Safeguarding one of Britain's most important



The Canal & River Trust in partnership with East & North Yorkshire Waterways Partnership; the East Riding of Yorkshire Council; the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society; and Natural England has been awarded development funding of £47,100 to help progress their plans to apply for a full grant of almost £500,000. The scheme, involving a number of partners, aims to improve and safeguard the Pocklington Canal for future generations. In particular the project will protect important wildlife habitats along the canal repairing the beautiful and iconic 200 year-old Church Bridge and reinterpreting a distinctive swing bridge.

The Pocklington Canal, which runs for 9.5 miles between Canal Head, near Pocklington to the River Derwent in East Cottingwith, is a real gem with virtually the entire length of the canal falling within one of three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). What's more, all nine locks and all four road bridges are Grade II listed making the canal one of the nation's most interesting waterways.

As well as the works to protect the ecological and historical character of the canal the project will also encourage members of the local community to appreciate its significance and to become actively involved in caring for it. The project will look to improve access to and along the canal, as well as organising events and activities to engage local people, supporting them to explore all that it has to offer.

The canal is a popular location for walkers, bird watchers, anglers and budding photographers as well as the occasional

boater. The canal is particularly important for aquatic plants, birds, waterfowl, and invertebrates – including 13 different species of dragonfly and damselfly.

Mark Penny, chair of the Canal and River Trust's North East waterway partnership said: "This is great news and takes us one step closer to safeguarding what is one of the nation's most treasured canals. The Pocklington canal is really special in that no matter where you are on the towpath you're almost certainly standing in an area of environmental or historical significance. That's why it's so important that we protect it for future generations and why this funding could be so significant. It could not only allow us to carry out important physical works but would also give us the opportunity to engage local people through varied activities and sharing the significance of the canal and gaining their support in protecting it."

Fiona Spiers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "We are delighted to be able to offer the Canal and River Trust a development grant to get plans underway to restore and safeguard the Pocklington Canal. This waterway gem is largely unspoilt and this project will not only ensure its sustainable future but give lots of people the chance to get involved in protecting this rich natural heritage on their doorstep."

The canal was built in the 19th century to transport coal, lime, fertiliser and industrial goods to Pocklington, and agricultural produce out to the fast-growing towns of West Yorkshire. During the middle part of the last century the canal fell into disuse and became unnavigable. Despite plans in the 1950s to turn it into a dumping ground for chalk sludge, the canal survived with the section from the River Derwent to the Melbourne Arm being restored with the help of the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society.

Notes to editors

A first-round pass means the project meets HLF criteria for funding and HLF believes the project has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award. On occasion, an applicant with a first-round pass will also be awarded development funding towards the development of their scheme.

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales. It is 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. They believe that our canals and rivers are a national treasure and a local haven for people and wildlife. It is their 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

For media requests please contact Stephen Hardy, Communications Manager at Canal & River Trust on 01636 675 703, 07920 077 190 or email: stephen.hardy@canalrivertrust.org.uk.