



The Montgomery Canal

**Regeneration through
sustainable restoration**



Canal &
River Trust

Montgomery Canal Partnership

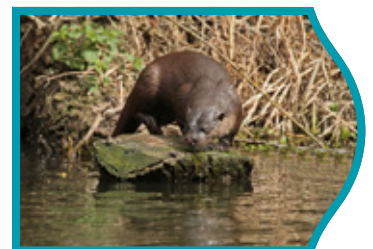
Welcome

Montgomery Canal: Regeneration through sustainable restoration

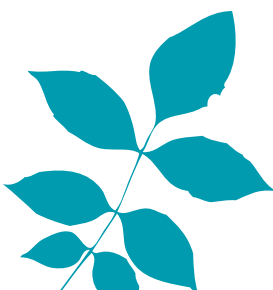
The beautiful Montgomery Canal is a 56 km long rural canal, only partly navigable, with a high quality natural and built heritage in both Wales and England.

It is important for its aquatic plants, and it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in England and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) in Wales.

The existing Canal stretches from its junction with the Llangollen Canal at Lower Frankton, near Ellesmere in Shropshire to Freestone Lock near Newtown, its original terminus. It was developed in the early 19th century primarily to supply the areas agricultural land with lime and general materials. Today it is home to the largest UK population of floating water plantain, a rare aquatic plant, and grass wrack pondweed. Over the last 40 years more than half of the Montgomery Canal has been restored to navigation and there is on-going support in England and Wales amongst canal societies, public bodies and trusts to complete this work. The Montgomery Canal Partnership members have signed up to a Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) – a framework for taking forward the restoration of the canal, whilst balancing it with the requirements specific to the habitat designations.



Caersws 8 mins	Lake Vyrnwy 40 mins	Oswestry 10 mins	Wrexham 22 mins	Denbigh 50 mins
Llanidloes 23 mins	Shrewsbury 32 mins	Kinnerley 26 mins	Chester 37 mins	Liverpool 53 mins



Montgomery Canal Partnership



The Montgomery Canal Partnership brings together all groups with an interest in the Canal, led by the Canal & River Trust (the Trust). The Partnership (which includes Shropshire and Powys County Councils) is committed to working together to complete the restoration of the Montgomery Canal and in doing so bring about a sustainable regeneration of the canal corridor.

Montgomery Canal Partnership Membership

- Canal & River Trust (British Waterways before July 2012)
- Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust (MWRT)
- Powys County Council
- Shropshire Council
- Natural Resources Wales (formerly Countryside Council for Wales, EA Wales)
- Natural England
- Historic England
- Cadw
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW)
- Environment Agency
- Shropshire Union Canal Society (SUCS)
- Inland Waterways Association (IWA)
- Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- Severn Rivers Trust

2024 update: Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust were members of the partnership until withdrawing in May 2022

A Way Forward

This document is designed to build on the CMS and presents the Partnership's programme for the restoration of this beautiful and important Canal, as a flagship model of sustainable rural regeneration with the Canal at its heart. In doing so we will protect the Canal's unique natural and built environment and make it accessible so that it is used, appreciated and protected for the benefit of local people and visitors alike. The planning policies of both Powys County and Shropshire Councils support the restoration project.



Vision

The vision for the restoration of the Canal is that it will:

- Be a corridor of opportunity that will provide a driving force for rural regeneration in England and Wales. Through physically and thematically connecting local tourist attractions the Canal will create a focus and catalyst for the wider regeneration of Welshpool and Newton and the Oswestry – Queens Head – Llanymynech triangle based on the its key historic role in the industrial revolution.
- Provide a community resource, valued and used by all.
- Enable restoration to navigation that respects values and enhances the unique nature of the Montgomery Canal and have sustainability at the heart of all management and development.



