

Dinham Bridge, Ludow

A multi-million pound plan to restore the River Teme is a step nearer today thanks to vital funding from the HLF.

HLF has approved a development grant of £204,000 to allow the Severn Rivers Trust (SRT) to develop plans and apply for a full £3m grant for its Springs of River project that will restore the wildlife and revitalise the historic communities along the river.

The beauty of the River Teme was immortalised in AE Housman's collection of poems *A Shropshire Lad,* but in the 118 years since it was published the river has suffered a drastic change. Despite its high conservation status, species such as salmon and eel are in serious decline, and wildflower meadows and woodlands that once characterised the river valley are being lost.

The Springs of Rivers project, which will be managed by SRT, aims to reconnect and improve more than 200km of river through a number of linked initiatives. These will include practical conservation; a range of community events; improving access to the river; and creating volunteering opportunities and apprenticeships. A new visitor centre will form a hub for the community across the river. An educational programme is also planned that will aim to work with schools and their local rivers and streams across the region.

The importance of the River Teme is already widely recognised; it is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the wider catchment covers two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Special Area of Conservation. It is one

of the most important tributaries of the UK's longest river, the Severn.

Commenting on the award, Tony Bostock, chief executive of the SRT, said: "We're delighted that HLF has given us this support in recognition of the Teme being a truly unique and special place."

Reyahn King, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "The River Teme and its catchment once had thriving wildlife and natural heritage. Now thanks to National Lottery players, we can invest in this transformational project that will revitalize this important river."

Note to editors

The Severn Rivers Trust is an independent environmental charity established to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of the rivers, streams, watercourses and water bodies in the Severn catchment, and to advance the education of the public in the management of water and the wider environment.

Further information

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