways that green spaces can be used for our own and others wellbeing?

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

Go Explore – a waterway near you

Investigate the quality of your local river or canal with WaterAid

Overview: A water quality testing activity to look at changing conditions and to highlight the importance of clean water.

Outcome: By closely examining water from the canal the young people will understand the value of a clean water source.

Time: 30 minutes

Equipment: Jars with three metres of string tied securely around the edges, white A4 paper or card, notebooks, tape measures, antibacterial gel, towels. You can also order a pH paper book from WaterAid scouts@wateraid.org

Linked badges:



Activity instructions:

1. When you arrive at the canal ask the young people if they can see any places where the water changes – a lock or an inflow or another place where the water looks visibly different to water in another area.
2. Working with your young people, take a tape measure and make three marks 10 metres apart: the first at the point of change, one up stream and one downstream from the first mark.
3. Using the string, lower the jam jar into the water at each of the points. Pull the jam jar out of the water and stand it on one piece of paper while putting the other piece of paper behind the jar to examine it.
4. Look at the colour of the water. Look to see if there is anything floating in the water. Sniff the water. Think about the water you get from a tap; how does this compare? This water is untreated and unsuitable to drink. Even if it looks clean there might be microbes or pollutants that are invisible to the eye.
5. If there are any creatures make notes, draw, or photograph them to clearly identify them later.
6. Optional: now test the pH of the water (a kit is available from scouts@wateraid.org).
7. Make notes about the water and compare it at the different points, take pictures along the area you survey and think about the reason for any changes.
8. Undertake this activity a few times over a length of canal. Discuss any changes and imagine if this were your only source of water for drinking, washing and cooking your food. What would you do? (Following the activity remind your young people to thoroughly wash their hands after the activity to avoid water-borne diseases).
9. Nine out of ten people are able to get clean water. Together we can make it ten out of ten before the year 2030. Why not make your visit and exploration of canals a part of how you tell that story.

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

Go Explore – a waterway near you

Experience waterways from another perspective with Guide Dogs

Overview: Create a sensory map of a nearby canal or river by going for a walk along the water focusing on how all of your senses experience it.

Outcome: Young people will develop a greater understanding of how people with sight loss use their remaining senses to understand and enjoy the world around them.

Time: 40 - 60 minutes

Equipment: Pens/pencils and paper. A map of the area

Linked badges:



Activity instructions:

1. Decide on a stretch of your local canal or river you would like to visit with your young people and go for a walk. Make sure you plan and risk assess the walk beforehand.
2. On your walk discuss what your senses are telling you.
3. Talk about how most people use their vision to understand the world around them – we use our sight more than any other sense. When a person starts to lose their sight, or has lost their sight completely they adapt to understand and enjoy the world around them using their remaining senses.
4. Think about how you would enjoy the canal if you were partially sighted or blind and you were experiencing it using your other senses.
5. Stand still and make notes of what you can:
 - Hear – natural or man-made sounds?
 - Smell – Are there any particularly nasty or nice smells?
 - Touch – What's underfoot and are there any canal or river related objects that would be interesting to touch?
 - Taste – Is there anything growing? (Check if it's safe to eat).
 - See – What's the view like? Does it change on the walk? Are there any objects that are very visible?
6. Draw a map of the stretch of canal or river you walked along and mark out what you have sensed. What did you like? Was there anything you didn't like?

UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

Go Explore – a waterway near you

Improve access to your local waterway with Leonard Cheshire Disability

Overview: Conduct an access survey to improve access to a local canal or river for disabled people, and then take action to improve access.

Outcome: Your Scouts will get a better understanding of how disabled people's lives are affected by access and help to improve their access to local waterways.

Time: 1-2 hours

Equipment: Cameras/smart phones (to show areas of poor access and to document your activity), clipboard, pen, Access Survey templates

Linked badges:



Activity instructions:

1. Decide on a canal or river that you would like to visit with your young people.
2. Choose a time to conduct the survey. You can use the survey template provided or create your own.
3. It is helpful to speak to disabled people in your community to ask about access problems they have had in the area that you plan to survey. If possible, conduct the access survey in partnership with disabled people.
4. Conduct your survey over a length of canal (about a mile is ideal).
5. Once you have conducted your survey, discuss your findings and think about what could be done to improve the results. Next, move on to a PLAN ACTION activity below.