We will restore the Canal in four phases, initially completing the section from Gronwen to Crickheath and then onto Llanymynech (on the Welsh border); then from Llanymynech to Arddleen enabling navigation through to Refail (South of Welshpool), the end of the isolated navigable section. This fits with the ambitions of Welshpool Town Council to restore the Canal to Welshpool and so obtain the economic benefits of restoration. Phase 4 will be from Refail to Newtown, in line with the objectives of Newtown Town Council. The first three phases are achievable in 10 years, subject to funding, with the last part targeted for 2029.

Phases 1 & 2: Gronwen to Crickheath and then Crickheath to Llanymynech:

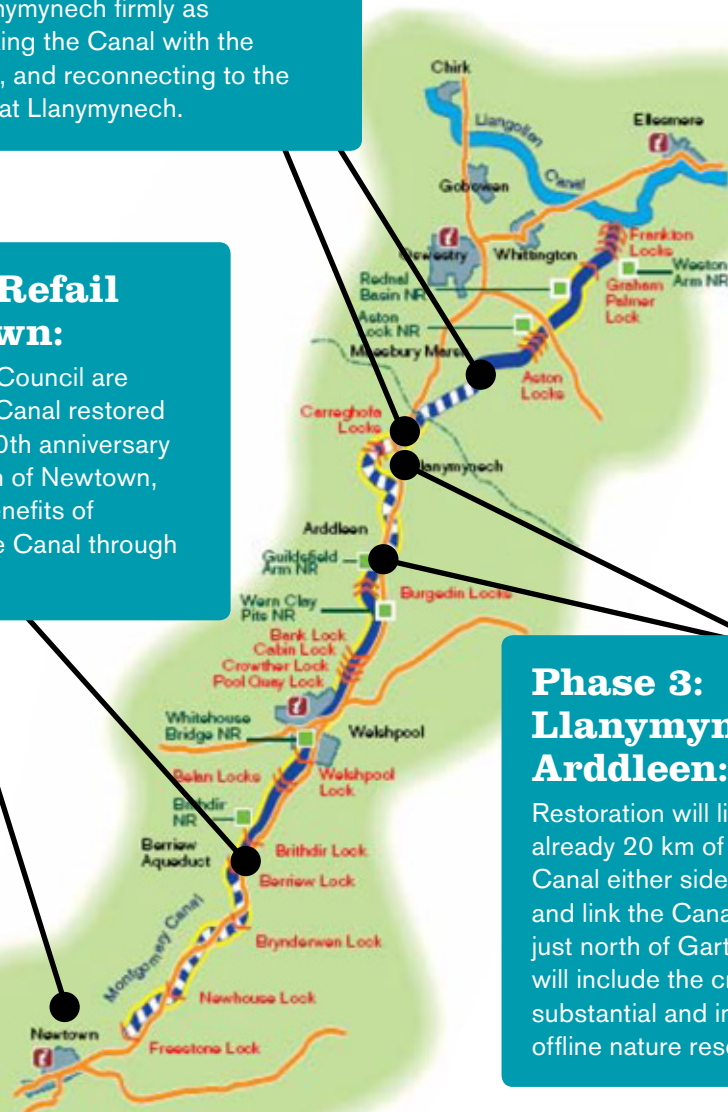
Establishing Llanymynech firmly as a visitor hub, linking the Canal with the historic limekilns, and reconnecting to the section in water at Llanymynech.

Phase 4: Refail to Newtown:

Newtown Town Council are keen to see the Canal restored by 2029, the 750th anniversary of the foundation of Newtown, extending the benefits of restoration of the Canal through to the Town.

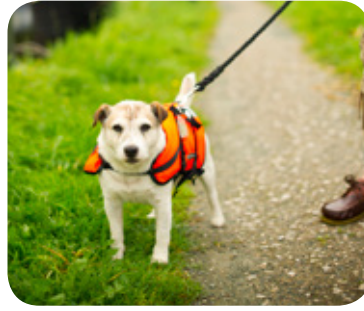
Phase 3: Llanymynech to Arddleen:

Restoration will link to the already 20 km of re-opened Canal either side of Welshpool and link the Canal to Refail, just north of Garthmyl and will include the creation of substantial and imaginative offline nature reserves.



