



National Lottery helps unlock the power of our river

Osney Lock Hydro in West Oxford has received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £9900 for an exciting heritage project, *Osney Lock Hydro: Unlocking The Power of Our River*. Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the project supports a series of community based arts projects that celebrate the links between the local history of energy generation in West Oxford, and the local and global environment.

Supported through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project kicks off this summer with a river inspired 'Midsummer Meander' – a river themed arts trail across West Oxford. People from across the community will be invited to join in and help celebrate our centuries old connection with the river.

Part of the trail will feature art works created by local school children, which will be displayed at Osney Lock Hydro, the first community owned hydro on the Thames that started generating electricity in 2015. Owned by its 200 Members, Osney Lock Hydro is the latest manifestation of West Oxford's history of using the river to generate power.

Saskya Huggins, Director of Osney Lock Hydro said "Our community has been harnessing the power of the river for centuries. In mediaeval times, there were up to a dozen watermills situated on this stretch of the river. The 19th Century saw Oxford's first electric power station built in West Oxford, burning coal to turn river water into steam to drive the turbines. Now we are using the power of the water to generate electricity."

As well as helping reduce the community's carbon footprint, Osney Lock Hydro is making a positive impact to the local environment. Its design incorporates a fish pass, making this section of the river freely passable to fish for the first time in 200 years,

The arts project is being delivered in partnership with local charity Low Carbon West Oxford.

Mim Saxl, Lead Programme Manager at Low Carbon West Oxford said "The project will give local people the chance to learn about the ecology of our river. Our local streams and river are home to a whole host of species of fish, as well as otters, kingfishers, herons and more. We are really looking forward to working with the local community to discover its hidden depths!"

The second phase of the project will be taking inspiration from these native species to create a human sundial featuring local plants and animals. This will be installed at Osney Lock Hydro in the summer of 2020.



Saskya Huggins said “We are thrilled to have been awarded this grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. As we face the growing threat of climate change, the project gives us the opportunity to explore the interconnectedness between our industrial and natural heritage. The hydro shows that it is possible to harness the power of nature, in a way that can also enhance the ecology around us.”

Notes to editors

About Osney Lock Hydro (OLH)

We installed and manage the first community-owned hydro to be built on the Thames. We harness the power of the river to generate green energy and reduce our community's carbon emissions. We are entirely volunteer-run, and owned by our 200 investor Members, almost one half of which live within a mile of the project. All profits from the project are committed to the support of further environmental projects. www.osneylockhydro.org.uk

About Low Carbon West Oxford (LCWO)

Low Carbon West Oxford is a volunteer-driven charity with over 200 members and supporters in the community, which aims to reduce the carbon footprint of West Oxford and encourage residents to live more sustainably. www.lcwo.org.uk

About the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/>. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLottery and #NationalLotteryHeritageFund.

Further information

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