



Canal &  
River Trust

## PRESS RELEASE

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15 September 2016

### **North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust wins prestigious Living Waterways Award**

The North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust's Restoration project was announced as "commended" (runner-up) in the 'Restoration & Historic Environment' category at the 2016 National Living Waterways Awards ceremony, held at Birmingham Town Hall on 14 September 2016..

Launched by the Canal & River Trust in February, and sponsored by Keir, Arcadis, CPC Civils and Fountains, the *Living Waterways Awards* seek to recognise the most exciting and inspiring waterway-based improvement projects across the UK.

Richard Parry, chief executive of the Canal & River Trust, explains:

*"The Living Waterways Awards celebrate the individuals, communities and organisations that have done the most to make a difference to the nation's rivers, canals, lochs, lakes, reservoirs and docks, making them exciting places to live, learn and spend time."*

Norfolk's only locked canal, the partly de-watered North Walsham & Dilham Canal runs for seven miles from its junction with the River Ant at Wayford to its terminus at Swafield.

In 2008 the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust formed and continued restoration efforts from Honing Lock to Swafield. The top third, from Ebridge to Swafield had recently been purchased by the Old Canal Company, keen to open up public access to the waterway, and the works were subsequently concentrated in this area.

Since then, the mill pond and 1.6km of this wide sailing canal have been re-profiled and are now in clear water, providing valuable habitats for water fowl, otters, water voles and fish. And permissive paths have been created along the banks.

Lock number four at Spa Common has been re-furbished, the terminus winding area restored, trees and detritus blocking the channel removed, and a further 2km of banks re-profiled.

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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

*“We are absolutely delighted to receive this national award, which recognises the considerable restoration achievements of members and supporters of the Trust, opening up public access to enjoyment of the top third of our canal.*

*“This section of the canal has been restored by volunteers and an enthusiastic owner, without public or lottery money. It now provides another 3.6km of canal-side paths, connecting a major forested area to an important local nature reserve.*

*“It already supports some 1.6km of prime water-vole territory which will increase to 3.6km. This work has saved this section of the canal from being lost forever and has brought a lot of joy to the many people who use it.”*

Further details of the 2016 Living Waterways Awards can be found at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/living-waterways-awards-2016>

### **Notes to editors**

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales. We are among the largest charities in the UK, maintaining the nation’s third largest collection of Listed structures, as well as museums, archives, navigations and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that our canals and rivers are a national treasure and a local haven for people and wildlife. It is our job to care for this wonderful legacy – holding it in trust for the nation in perpetuity and giving people a greater role in the running of their local waterways

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

**The North Walsham and Dilham Canal**, Norfolk’s only locked canal. It runs for seven miles from its junction with the River Ant at Wayford to its terminus at Swafield. Two locks remain on an officially abandoned section above this point.

Opened in 1826, it had six locks and climbed 58ft. This canal was plied by 20 ton Norfolk wherries, but fell into disrepair as the railways took its trade. Leisure use was always a feature which continued until the canal lost its water between Pygneys Wood Nature Reserve and Bacton Wood Lock at Spa Common.

Previous restoration attempts failed. In 1999 the East Anglian Waterways Association (EAWA) headed the task, their work-parties stabilising the locks, restoring a ‘lost’ staithe and gradually clearing some banks. The EAWA had previously, in the mid 1990s, had Ecological and Structural Surveys carried out.

In 2008 the North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust was formed to take the restoration closer to the North Norfolk people and then the Old Canal Company Ltd purchased the top third of the canal – and the restoration became concentrated on that section.

[www.nwdct.org](http://www.nwdct.org)