Burnley's river restoration to go ahead

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The project will see almost £1million spent on the naturalisation of the town's rivers with the involvement of local communities.

The 18-month development phase of the project began in October 2011, which included development funding of £81,000 from the HLF. Investigative studies were undertaken and ideas formulated that would help improve the rivers whilst at the same time, engaging local people in the heritage of Burnley's waterways and bringing them closer to nature.

The URES will make physical improvements to Burnley's concreted river channels, increase the habitat for flora and fauna, improve public access to the rivers and highlight the importance of the Rivers Brun and Calder to both wildlife and people.

The project will also help to bring new jobs and opportunities for local people to train, gain professional qualifications, learn new skills and benefit from work experience. Education projects will introduce river studies into the school classroom and the natural river heritage will be celebrated through arts, drama and theatre performances.

Victoria Dewhurst, Community Engagement Officer for the URES, said: "The project will bring over £900,000 to the heart of Burnley. As well as making physical improvements to the river habitats, controlling invasive species and improving biodiversity, we know that local people are essential to the success of the URES and we are working to encourage and equip our communities with the skills, experience and confidence to take ownership and pride in our rivers. Get in touch and help make a difference."

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: "The Urban River project is fantastic news for Burnley and will have transformational effects for both local people and the surrounding environment. Ribble Rivers Trust will not only uncover the historic river and reinstate it at the heart of the town but also empower local communities to explore, enjoy and help conserve this important part of their heritage.

"HLF has invested a total of over £6.9m into conserving and opening up Burnley's rich heritage, from sharing the stories and traditions of its diverse communities to restoring its listed buildings. This includes over £750,000 for smaller community heritage projects. As a great example of the difference HLF money can make, we are holding a special event on 27 March to showcase Burnley's success – why not come along and find out more?"

The HLF event will be held at Towneley Hall on 27 March. For more information, please contact Rebecca Mason on 0161 200 8472.

Notes to editors

The Ribble Rivers Trust (RRT) is a local environmental charity established in 1998 to protect and restore the rivers, streams and watercourses within the Ribble catchment and to raise public awareness of the value of our local rivers and streams. The Ribble catchment is the area of land that is drained by the River Ribble and its major tributaries; the Hodder, Calder and Darwen. It covers a varied landscape, from the rural hills of the Yorkshire Dales and the source of the River Ribble, to major urban areas of Lancashire including Blackburn, Burnley and Preston. For more information

please contact 01200 444 452.

Burnley has been, up until March 2013, a Priority Development Area for HLF which means it has received less HLF funding than other areas in the North West, despite its rich and fascinating past. HLF have been working closely with Burnley CVS and Burnley Borough Council to conserve and share the town's vast heritage.

Further information

Ribble Rivers Trust: Victoria Dewhurst, Community Engagement Officer on 01200 444 452, email: vic@ribbletrust.com.

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