



Heritage | Environment | Community

WINTER NEWSLETTER December 2024

Dear friends, supporters and followers – we at The Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project thank you for your continued interest in the project and would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year. It has been a while since our last newsletter, so we have decided to have a look back at 2024 in this edition.

Our President - Paul Dadford



Earlier this year we announced that Paul Dadford was stepping down as a Trustee of the project. Paul was the catalyst who generated peoples' interest in doing something with the Oakham Canal environment, and one of the founder members of our charity. Paul successfully laid the foundations for our future, having overseen improvements to access along the green corridor. We are delighted that Paul agreed to be our President Emeritus and that he continues to lead many of our canal walks and to give talks to various groups about the history of Oakham Canal.

Spreading the message

We are pleased that, thanks to the active support of our trustees and volunteers, during 2024 we managed to provide:

- 5 talks to community groups
- 6 history walks along the canal
- 3 nature walks along the canal
- 4 bat walks
- 13 work parties

Work parties

We have:

- erected new fences and gates
- made repairs to the bridge over the dam
- continued maintenance of all paths – we would like to give special thanks to David Walker for his super-human effort in the single handed laying of many tons of wood chippings
- worked with pupils from Oakham School to help with repairs and maintenance.



Thank you to Heidelberg Materials staff members, who joined us to carry out concentrated maintenance work to paths and hedgerows. We are able to tackle more challenging work on these corporate work parties and everyone has a great time!

Canal works at the Spillway Bridge



We are pleased to advise that the repairs to the spillway were carried out by Rutland County Council contractors in mid-December. These repairs were originally scheduled for mid-November but the snow delayed the work. Rather than holding back water when the canal is in flood, the design is to allow excess water to flow over the top of the spillway without eroding the foundations of the spillway bridge.

Oakham Angling Society

Sadly, after 170 years, the Oakham Angling Society has been dissolved and fishing is no longer permitted along the canal. We worked closely with the angling society to maintain the towpath on this fishing section of the canal. It is thanks to their careful stewardship that sections of the canal remain in such a good condition considering that the paths were first constructed 222 years ago! The landowner for this section of the canal, Burley Estates, would be pleased to hear from any group who would like to discuss leasing the fishing rights.

How you can help us!

Access to guided walks can be booked via our website, but we have to limit the number of participants that we can safely walk as a group along the canal whilst making sure that our guides can still be heard. In the past we have not charged for tickets on these guided walks and have instead relied on donations from participants. Unfortunately, we have had a significant number of people not turning up to take the place they booked online. When this happens there is no time to reallocate their space, and this means we lose out on donations. To overcome this issue, in 2025 we will be asking people for a small non-returnable charge when booking a space on a guided walk.

Try our audio guide

Have you noticed the QR codes attached to some posts and fences? Scanning these with your phone takes you to a link to the new Oakham Canal Audio Walk. The audio



guide tells the story of the canal from the point of view of people who might have lived at the time it was built. This audio guide project was made possible by a grant from the Lottery Heritage Fund. Volunteers did a lot of research and the material discovered was used by a media company called Excavate to write scripts with actors from Arts for Rutland providing the voices of characters. Audio trail headsets can be hired from Oakham Castle and Oakham Library.

Canal Rangers



We have a band of helpers who have, up until now, been largely invisible. They are our Rangers who walk the paths, snipping back overgrowing vegetation and reporting back about any bigger issues. We are so proud of what they do and they now have smart new caps to wear!

Report suspicious behaviour

Most people you will see on your walks will value our community resource as much as you do and, like you, they will be friendly. If you should see any suspicious or anti-social behaviour please report it to the authorities. You can do this online at this link <https://www.leics.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/> or by calling 101 (or 0116 222 2222).

Help us secure more funding

We are delighted to have been accepted by the Co-op Group as part of their Local Community Fund Programme. We would love to have your support for this, as the number of votes (or nominations) we are given determines how much money we receive after voting closes in October 2025. Members only get one vote (or nomination) so there is no need to make repeated attempts to vote.

The Co-op Group is different to our local stores here in Oakham, so you cannot use your Central England Co-operative membership card to vote for us. Instead, you can use this website link <https://membership.coop.co.uk/new-registration> to join the Co-op Group, or download their app via this link <https://www.coop.co.uk/coop-app>.

Once a member you can then use this link <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/91111> to nominate The Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project as your chosen cause. In November 2025 the total number of nominations received for each cause will be counted up and this will determine how much funding The Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project will receive. Co-op Group members can make their nomination from anywhere in the United Kingdom so please let your friends and relatives, in both Oakham and the rest of the UK, know about this so that they might also nominate us. Thank you so much.

Identifying flora and fauna

Why not download the app iNaturalist on your phone and use it to identify flora and fauna? Anything you see will be logged as having been found in the Green Corridor which builds to form a useful database!

The future

Trustees at The Oakham Canal Green Corridor Project are working hard with a variety of groups to secure the future of the areas alongside the canal by having them designated as nature areas on official maps. Stay vigilant for more news about this on our Facebook page and show your support for what has been done whenever you can.

If you know of a company or individual who would like to sponsor a photography competition please let us know.

If you want to help in a more direct way you can contact us through our website, <https://www.oakhamcanal.org/>.

A very Merry Christmas from the
Trustees of the Oakham Canal
Green Corridor Project