Legend

- Canal navigable
- Canal not navigable



Outputs and outcomes

Across the UK, waterway restoration has been shown to act both as a catalyst for and a means of delivering economic, environmental and social benefits to the local community. For example the restoration of the Droitwich Canal (completed in 2011) saw a 20 percent uplift in towpath visitors with £1.1 m p.a. visitor spend, the creation of a 238 berth marina and associated facilities and significant waterside development sites coming forward. Please see **Water Adds Value** for further information.

The Canal's beauty and remoteness make it a very desirable destination for boaters and land based visitors alike and restoration will play a catalytic role in delivering local priorities through creating many opportunities for education, skills development and local employment.

Its role will reach well beyond the canal corridor reaching not only the area between Oswestry and Llanymynech (and eventually Welshpool) but also the much bigger triangle of Pontcysyllte, Llanymynech and Ellesmere. Linking the areas physically and thematically the Canal will bring even more tourism potential, extending economic benefit to wider communities. When complete, the project will transform significant parts of Shropshire and mid Wales, adding resilience to the local economy and connecting people with their cultural heritage and nature.

Growth & Sustainable Jobs

Education

Health

Homes

Safer Communities for All

Equality

Tackling Poverty

Rural Communities

Culture & Heritage

Lifelong Learning



Outputs

Flat, level towpath	56 km
Navigable channel	56 km
Brownfield land brought into use	27 ha
Nature reserves	20 ha
Listed structures conserved Grade II	127
Grade II*	1
UK BAP species protected	2
Construction jobs	242
Trainees	25
Construction GVA ¹	£16.6 m
¹ Construction GVA per Employee (including trainees) of £62,600 (Experian Labour Market forecasts for Gwent & Powys 2014)	

Project Outcomes

Total visits	1,000,000 p.a.
Existing visits	740,000 p.a.
Additional visits*	334,000 p.a.
Visitor spend (Direct, indirect & induced)	£5 m
Sustained	£3 m p.a.
Additional*	£2 m p.a.
Employment created as a result (Direct indirect & induced)	128 FTE
Sustained	78 FTE
Additional*	50 FTE
GVA created as a result of that employment (net) ²	£2.2 m p.a.
Sustained	£1.4 m p.a.
Additional*	£0.8 m p.a.
Equivalent Annual Value of public benefits (non-market)	£3.3 m – £4.6 m p.a.
Sustained	£1.0 m to £2.3 m p.a.
Additional+	£2.3 m p.a.
Health benefits included above:	Up to £0.4 m p.a.
Sustained	Up to £0.3 m p.a.
Additional*	Up to £0.1 m p.a.
New destinations at Llanymynech (in England) and Welshpool connected to network and other attractions in the vicinity	
² Assumes £40,000 visitor spend creates 1 tourism job which creates £17,600 GVA	
Excludes jobs and GVA created from new businesses and development of the destinations	
*from 50% of average increase in use after towpath upgrades encouraging more use and a shift from car to foot and bike	
+Jacobs "The Value of Inland Waterways in England and Wales" Final Report August 2011: Rural canal low boat numbers creates £58 k / km potential gain in benefits (EAV) with investment	

The outcomes have been calculated using known and estimated visitor numbers for the whole Canal and tested formulae from a number of recent canal restoration economic impact studies (i.e. An Economic Evaluation of the Restoration of the Kennet & Avon Canal: An Update of the 2002 Study, (2006) Ecotec – also updated 2009). We are in the process of updating methodologies.





The restoration will also act as catalyst for wider regeneration of the Oswestry Queens Head – Llanymynech. A new marina at Queens Head marina could create 147 jobs including retail with an estimated £1 m annual spend (2009 prices). In addition a fully restored Canal to Llanymynech will see businesses offering accommodation and food e.g. public houses stand to gain most (in direct financial terms).

As well as the monetised benefits, restoration will bring wider opportunities for building community well-being and skills through the involvement of local groups, volunteers and social enterprises in canal-related activities resulting in

- Opportunities to develop construction and heritage skills within the local community.
- Educational use of the canal, across all subjects and aspects of the curriculum.
- New community facilities such as visitor hubs, sport and leisure facilities providing new opportunities for walking, cycling, canoeing and angling.



Delivering the restoration

Our approach

The Canal is in single ownership (Canal & River Trust) from where it joins the Llangollen Canal at Frankton Junction to Freestone Lock (outskirts of Newtown): it has water supply, hasn't been built over and for phases 1–3 all locks are already repaired. This gives the restoration project considerable advantages compared with some other restoration projects.

Communities will be at the heart of the restoration. It is clear from our extensive consultation that the tranquillity of the Canal and opportunity for close contact with natural environment is valued by a wide range of different users. We also know that the Canal offers opportunities to grow the number of visitors and expand the visitor experience to provide 'something for everyone'. We will involve and work with the community and other local stakeholders to ensure that the Canal is a true community asset delivered in accordance with the principles set out in the CMS.



Principles of Restoration

NAVIGATION: Navigation is part of sustainable management of the canal, and will be allowed up to the maximum level consistent with maintaining the conservation value of the canal. The restoration will be designed to cater for a target level of boat movements of 2,500 annually in Wales and 5,000 annually in England, as agreed in the 2005 CMS.

ECONOMIC AND RURAL REGENERATION: A major means to achieve this will be through increased visitors and visitor spend. In addition, the restoration project can be used as a catalyst for local non-tourism economic regeneration through the redevelopment of canal-side land and buildings.

LANDSCAPE: We will protect and enhance the existing character of the waterway. Awareness of the landscape archaeology will be raised. New developments will respect local character, and use local and traditional materials. Wider corridor initiatives will be supported.

BUILT HERITAGE: Repairs and restoration will seek to minimise loss of the existing fabric. Compatible and alternative uses for historic buildings will be sought.

NATURE CONSERVATION: Assessment of value will be based on the Canal and hydrologically connected habitats. Measurement will be based on a whole canal cycle, to enable major works such as dredging. Conservation objectives will be set against the SAC and SSSI designations. Annual monitoring will be used to inform management change.

WATER: Practical measures to improve water quality will be identified and implemented.

COMMUNITY AND VISITOR ACCESS: "Access for All" will be promoted, and encourage long distance walkers, visitors and local use. Local circular paths, parking and interpretation will be used to increase local use of the canal and the new nature reserves. Cycling will be considered where the towpath is wide enough.



What has been achieved?

The restoration started over forty years ago through the dedicated efforts of volunteers from the Shropshire Union Canal Society, the national Inland Waterways Association and other waterway groups. Their ambition is and was to restore the Canal through the picturesque Welsh Marches. Over fifty percent has already been restored; all the locks in phases 1-3 have been restored. 20 km have been re-opened around Welshpool (Arddleen to Refail) and a separate 10 km north of Maesbury to Frankton Locks where it joins the very popular Llangollen Canal and the rest of the national network.

In recent years, over £1 million has been invested by the Welsh Government to improve the towpath route between Newtown and Crowther Hall, north of Welshpool. Another section south from Llanymynech to Four Crosses has been improved, leaving the stretch between Crowther Hall and Four Crosses to be done to complete the route in Wales.

Improving the path has also encouraged use for recreation and tourism. Over two hundred people now take part in the annual Canal triathlon, including groups from many local organisations and others from as far as Lancashire, Staffordshire, Hampshire, Bristol and Sevenoaks.



Aston Locks nature reserve opened 1994

Frankton to Queens's Head opened in 1996

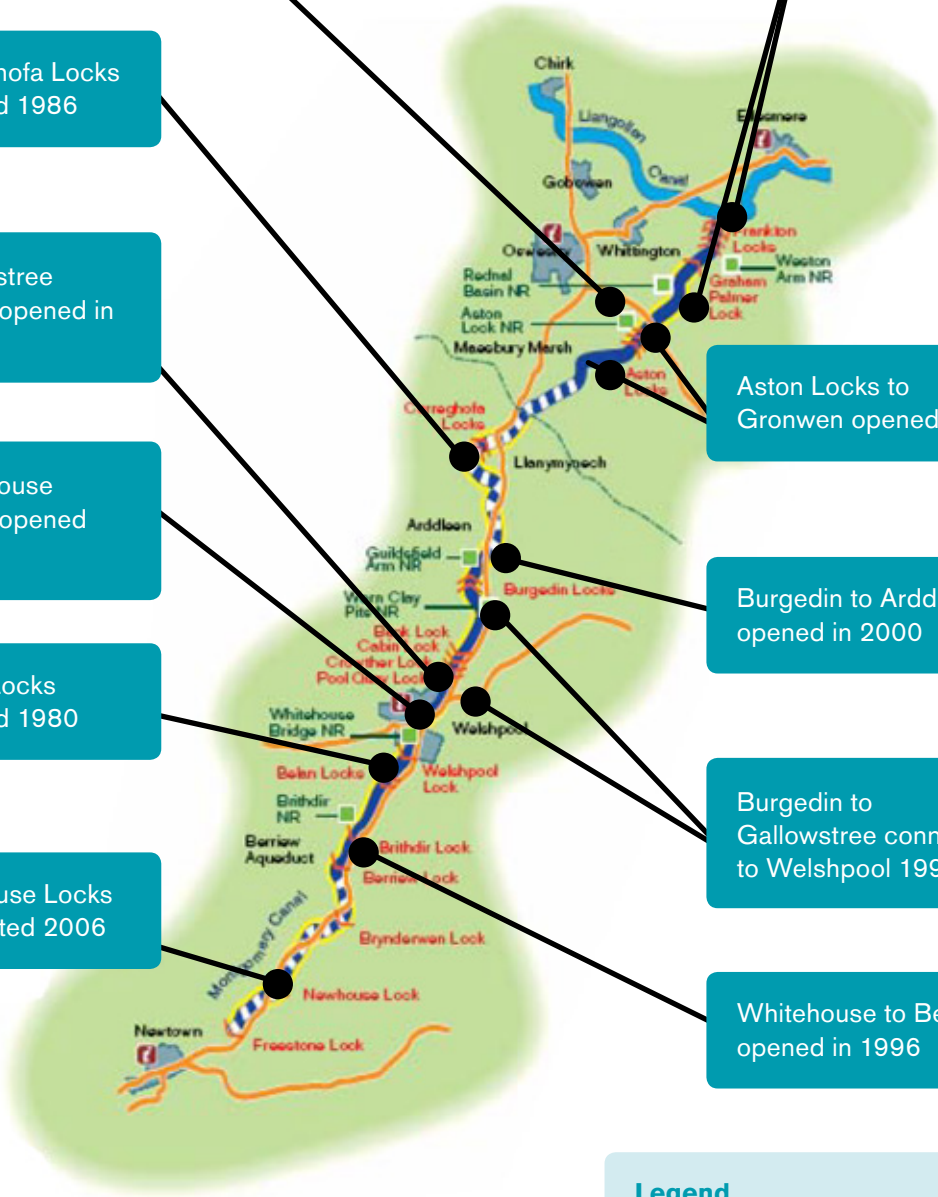
Carreghofa Locks restored 1986

Gallowstree Bridge opened in 1992

Whitehouse Bridge opened 1995

Belan Locks restored 1980

Newhouse Locks completed 2006



Aston Locks to Gronwen opened 2003

Burgedin to Arddleen opened in 2000

Burgedin to Gallowstree connected to Welshpool 1992

Whitehouse to Berriew opened in 1996

Legend

- Canal navigable
- Canal not navigable





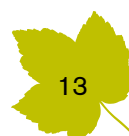
Priorities into Action

Much of the work to identify the issues and solutions has been completed. We have identified all required interventions and activities for the length of the Canal. Some of the works represent significant but straightforward civil engineering works, including rebuilding all of the lowered bridges, re-routing a short section of the canal and the creation of two locks to navigate under the A483 at Arddleen. We know from the experience of restorations of other canals that anything is feasible and, given time and resources, achievable. Please see **Epic Engineering** for further information. We have already begun the process of developing detailed design solutions.

