

PRESS RELEASE

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Project to repair Welsh canal and boost wildlife picks up top award

A project to restore and reline sections of the 200-year-old Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal while improving wildlife habitats along the waterway, has scooped a major award.

A team from **Glandŵr Cymru** - the Canal & River Trust in Wales - together with local volunteers from the **Llangattock Woodland Group**, collected the award in the 'Natural Environment' category at the *Living Waterway Awards* – known as the 'Oscars of the waterways' - which seek to recognise the most exciting and inspiring waterway-based projects across the UK.

The project was carried out on the canal, which is one of the most popular attractions in the Brecon Beacons, over six months finishing in March 2017. It included: restoring 650 metres of the historic canal lining; planting over 20,000 reeds; and improving nearly two miles of hedgerow. Education days for local schools and a public open day attracting thousands of visitors were also held. As part of the project the Llangattock Woodland group formally 'adopted' a stretch of the canal, which will see volunteers support **Glandŵr Cymru** to make continued improvements to the waterway.

The project was designed as an exemplar for the refurbishment of a waterway, focussing on improving the resilience of the canal – such as protecting against leaks – while simultaneously improving habitats for wildlife. Plans were shaped by the principles of the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources as established by the Environment (Wales) Act.

Integral to the work was the production of a new prospectus, written in collaboration with **Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit**, that establishes a framework of best practice for how the natural environment of canals can benefit the wider landscape.

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Commenting on the project, the *Living Waterway Awards* judges said: “It is hard to imagine that the canal was a construction site just 12 months previously. The environmental enhancements are well-established and a great success. The Wildlife and Waterways prospectus has radically changed how the natural environment is considered, managed and improved. The document has been recognised by Welsh Government as an exemplar and is being sought out and implemented by other organisations.”

Kevin Phillips, Glandŵr Cymru supervisor, said: “We’re delighted to have won the award and really grateful to everyone who contributed to the project. It was a great marriage of engineering, heritage and ecological expertise and shows what can be achieved on our waterways. The canals in Wales are beautiful, and so important for local economies, communities and wildlife. Projects like this mean we can keep improving the canals so people can continue to get massive benefits from them.”

Further details of the 2018 Living Waterways Awards can be found at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/living-waterways-awards-2018

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Notes to editors

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The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people’s lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk