

# Oakham Canal, December 2021 newsletter and season's greetings!



What a year it's been. Our first full year as a registered charity, and we would never have guessed so much would happen so quickly. We've been amazed by the support for our project and what we are trying to achieve. Despite the pandemic, it's been fantastic to be able to make so much progress in just one short year. In keeping with the festive season, read on to discover our "12 greatest achievements of 2021"!



1: St John and St Anne's Trust granted us permissive rights over the western banks of the canal, meaning we could start to improve the paths, habitats and access along the banks opposite the towpath.

2: We started volunteer work parties in the summer and, over the next few months, dozens of you came along to help cut, prune, strim, trim, tidy

and litter pick. The canal environment at the Ashwell Road end was greatly improved.

3: No 7 Regiment, Royal Logistics Corp, came along to lend a hand, replacing fencing, painting handrails, erecting new signs and building a new set of steps.

4: We were featured on BBC's Escape to the Country. Well, we were filmed in the Summer, but the episode is still to air on TV!



5: A grant from Healthy Rutland put us on course to completely resurface the northern footpaths and replace both the slippery old "cattle-drink" bridge and the rickety stone steps off Ashwell Road with a broader, safer set of steps. We have now resurfaced around 200 metres of footpath and work is ongoing to complete the rest in the New Year.

6: Major events and venue consultants, Trivandi, donated nearly £5k to the project and a team of 10 staff members spent time with us clearing paths and creating habitat piles.



7: In the summer we launched a series of 'informative and entertaining' guided walks, which were soon fully booked and got great feedback from participants.

8: A very kind supporter donated an old canal milepost, which has been in her garden for decades. The milestone is currently being restored back to its former glory and will be placed back by the canal very soon.

9: Locally based conservation firm Ecology Resources conducted regular wildlife surveys along the canal, highlighting that it is home to the endangered and protected water vole, as well as more than five species of bats.



7 Support kept growing from our lovely local community - we now have over 600 followers on Facebook, and over 100 newsletter subscribers. We also made strong links with Rutland Natural History Society, Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust and the Leicestershire & Rutland Bat group, all of whom have an interest in the canal, to ensure our projects are aligned with their conservation objectives.

8 Pupils at Oakham School designed our logo, donated funds from their non-school uniform day and volunteered to clear the Springfield paths of overgrowth and litter.

9 We recruited six Volunteer Rangers, who patrol the canal weekly, looking out for anti-social behaviour, litter, or any other issues.



12 Christmas spirit will be in abundance this evening (23 December) as we join Melton Round Table on their Santa Run in Whissendine. Funds raised will be donated to support our work, so please come out and say hello in you live in the village. If you'd like to come and help us shake a bucket or two, then please get in touch - we'd love to see you!

We hope you enjoyed catching up on our "12 greatest achievements of 2021". We couldn't have done it without your support, so thank you. We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year, and look forward to lots more canal progress to come in 2022.

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