The restoration is proposed in four phases and we are confident that restoration to Refail can be completed in 10 years (dependent on funding).

We owe the survival of the Canal to date to the passion and commitment of the local community and we will look forward to the on-going involvement of the local community in the future of the Canal, building and complementing the work of the Shropshire Union Canal Society (SUCS), the Inland Waterways Association and their Waterway Recovery Group, the Friends of the Montgomery Canal and the local adoption groups.

The principle of delivery is that the restoration will continue to be volunteer led. Delivery for the later phases is dependent on growing community input and the first phase will include a significant programme to build the capacity and skills of local communities, organisations and volunteers to not only restore the Canal but to take on some of the ongoing management and maintenance functions, whilst always supported by the Canal & River Trust.

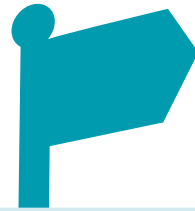


Phase 1: Gronwen to Crickheath

The Canal has already been restored from Gronwen Bridge to Pryce's Bridge. Phase 1 would be to complete the restoration from Pryce's Bridge to Crickheath Basin (allowing boats to turn). The work mainly relates to the provision of additional nature reserves at Aston; this will satisfy the reserves need for the rest of the Canal in Shropshire. Phase 1 also includes works to 12 heritage structures in Wales as well as dredging to improve the water quality for water plants.

This phase will include the implementation of significant activity and interpretation strategies for the Canal led by a Community Development Officer managed supported by a volunteer leader; the restoration will become a focal point for people to learn about the heritage of the waterway or participate in training in a range of specialist skills. This phase is key to building the community involvement and skills necessary for the delivery of subsequent works.

The conservation works on the 12 heritage structures is seen as a way as a way of building the development of local heritage skills, promoting an understanding of heritage and preventing further deterioration in these important assets.



Phase 2: Crickheath to Llanymynech

Works focus on opening up navigation from Crickheath to Llanymynech. This will involve turning nearly 3 km of currently dry and less rich biodiversity into a canal with marginal habitat important for nature; acting as a 'functional' ecological corridor.

Opening up the Canal will greatly enhance the tourism offer of Llanymynech, creating a destination hub, which includes attractions such as the limekilns, Iron Age hill fort and links to the long distance foot paths of Offa's Dyke and the Severn Way.

Opening the Canal will also be the catalyst for the creation of a c100 berth marina and shopping area through private finance which would an additional destination, offer retail facilities and create jobs through its associated spend. Whilst this would be on the existing navigable section at Queens Head, the site owners have said they see the restoration to Llanymynech as being a pre-requisite.

There are several key activities that need completing in phases 1 and 2 but we are confident that they can be delivered in 5 years from the commencement of the phase, given sufficient funding and volunteer support.



Phase 3: Llanymynech to Arddleen

In this phase our focus will be on opening up the channel for navigation between Llanymynech and Arddleen so re-connecting Welshpool to the national network. Restoration will link the 20 km of re-opened Canal either side of Welshpool. This will mean the Canal will be navigable as far as Refail, south of Welshpool.

The work here will include overcoming engineering challenges in the form of four lowered bridges, two relating to minor roads and two relating to the A483 main road. Proposed solutions for the four road crossings have already been drawn up by consultants. Work to carry out major repairs to the Grade II* listed Vyrnwy Aqueduct will be included.

Opening up this section will also require excavation and restoration works to the channel. Dredging and bank protection works will need to be done carefully and sympathetically as the Canal in Wales is a Special Area of Conservation and of particular value is the population of Floating Water plantain and Grasswack Pondweed. The aquatic plants are particularly sensitive to disturbance by boats but neither will they flourish if the canal is left to nature.

