

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Canal & River Trust receives grant of £1.7 million from the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund

- The Canal & River Trust's partnership will develop a nature recovery network across the West Midlands
- One of 90 initiatives nationwide awarded grants to accelerate the implementation of nature-based projects, from new 'insect pathways' in our countryside and towns, to tree planting projects in deprived urban areas
- Second funding round of Green Recovery Challenge Fund backed by £40 million, with over 1,000 jobs to be created or retained in England

The Canal & River Trust, waterways and wellbeing charity, has been awarded a grant from the Government's £40 million second round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, a multi-million pound boost for green jobs and nature recovery.

The grant to the Trust of £1,726,300 will be used to develop a Green Recovery network across West Midlands canals. The work will deliver environmental enhancements including the creation of wildlife corridors reconnecting fragmented habitat for endangered species such as water voles. 50kms of canals will be improved linking seven nature reserves. Seven SSSIs will be enhanced, a 20km community orchard will be planted between Birmingham and Wolverhampton and canals around the Commonwealth Games sites will be improved, helping to make it the greenest games ever.

The canal project will also form a partnership with the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, supporting up to 500 schools with environmental learning, to inspire the next generation. Eight new environmental roles and four apprenticeship opportunities will also be created. Walsall, Wolverhampton and Worcestershire local authorities are all part of the partnership.

Richard Parry, Chief Executive of Canal & River Trust, comments: "Canals are playing a crucial role bringing nature into our towns and cities. As well as supporting nature recovery, which is so important for wildlife, the funding will also help more people to connect with the canal network across the West Midlands and improve the wellbeing of waterside communities – where the

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

canal is a vital green and blue space for people to use and enjoy for better health and happiness.”

The funding for the West Midlands’ canals is one of 90 nature projects across England to have been awarded grants to create and retain over 1,000 green jobs, backed by the Government’s £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

Work will be carried out on over 600 sites from North Northumberland to the tip of Cornwall, and combined with the first round, almost a million trees will be planted, contributing towards the Government’s commitment to treble tree planting rates across England by the end of this Parliament.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a key part of the Prime Minister’s 10 Point Plan to kick-start nature recovery and tackle climate change. Connecting people with nature is another priority theme: by increasing access to nature and greenspaces, projects will support both physical and mental wellbeing. The Government’s Green Recovery Challenge Fund was developed by Defra and its Arm’s-Length Bodies. The fund is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.

**Environment Minister, Rebecca Pow, said:**

“The diverse and ambitious projects being awarded funding today will help environmental organisations employ more people to work on tree-planting, nature restoration and crucially, help more of the public to access and enjoy the outdoors.

“Through our £80 million Fund, we are on track to support over 2,500 jobs, plant almost a million trees and increase nature recovery at a huge scale across the country, which will help us deliver against our 25 Year Environment Plan.”

**Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive, National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:**

“From wetland restoration, to creating wildlife-rich habitat for bees, it is vital that we value, protect and rebuild our natural heritage. This new funding will not only allow projects to carry out direct conservation which is essential in protecting our biodiversity, but it will increase awareness of how and why we need to change our behaviours in order to protect our future.”

**Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:**

“By supporting jobs from Northumberland to Somerset, the Green Recovery Challenge Fund will help deliver a nature positive future. The fund supports young people to develop skills needed to protect nature, build back greener and prepare for climate impacts, like floods and heatwaves.”

**Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said:**

“Our environmental and conservation charity sector does an incredible job in protecting, improving and restoring the natural environment for the benefit of communities and the economy.”

**Forestry Commission Chair Sir William Worsley said:**

“This funding will help deliver thousands more trees and help us achieve our target of trebling tree planting rates in England by the end of the Parliament. We need to work towards net zero emissions by 2050; to address biodiversity loss; to better connect people with nature; and to create more green jobs in doing so. Trees are central to this and the projects being awarded these grants will have a hugely important role in helping us realise these objectives.”

A full list of awards is available to view at:

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/publications/green-recovery-challenge-fund-second-round-decisions-july-2021>

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For further information contact Sarah Rudy, comms & campaigns manager on 07788 691 219 or email [sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

**Notes to Editors**

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](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

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**About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we Inspire, lead and resource the UK’s heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future.

[www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk)