

Wales



Below:
Pontymoile,
Monmouthshire &
Brecon Canal

In October, the Montgomery and Llangollen canals secured over £15.4 million in funding from the Government's UK Levelling Up Fund.

This represents the largest single investment made in improving and securing the long-term future of canals in Wales. The projects to restore a stretch of the Montgomery Canal and deliver visitor improvements along the Llangollen Canal will be delivered in partnership with Powys County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Solutia and a range of partners and volunteers. The investment will benefit local people, heritage and nature and the thousands of boaters and visitors who come to visit Wales each year, as well as bringing economic benefit to neighbouring towns and villages. The funding will focus on progressing the

restoration of the Montgomery Canal from the Wales-England border at Llanymynech to Arddleen, and improving visitor access to the 11-mile UNESCO World Heritage Site stretch of the Llangollen Canal.

Swansea Council completed a section of towpath resurfacing on the Swansea Canal from the County boundary to Coed Gwilym Park. The work received Welsh Government Active Travel funding and joins a section previously improved by Neath Port Talbot Council.

We reopened our Trevor Basin Visitor Centre on the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage Site and welcomed over 30,000 visitors, including over 4,500 children. Over 300,000 people visited the UNESCO World Heritage site. At the Centre, we hosted regular events bringing people to the waterside for health and wellbeing and we resumed our schools Explorer education programme in north Wales.

Above: Brecon,
Monmouthshire &
Brecon Canal

In February we restarted our Community Roots programme in Torfaen, which over the next three years will deliver a range of community activities, events and wellbeing opportunities focused around Pontymoile Basin.

Work has continued with colleagues across the Trust to fulfil our Welsh language commitment and develop more bilingual materials, including a bilingual junior Lock Keeper certificate.

As part of the Pont-y-Ddol 'bridge over the meadow' project, we worked with artist Rebecca Chesney to plant a mini wildlife flower meadow on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal south of Pontymoile Basin. Native flowers were planted, creating ribbons of colour along the water's edge and providing habitat and food for a variety of insects. Changes have been made to the Trust's grass mowing regime, cutting just a

narrow strip either side of the towpath to increase habitat and biodiversity. Rebecca produced monitoring kits for people to record the plants and insects spotted and note how what they see and hear affects their mood. The project was delivered in partnership with arts organisation Peak Cymru and community interest company In Our Nature, with support from Arts Council of Wales and Colwinston Trust and Arts & Business Cymru. The plants were supplied by Habitat Aid.

In April we launched our three 'Step by Step' bilingual walking trails along the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, focused around Brecon and Pontymoile basins and Gotyre Wharf. The initiative, which encourages people to exercise by exploring their local landscape and heritage, is part of Glandŵr Cymru's social prescribing project. The project was funded by Cronfa Dreftadeath, National Lottery Heritage Fund.





Below: Llanellen, Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal

- A Canals, Communities & Wellbeing project based around the Monmouthshire & Brecon and Montgomery canals in Powys has been awarded £840,432 Rural Development Programme funding. The project will improve access so that more local people can use them. It will also provide opportunities for interpretation, enhancing biodiversity and developing nature reserves.
- We secured £128,000 from the Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics fund via Visit Wales, to improve accessibility at Trevor Basin on the Llangollen Canal. We upgraded paths, access gates and entrance points, carried out landscaping works and planted trees to improve the public realm at the basin, within the World Heritage site.
- Swansea Canal Society has secured £99,620 from the Welsh Government Brilliant Basics Fund towards a project to restore the buried lock at Clydach in the former Swansea Council depot site. Swansea Canal Society now owns this site and has asked the Trust to form a partnership to develop the project.
- We secured around £358,000 from the Nature Networks Fund for our Luronium Futures project on the Montgomery Canal Special Area of Conservation, aiming to improve the condition and resilience of the canal for floating water-plantain, a European protected species.



All 35 miles of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal were awarded Green Flag status by Keep Wales Tidy

All 35 miles of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal were awarded Green Flag status by Keep Wales Tidy, and Swansea Canal Society received the Green Flag Community Award for the sixth year running.

In January, we held a virtual open day on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal at Mamhilad, giving people an insight into the work required to maintain our historic waterways. Before undertaking the repairs here, we blocked off a one-and-a-half mile section of the canal and rescued the fish. More than 21 million litres of water were drained from the canal, ready for us to work on some of the bridges, culverts

and sluices. The virtual open day videos explain key aspects of the work, including the fish rescue, doormice surveys, bridge repairs and works to preserve and repurpose a nine-metre long Georgian stone culvert.

Volunteer lock keepers and towpath rangers on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal have continued to help to make our waterways better places to visit, with activities such as supporting boaters, litter picking, removing obstructions to navigation, and re-enforcing embankment walls.

In June and July we worked with Y Gaer Museum & Art Gallery to host visits from 58 school children. Hands-on STEM learning activities included water safety, a boat trip, helping the lock keeper and curriculum-relevant guided walks.

Above: Brecon Canal Basin