This phase of restoration will see the creation of substantial further offline nature reserves to protect and conserve the environment.

The provision of the nature reserves would create the largest of its type in Wales and provide a new visitor destination and integral part of the visitor experience to the Canal.



Phase 4: Refail to Newtown

The Canal is in water from Refail to Freestone Lock where a water feeder enters the Canal. There are four road crossings to be dealt with in this phase; solutions were worked up some years ago. When the Abermule by-pass was built in the 1970s, the bridge was built at a navigable height. This section is owned by the Trust. From Freestone lock into Newtown, the Canal has been sold off and in some parts has been filled in – but the course of the Canal is still there and the towpath has in recent years been repaired. Works in this phase include dealing with four road crossings, careful and sympathetic dredging and bank protection and digging out the filled in section on the outskirts of Newtown.

Newtown Town Council resolved in 2015 to support the restoration of the Canal back into Newtown. During the course of public consultation about developing the town plan, restoration was placed by the public as high as fifth out of 60 possible projects. The Town Council wish the restoration to be complete in time for the Town's celebration in 2019 of the 750th anniversary of the Town's founding charter.

The Partnership see this phase as being the last of the four but are open to initiatives from Newtown Town Council to start earlier.





Restoration Programme for phases 1, 2 and 3

Phase	Activity	Key Stakeholders	Indicative time frame																			
			2017-21						2021-26													
1	Extend of Aston Nature Reserves by 3.5 ha. This will be sufficient to cover the ecological requirements for the Shropshire section of the Canal	Montgomery Canal Partnership (MCP) including Natural England and Wildlife Trust /HLF/CRT																				
1	Excavate and reline bed c 0.5 km to get to Crickheath	CRT, SUCS, HLF																				
1	Repair 12 heritage structures between Llanymynech and Arddleen	CRT, HLF																				
2	Removal of the Pant rail causeway	MCP, CRT, IWA (WRG)																				
2	Excavate and reline bed from Crickheath to Llanymynech (c 5 km)																					
2	Replacement of School House bridge	MCP, Shropshire Council, CRT																				
2	Move sewer pipe near at Pant	Severn Trent, CRT																				
2	Work with partners to bring forward wider regeneration of the Oswestry- Queen's Head - Llanymynech triangle	Shropshire County Council, Highways England																				
3	Walls Bridge (bridge 98): The original bridge is adjacent to lowered road crossing (either re-instate / widen the existing bridge and remove lowered road or build a swing or lift bridge	MCP, Powys County Council and CRT																				
3	Williams Bridge (bridge 96): works include rebuilding the lowered bridge as a lift bridge	MCP, Powys County Council and CRT																				
3	Repairs to the Grade II* listed Vyrnwy aqueduct	MCP/CRT,- possible bid to Cadw and HLF																				
3	Maerdy Bridge (bridge 102): works include a new section of the canal and installation of lift bridge on a minor road	MCP/Welshpool Town Council (WTC), CRT and Mid-Wales Trunk Road Authority																				
3	Arddleen (bridge 103): Works here include the installation of a new lock each side of the lowered bridge	MCP/WTC, CRT and Mid-Wales Trunk Road Authority																				
3	Creation of substantial new off line nature reserves	MCP/CRT/ Natural Resources Wales																				
3	Channel works Dredge section in Wales to give more light to rare water plants	MCP/CRT, Natural Resources Wales																				
3	7.8 Km of towpath to be improved	MCP/CRT																				

Our ability to adhere to this programme depends on a number of factors, not least raising the necessary finance. The programme is continuously reviewed in the light of circumstance.

Funding

Phase 1 is currently costed at c£4 m and funding is being sought from a variety of sources including Heritage Lottery Fund, the Canal & River Trust, Powys County Council, SUCS (£74k) as well as private donations.

The indicative total costs for phases 2 and 3 are c£30 m (£5 m in Shropshire and £25 m in Wales). The works in Shropshire are based up a realistic approach to funding and volunteer involvement, whilst the works in Wales assumes the work is done by contractors: in practice, there is significant scope for cost reduction by using volunteers. Phase 4 has not yet been costed recently.