	Access Survey – Canal or River	Y/N	Comments/recommendations
1	Is there parking for disabled people (blue badge holders) nearby?		
2	Is the route from the parking area to the waterway clear and accessible for people with a mobility impairment? (Consider gates, steps, etc)		
3	Are there accessible toilet facilities nearby?		
4	Is the surface accessible for wheelchair users and people with mobility impairments?		
5	Are the paths wide enough for wheelchair users?		
6	Are there any access aids? For example: ramps, ropes, hand rails		
7	Is there enough seating for people who may need to rest frequently?		
8	Are signs clear and easy to understand?		
9	Is information about the canal or river available in another format?		
10	Is there any information about accessible routes?		
11	Are there any obstructions along the route? For example: gates, large trees		
12	Are there any areas/facilities that have been designed with disabled people in mind? For instance, accessible fishing platforms or sensory planting?		
13	Is the exit route from the canal or river clear and accessible for people with a mobility impairment?		

PLAN ACTION

Ask your young people: Whilst you were out and about did you start to think about possible things that you could do to improve your waterway in relation to the A Million Hands issue you have chosen?

By continuing through this pack, Scouts can start to put some of those ideas into action by working with the Canal & River Trust. In the meantime, keep those ideas fresh by doing this programme activity.

Plan your perfect canal

Overview: An activity for all sections, for young people to get all their great ideas down on paper. They can then use this as a planning tool when they start to plan their pocket adoption with Canal & River Trust.

Outcome: Scouts will have a visual plan of the area they would like to adopt, including potential improvements they would like to make bearing in mind those affected by their chosen issue.

Time: 1 hour

Equipment: Pens, pencils, crayons, a roll of paper (wallpaper/lining paper would be ideal)

Linked badges:



Activity instructions:

1. Roll out your paper on the floor or a long table.
2. Develop a scale – 1 meter of paper to 100 meters of canal (depending on the space you have). Mark this along the bottom of the sheet.
3. Allocate a section of canal to each young person or pair of young people.
4. Draw onto the sheet all the existing features of the canal that you remember, such as:
 - Towpath (footpath)
 - Water
 - Bridges
 - Locks
 - Access points
 - Useful things like loos and parking
5. Once this is finished, draw or write on your canal plan all the ideas you have for making it even better for people affected by the A Million Hands issue your young people have chosen.

TAKE ACTION

A great next step from 'Go Explore' is to adopt a section of your local canal or river by partnering with the Canal & River Trust.

By adopting a stretch of nearby canal or river, young people in Scouting form a partnership with the Canal & River Trust (and potentially their chosen charity too) to work together to create enjoyable outdoor spaces. The young people can then take ideas they've developed about making improvements that support their A Million Hands issue and start making them a reality. As a local Group, you can play a central role in improving and promoting canals and rivers for people in your community.

Scouts understand the great impact that being outside has on physical and mental wellbeing, whether it is going on a hike, enjoying and learning about nature, having a picnic or going canoeing. A pocket adoption is about creating ways that mean more people can benefit from local canals and rivers.

A pocket adoption involves adopting any distance of canal for either 6 or 12 months. It could be undertaken as a section, Group or District. The young people will need to theme the activity around their chosen A Million Hands issue and work with the Canal & River Trust (The Scottish Waterways Trust in Scotland or Waterways Ireland in Northern Ireland) to plan and deliver activity.

Steps to adopting

1. Check that you are close to a waterway managed by Canal & River Trust here: canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network
2. Identify your A Million Hands issue. This will become the theme of your adoption. Will your young people choose disability, mental wellbeing and resilience, water and sanitation or dementia?
3. Talk to your partner charity (Leonard Cheshire Disability, Guide Dogs, Alzheimer's Society, Mind, WaterAid – details below) about how they could get involved. This might be through planning and consultation or by getting active on site with you. Partner charities can adopt with you jointly if they would like continued involvement.
 - Contact Alzheimer's Society: scouts@alzheimers.org.uk
 - Contact MIND: scouts@mind.org.uk
 - Contact WaterAid: scouts@wateraid.org
 - Contact Guide Dogs: scouts@guidedogs.org.uk
 - Contact Leonard Cheshire Disability: scouts@leonardcheshire.org
4. Get in touch with the Canal & River Trust by emailing millionhands@canalrivertrust.org.uk or calling 0303 040 4040 to identify a section of waterway idea for your pocket adoption. This will be a joint decision depending on location, type of activity, existing adoptions and access.
5. Complete the Go Explore activity with your young people to undertake some initial activity on your pocket adoption.
6. Plan and register the pocket adoption with Canal & River Trust – this will include looking at safety aspects relating to the projects you plan to deliver.
7. Launch your pocket adoption. Promote your activity with the help of your County Media Development Manager, contact them and discuss how they can help you with local media work. Monitor the local news for any press coverage and record it. If you don't have a County Media Development Manager, please contact the Scout Media Team on 0845 300 1818 or communications@scouts.org.uk.
8. Deliver, continue to communicate, celebrate and evaluate. For Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, linked badges include the World Challenge Award Badge.

