



Canal &
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PRESS RELEASE

11 February 2015

Project to protect habitats and heritage on the Pocklington Canal set to start

A project that could see £500,000 invested in protecting important wildlife habitats and 200 year old structures on one of Britain's most cherished canals is about to get underway.

The Pocklington Canal, which runs for 9.5 miles in the East Riding of Yorkshire, is particularly special as virtually the entire length of the canal falls within one of three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The canal is nationally important for its aquatic plants and dragonflies. 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.

Now a partnership of organisations including the Canal & River Trust, East & North Yorkshire Waterways Partnership, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, the Pocklington Canal Amenity Society and Natural England are working on a Heritage Lottery Fund bid which could see the canal's delicate ecology and historical features protected.

In order to pull together the bid a Development Officer, Rachel Walker, has recently been appointed. Rachel will be helping to plan the key activities taking place as part of the project, including putting together a series of plans setting out how the canal's habitats and heritage features should be managed, and how best to tell the story of the canal so visitors and local people can understand its importance.

Key to the success of the project will be the involvement of local people so that they can play an important part in helping to shape the plans.

Rachel Walker, Pocklington Canal development officer for the Canal & River Trust said; "The Pocklington Canal is a real gem, bursting with wildlife and dotted with some really interesting examples of the area's industrial heritage. This project's really exciting as it not only seeks to protect these things that make the canal so special but also to give both local people and visitors a greater appreciation of just how important the canal has been to local life.

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“A big part of my role will be speaking to local people, hearing their views and ideas on the canal and telling its story to a much wider audience. It’s a great opportunity and I would encourage as many people as possible to get involved.”

The project received funding of £47,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund in December 2013 to develop the bid which, if successful, would secure a full grant of almost £500,000.

In addition £45,000 has been secured from WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd) to clear overgrowth, which is obscuring the line between the canal and the towpath.

It’s a particularly exciting time on the canal as local volunteers are also working on a project to restore two locks reopening a further two miles of the canal to boats. The Pocklington Canal Amenity Society also hopes to raise £250,000 to fit new oak gates at Thornton and Walbut Locks as well as dredging silt and weeds from the canal bed extending the navigable length of the canal from Melbourne to Bielby. For more details go to www.pocklingtoncanalsociety.org

The canal was built in the 19th Century to transport coal, lime, fertiliser and industrial goods to Pocklington with the boats carrying agricultural produce on the return journeys 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.

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Notes to editors:

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation’s third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites. We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk / @CanalRiverTrust / @crtcomms

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