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Canal Towpaths

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Sustainable Canal Towpath Surfacing

Stretching for hundreds of miles, the UK's canal towpaths offer a direct link to the nation's industrial heritage. Once vital transport routes, they are now widely used by walkers, cyclists and local communities. In recent years, the Canal & River Trust has worked to revitalise these towpath networks, improving accessibility while preserving their unique character.

PMP Surfacing has supported this transformation using the Flexipave system, delivering durable, low-impact surfacing across multiple sections of canal routes. Previously prone to water-logging and erosion, these towpaths often became muddy and inaccessible following rainfall. Flexipave's porous and flexible structure allows water to drain naturally, creating a safe, consistent surface while maintaining the integrity and appearance of these sensitive heritage environments.





Flexipave Canal Towpaths

In a unique approach that reflects the canals' original purpose, PMP Surfacing utilised narrowboats throughout the installation process. Raw materials were transported directly along the waterways, reducing the need for land-based access in difficult or environmentally sensitive areas. Flexipave was then mixed on the barges before being carefully laid along the towpath.

This method not only minimised disruption to the surrounding environment but also demonstrated how historic infrastructure can once again support modern industry - bringing the story of the canals full circle while delivering a practical, sustainable surfacing solution.

Key Benefits

Low-impact Installation - hand-laid application ideal for restricted or remote access areas.

Barge-Based Logistics - materials transported and mixed via the canal network, reducing disruption.

Highly Porous - prevents standing water and water-logging.

Flexible and Durable - adapts to movement and irregular surfaces.

Heritage-Compliant - suitable for use alongside historic coping stones.

Sustainable - manufactured using recycled tyres.

Clean, Precise Finish - enhances appearance while preserving character.







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