

Press release: Highways England pours £4 million into canal restoration scheme

In the late 1960s the construction of a motorway and a roundabout in Gloucestershire meant the Stroudwater Navigation Canal was effectively split in two.

Since 1972, volunteers from the Cotswold Canals Trust have been working to restore derelict sections of the canal route.

And now Highways England, the company responsible for managing and maintaining England's major A roads and motorways, is contributing funding towards the restoration of the final 'missing mile'.

Sean Walsh, route manager for Highways England, said:

We are delighted to support this project which will restore the missing mile to the nation's inland waterway network.

When the work is finished there will not only be a restored canal, but also a great walking and cycling route, and environmental improvements, all of which will attract more visitors to the area, and so help the local economy.

Our designated funds programme was developed so that we can invest in improvement projects like this, which go beyond traditional road building and maintenance and have a positive impact on people and communities, as well as protecting cultural heritage and leaving a positive legacy for future generations.

Jim White, Chair of Cotswold Canals Trust, welcomed the Highways England funding. He said:

The Highways England award is extremely welcome and will significantly progress the overall project by bringing forward several of the major engineering tasks in the programme.

The project, led by the Cotswolds Canals Trust and involving Stroud District Council, will restore the waterway, locks, bridges and wetlands west of Stonehouse in Gloucestershire that were lost when the M5 and a roundabout linking the A38 and A419 were built more than 50 years ago.

The work will restore historic features near to junction 13 of the M5 including new bridges and a new lock and improve more than 30 hectares of

wildlife habitats.

The project is also part of the Cotswold Canals Trust's bigger project, which aims to restore the Cotswold canals as a navigable route from the River Severn to the River Thames.

This was awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant last year to prepare surveys, detailed designs, costings and plans.

The Highways England funding comes from one of the company's ring fenced pots of money worth £675 million, which enable it to provide environmental, social and economic benefits to the people, communities and businesses who live and work alongside its road network.

There are designated funds to support the environment, air quality, growth and housing, innovation, and cycling, safety and integration, with £225 million dedicated to environmental improvements.

Earlier this year, Highways England awarded £27 million towards a wide range of initiatives including a variety of new cycle paths, habitat and heritage projects in Cornwall.

The funding will help walkers and cyclists travel safely by creating a network linking Truro with St Agnes, Perranporth and Newquay.

It will also help restore internationally rare heathland habitat and Bronze Age barrows, reduce flooding and water quality issues, and restore the Grade II registered Chyverton Park.

For more information visit [Highways England Designated Funds](#).

You can also visit our specific [A30 Designated Funds](#) page.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.