Funding for restoration phases 2 and 3 is expected to come from a wide range of sources but inevitably the scale of work will require public support.

The main sources of funding for heritage restoration projects can be broadly grouped as follows

- Historic England, CADW and other funding from Government departments and agencies;
- European funding;
- Local Government and local/regional agencies (Local Enterprise Partnership);
- Lottery funds and in particular the Heritage Lottery Fund;
- The Architectural Heritage Fund (small grants and large loans) and other low-cost loans;
- Local Authorities
- Canal Societies
- Charitable Trusts and Foundations;
- Commercial sector (including planning gain and enabling development, plus contributions in kind);
- Private individuals/Friends schemes/local fundraising.

The Canal & River Trust Enterprise Team will be responsible for preparing funding applications for discrete projects to contribute to the canal restoration. The Trust has a proven track record of securing 3rd party funding and attracts c£12 million pa investment from 3rd party sources for a range of projects across England and Wales.



We can afford to be opportunistic taking funding breaks as they arise or capitalising on end of year underspend in addition to its routine and non-routine maintenance works which can be used as match funding. Welshpool Town Council are preparing to make an approach to the Welsh Government and Newtown Town Council are also in touch with the Welsh Government – thus demonstrating local community demand for restoration.

There is considerable scope for a major contribution from volunteers, trainees and community service. The use of volunteer labour can reduce costs significantly, albeit with a time penalty. Creating the reserves would be particularly well suited to volunteer input. Community adoptions would help to sustain the Canal over the long term. For example, phase 2 was estimated to cost about £15 m if the work was done by contractors. This work can be delivered for £5 m, using volunteers and community input.



Maintenance and sustainability



The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) own and have maintenance responsibilities for the Canal, from Frankton Junction to Freestone and will continue to have overall responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and sustainability of the waterway and its assets.

The Conservation Management Plan sets the framework out how the Partnership will conserve and protect the built and natural heritage post restoration and demonstrates how the Trust will prevent deterioration of any works and progress against this plan is monitored. Although the Trust is ultimately responsible for the care of the Montgomery Canal, there are strong partnerships with other agencies and active volunteer groups in order to carry out the future maintenance required to protect the navigation and SSSI and SAC. The principles of maintenance and conservation are:

- Existing maintenance contract costs will be covered by the Canal & River Trust.
- Appropriately trained and managed volunteers where possible to reduce costs.
- Restored/renewed highway bridges will be built to 100 year life span will be recommended for adoption by Highways Authority where appropriate.

The Canal is regularly monitored by canal staff in the course of their normal work routine. The Trust already undertakes a policy of inspection, comprising:

- Length Inspectors – Inspect canal and all structures once a month to highlight any defects and check for any change in condition.
- Annual Inspection – Once a year an engineer will visit each canal and structure to determine the causes of any defects, consider consequences and determine priorities.
- Principal Inspections – Carried out around every 10 years only to principal structures to do a more thorough inspection and assess the grading for each structure.

The maintenance cycle requirements and costs of the waterway are identified through the Trust's 'Steady State' model and assets are already maintained as part of this regime. The maintenance plan will be revised and updated as the restoration scheme is brought forward ensuring the sustainability of the waterway.

We will look to build on this approach and grow the body of volunteers the Trust will look to its business plan to resource and manage the increase numbers of volunteers for future sustainability.

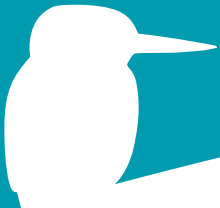
Photo: Jack Perks



About Canal & River Trust

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.



Ways to contact the Restoration Team

Jason Leach

E: jason.leach@canalrivertrust.org.uk


T: 07810 378914


Address:

Canal & River Trust
Peel's Wharf
Lichfield Street
Fazeley
Tamworth
B78 3QZ

Check out our website for updates:

canalrivertrust.org.uk/restoration

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