Boost for Montgomery Canal restoration

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The bid led by the Canal and River Trust and supported by the Montgomery Canal Partnership which includes 14 partner organisations, is a key step to securing the full grant of £3.7m and a major step forward in the plans to fully restore the canal.

Known for its outstanding natural beauty and heritage the Montgomery Canal runs for 33 miles between England and Wales. The canal has the largest population of rare floating water plantain in Britain and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in England and a Special Area of Conservation in Wales for its abundance of aquatic plants.

Richard Parry, Chief Executive of the Canal and River Trust, said: “This is fantastic news. The Montgomery Canal is one of the most beautiful waterways in Britain. Whilst much of it can be enjoyed today, the goal of fully restoring it has been kept alive for decades by the tireless work of volunteers. We are delighted to be awarded this development funding. It is another big step towards the canal’s full restoration and allows us to complete our application to the HLF for the full £3.7m grant.”

The Montgomery Canal Partnership aims to fully restore the canal as a haven for people and nature and bring canal boats back into the area for the first time in 80 years. Works will include; the reopening of 2km of canal; re-instatement of a ‘winding hole’ (for boats to turn) at Crickheath; towpath improvements from Welshpool to Llanymynech and; better links between communities in Shropshire.

Importantly the project aims to complete the extension of the nature reserve at Aston Locks which will extend the conservation of the important aquatic plants and secure the environmental works agreed under the Conservation Management Plan for the restoration of the canal through to Llanymynech. It will also restore historic bridges along the canal and allow work to go ahead to undertake the vital studies needed to secure the full funding needed for the project.

Reyahn King, Head of HLF West Midlands, added: “The Montgomery Canal is a remarkable feat of industrial transport engineering that was developed over two centuries worth of history. This project will help bring the canal back to life as well as preserving rare natural habitats found along its course. This is a great first step and we are looking forward to working with the Trust on the development of proposals in the coming months.”

Thanks to the development funding the trust will employee a temporary project manager and a community development officer to manage a range of volunteering and educational opportunities.

The funding announcement from HLF comes soon after £1million has been invested to transform approximately 14 miles of the Montgomery Canal’s towpath between Newtown and Welshpool through a partnership between the Welsh Government, Gland?r Cymru - the Canal and River Trust in Wales, Powys County Council and Sustrans.

Notes to editors

The Montgomery Canal Partnership members include; Canal and River Trust, Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust, Powys County Council, Shropshire Council, Natural Resources Wales (formerly Countryside Council for Wales, EA Wales), Natural England, English Heritage, Cadw, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), Environment Agency, England, Shropshire Union Canal Society, Inland Waterways Association,

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust and Shropshire Wildlife Trust

The Montgomery Canal is navigable from Lower Frankton to Gronwen Bridge (13kms) in England with limited access for narrowboats from Llanymynech to Freestone Lock in Wales with the rest of the canal dry.

Canal and River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales. We are among the largest charities in the UK, maintaining the nation's third largest collection of Listed structures, as well as museums, archives, navigations and hundreds of important wildlife sites. We believe that our canals and rivers are a national treasure and a local haven for people and wildlife. It is our job to care for this wonderful legacy – holding it in trust for the nation in perpetuity and giving people a greater role in the running of their local waterways.

Further information

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