If your young people are interested in undertaking a pocket adoption and would like more information, please visit: Canalrivertrust.org.uk/a-million-hands

LEARN AND DO MORE

Now young people can learn and do more around your chosen issue. Below is some inspiration for activities that they could do to continue learning and having an impact in their community. Many of these things are great fun to do as a group but they also offer exciting opportunities to get other members of the local community involved too.

Disability

- Conduct an audit and consultation about canal and river accessibility
- Improve access or campaign for improved access. For example: fixing pot holes, widening gateways, levelling footpaths, signposting accessible routes
- Run awareness campaigns – such as ‘Share the Space’ to reduce cyclists’ speed
- Host walks, talks or fishing tasters, or link with local accessible boats
- Create interpretation in accessible formats such as podcasts/clear posters
- Take canal themes and activities to people in the community (bird boxes, tree planting, wild flowers)
- Improve destinations such as picnic and seating areas
- Create art projects that inform or educate about disability

Mental Wellbeing and resilience

- Create themed walking routes
- Run awareness campaigns – such as ‘Share the Space’ to reduce cyclists’ speed
- Host visits, walks, talks or fishing tasters
- Create quiet zones at picnic sites or resting places along canals and rivers
- Host yoga or meditation classes on the towpath
- Lead stress-busting health walks
- Create welcoming signs and artwork along the canal

Dementia

- Conduct an audit and consultation about canal and river accessibility for people with dementia. Create walking routes from centres or homes where people with dementia live
- Gather local stories about the canal and use them to inform arts and interpretation projects
- Run awareness campaigns – such as ‘Share the Space’ to reduce cyclists’ speed
- Host visits, walks, talks, or fishing or boat trips
- Create resting areas that are both stimulating and relaxing
- Create art projects that inform or educate about dementia

Clean water and sanitation

- Test the quality of the water by mapping the area and monitoring it over a length of time
- Run a local awareness campaign about littering or pollution
- Raise awareness of, and remove, invasive flora and fauna
- Clean up canal and rivers by doing a litter pick
- Plan hikes along canals and rivers that are based on distances travelled by people in different countries to get water
- Lead fun activities by the canal that develop people’s understanding about how we use water and highlight the importance of good quality water
- Create art projects that inform or educate about the importance of clean water locally and internationally

Useful links

- Taking a boat trip or holiday? Why not link up with a community boat in your area? Visit the National Community Boats Association for details: national-cba.co.uk
- Getting out on a canoe? For a fun way to exercise and see the waterways from a different angle find your local canoe club by visiting: britishcanoeing.org.uk
- Discover waterway heritage by visiting a local museum or using resources available on the Canal & River Trust site: canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers
- Get involved in fishing! Fishing is the biggest participation sport in the UK. It's a great way to relax, learn new skills fishing and develop an accessible hobby for life. For more information visit: canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/go-fish
- To access water quality test kits supplied as part of citizen science project, contact the Freshwater Habitat Trust here: freshwaterhabitats.org.uk

TELL THE WORLD

Once you have adopted your stretch of canal, tell the world about it!

Here are some tips and ideas to help inspire you to engage with as many people in your local community as possible and really help to impact the issue you have chosen:

- Invite local community organisations, councillors, celebrities or MPs to one of your canal days
- Write a project blog – talk to Canal & River Trust about how you could promote this with them
- Create a case study to share the great stuff you have been doing – maybe a short video – and post it online
- Host a fun day or event on your section of canal so you can tell everyone that lives locally about the great work you are doing
- Share pictures and videos relating to your project on Twitter and Facebook
- If you have a County Media Development Manager, contact them and discuss how they can help you with local media work. Monitor the local news for any press coverage and record it. If you don't have a County Media Development Manager, please contact the Scout Media Team on 0845 300 1818 or communications@scouts.org.uk.