

WL2a Union Canal Water Path

Start, route and finish

This 14.5 mile (23km) section of the canal goes from the River Avon Aqueduct through Linlithgow, Winchburgh and Broxburn to Linn's Mill Aqueduct across the River Almond at Loup o Lees near East Calder.

Surfaces and features

The canal varies in width with the aqueducts and the over bridges being the narrowest points. There are a number of weirs which take water from the canal into rivers and burns below. Paddlers share the water with a growing number of canal boats and cruisers as the canal is now open from the Falkirk Wheel to the centre of Edinburgh.

The experience

The canal is a Scheduled Ancient Monument as well as an important linear wildlife habitat. With two magnificent aqueducts and good views of Linlithgow and the scheduled shale bings between Winchburgh and Broxburn the canal has a lot to offer as a tourism attraction as well as being valued by local people.

Opportunities and constraints

With the canal used by motor vessels and anglers as well as paddlers there is a potential for conflict. The paddlers enjoy the right of responsible access under the SOAC whilst the others need a licence.



WL2b Union Canal Towpath

Start, route and finish

This 14.5 mile (23km) section of the canal towpath goes from the River Avon Aqueduct through Linlithgow, Winchburgh and Broxburn to Linn's Mill Aqueduct at Loup o Lees.

Surfaces and features

The towpath and some links to it were upgraded as part of the Millennium Link Project. It is a whindust path, generally between 1 – 1.5 metres wide.

The experience

The canal is a Scheduled Ancient Monument as well as an important linear habitat. With two magnificent aqueducts and good views of Linlithgow and the scheduled shale bings between Winchburgh and Broxburn the canal has a lot to offer as a tourism attraction as well as being valued by local people.

Opportunities and constraints

A recent study, commissioned by SNH, determined that the towpath width and the limited clearance under the many bridges are too narrow and low to allow horse access. However, the popularity of the path for walkers, runners and cyclists has led to incidents and complaints. The development of the Winchburgh/East Broxburn CDA, with between 3-5,000 new houses, will bring even greater pressure that must be managed or diverted elsewhere. There is also a problem with motor bikes using the towpath, particularly in the vicinity of Broxburn.

There is still a need for some path links to the towpath to be developed or upgraded. This is particularly important in settlements through which the canal passes.



