

2017 UK RIVER PRIZE & NIGEL HOLMES TROPHY

"Celebrating the best in river restoration and catchment management"

Press release

Tuesday 4th April 2017

The UK River Prize celebrates the achievements of those individuals and organisations working to improve the natural functioning of our rivers and catchments, and benefitting society by having a healthy natural environment.

**The winner of 2017 UK River Prize and
Nigel Holmes Trophy is:**

River Avon Hampshire, Wiltshire & Dorset

After much deliberation the judges selected the overall winner as the River Avon **for the excellent demonstration of a whole river approach to restoration and management**. The project partners were awarded the Nigel Holmes Trophy, named after a hugely influential and passionate river restoration and conservation advocate.



Daslett Hatches, part of the River Avon Restoration Programme

“We are delighted to accept the prestigious UK River Prize 2017 award on behalf of the Environment Agency, Natural England and project partners. This award is well earned recognition for the efforts of many people and organisations working together to help realise the vision for the very special River Avon – and a great springboard for the next phase of the programme, where we would like many more to be involved.

“Over the past five years the Environment Agency has worked with partners to improve and protect over 15,000 km of rivers, lakes and coastal waters in England and our rivers are the healthiest they’ve been for more than 20 years. The River Avon Restoration Programme is a great example of what we can achieve when we work together.”

Russell Spencer, Hampshire Avon Catchment Co-ordinator, Environment Agency

“Chalk rivers have had a long history of management and modification. The Avon has also had a good history of organisations and groups working to restore its natural beauty and resilience. The River Avon Restoration Project has been able to build on this enthusiasm and commitment through a clear shared vision of the river and what is needed. In just a few years this active project team has delivered over 50 individual projects across the River Avon catchment totalling 33.5km of the River Avon SSSI which has now been improved. This is a fantastic achievement.”

Martin Janes, Managing Director, the River Restoration Centre

“Arup is once again delighted to partner The UK River Prize in 2017. We champion best practice, innovation and pragmatic thinking, and we fully support the recognition that this prestigious award provides.

Mark Fletcher, Global Water Leader, Arup

About the Winners

The River Avon Restoration Programme (RARP) was set up to restore the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to a naturally functioning river system to meet the government's obligations under the Water Framework and Habitats Directives.

Project partners



The Challenge

In many places the River Avon has been straightened or moved to the edge of the floodplain to work mills or water meadows and there are now some 150 weirs and sluices on the river. It has also more recently been dredged for land drainage resulting in an over-wide and deepened channel and has been embanked in places.

Restoration

A range of restoration methods have been used to restore the rivers natural processes. These include the removal, modification and bypassing of structures; re-alignment of the river through the centre of the floodplain; re-meandering the channel within its existing plan-form and much more.

The completion of Phase 1 is not the end point but a springboard for new phases of restoration using the knowledge, experience and goodwill built up over the past ten years. A further programme of work is needed on the remaining 185km of river to fully realise a more naturally functioning river catchment, able to respond and adapt to climate change.

The other finalists in this year's UK River Prize are:

Finalists:	Winning the category of:	Lead applicant
Stroud River Frome, Gloucestershire	Innovation project <i>Demonstrating innovation and novel approaches to river management</i>	Stroud District Council
Healthy Rivers Project, South East Wales Valleys	Urban communities project <i>Working on highly constrained and modified urban watercourses to restore a healthy river for people and wildlife</i>	Groundwork Wales
Pearls in Peril Project, Rivers across Scotland, England and Wales	Partnership project <i>Demonstrating a long-term partnership approach to restoring the ecology and natural functioning of rivers</i>	Scottish Natural Heritage

The UK River Prize is administered by the River Restoration Centre and judged by a panel of experts. The announcement and presentation took place in front of an audience of 300 at the Hilton Metropole, Brighton on the 4th April at the UK River Prize Awards Dinner.

The award is run by the River Restoration Centre, partnered by Arup, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Natural Resources Wales. It is also supported by the Environment Agency and University of Dundee.

Notes to editors

The River Restoration Centre is the UK's expert centre for information and advice on best practice restoration and management of rivers and their catchments. We are committed to ensuring our watercourses are restored and managed for the benefit of all, with long lasting results for future generations to enjoy. Healthy rivers and catchments provide enjoyment and well-being for people, rich and diverse wildlife and strong economic benefits for modern society.

Short videos have been submitted by the winner and finalists. These are available to view on the River Restoration Centre's website. Further information on the finalists is available at www.therrc.co.uk/uk-river-prize

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The UK River Prize is supported by:



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