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Leicestershire's waterways receive international recognition with prestigious Green Flag Award

Waterways and wellbeing charity the Canal & River Trust has announced that a mammoth 40km stretch of Leicestershire's waterways has been awarded prestigious Green Flag status.

As the waterway and wellbeing charity celebrates its tenth anniversary the Green Flag, awarded to the 40km stretch of the River Soar and Grand Union Canal running from Loughborough to Wigston, further demonstrates the renaissance of the nation's 200-year-old canal network after a decade of being looked after by the charitable sector.

With Leicester experiencing the longest lockdown in the country the county's waterways have been especially important over the past two years, providing an invaluable escape for local people to relax, exercise and meet friends and family safely.

The news that Leicestershire's waterways have achieved the Green Flag Award is testament to the hard work and dedication of the people that work tirelessly in all weathers to make them such special places for people to enjoy.

The Trust's staff and volunteers work all year round to protect and preserve Leicestershire's waterways, keeping them safe and accessible and improving habitats for wildlife. Alongside works to maintain historic bridges and tunnels teams also help remove litter, create canalside gardens and restore vital hedgerows.

In a further testament to the care of the county's historic waterways Foxton Locks has retained the Green Flag status that it secured for the first time last year.

Speaking about the award Phil Mulligan, regional director for the Canal & River Trust said: "This is a massive achievement and we couldn't be happier for everyone that has helped to secure Green Flag status for waterways in the county.

"As we celebrate our tenth anniversary this award further demonstrates the renaissance of Leicestershire's waterways after a decade of being looked after by the charitable sector. Once industrial arteries these waterways now provide vital habitats for wildlife, even in urban areas, and give local communities green attractive spaces to look after their health and wellbeing.

“To win this award across a 40km stretch of waterway is an incredible feat and we couldn’t have done it without our expert teams and dedicated volunteers who work together to make the River Soar and Grand Union Canal such special places. The challenge now is to improve them even more and we are calling on the public and the government to continue to support the waterways so we can continue to protect and preserve this incredible network and avert the decline we saw last century.”

Keep Britain Tidy’s Accreditation Manager Paul Todd said: “I would like to congratulate everyone involved in making these waterways worthy of a Green Flag Award.

“Canals and rivers are vital green spaces for communities across England and Wales. These awards are testament to all the hard work of staff and volunteers, who do so much to ensure that they maintains the high standards demanded by the Green Flag Award.”

The Green Flag Award scheme, managed by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of green spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world. A full list of Green Flag Award-winning parks and green spaces is available [here](#).

Details of how to volunteer or donate money to support your local canal can be found at: canalrivertrust.org.uk.

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people’s lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.