

***Open letter to the Leaders of Newport City Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, and  
Caerphilly County Borough Council.***

**Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust is bitterly disappointed that local  
Councils have not applied for UK Government Levelling Up funding to restore our canal.**

Our Trust congratulates the successful partnership - comprising Powys County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and the Canal and River Trust, supported by local canal volunteer groups - which has secured over £20 million funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund.

The funding will restore a four-mile stretch of the Montgomery Canal from the Wales-England border at Llanymynech to Arddleen and improve visitor facilities along the Llangollen Canal at Trevor Basin and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

Our Trust is pleased that these very worthwhile Welsh canal schemes have been financially supported.

This is, however, tinged with disappointment and sadness that our own local councils have not applied for this funding-stream to restore our equally deserving Mon and Brec Canal.

We cannot help but compare and contrast this current situation to that which existed in 2007, when an enthusiastic partnership between Torfaen CBC, Newport City Council, Caerphilly CBC and British Waterways, supported by our Trust, submitted an application for £25 million Big Lottery funding to enable restoration of the canal.

The application successfully reached the final UK shortlist, but lost out to the Helix Canals Project in Falkirk, Scotland, now completed and a major tourist attraction.

It did, however, secure funding to carry out initial engineering design works for the scheme, which gives us a good base for future submissions.

In the face of huge financial pressures, staffing reductions and changes and, more recently, the pandemic, a once-dynamic Canal Regeneration Partnership, operating since 1995 has, in the last few years, lost all momentum.

We would urge Torfaen, Newport and Caerphilly Councils to re-energise the Partnership, so that funding opportunities such as the Levelling Up Fund can be explored and coordinated.

Revd. John Collier, Chairman

Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust

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***About the Monmouthshire Brecon & Abergavenny Canals Trust***

*We are a local South-East-Wales based registered charity, run by volunteers, which campaigns and works to improve and sustainably restore the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal for the benefit of our local community.*

*Along with campaigning for restoration, we undertake on-the-ground works and run a successful interpretation centre at Fourteen Locks, Newport, where we have run an “Education through Restoration” project with 60 local schools in partnership with Newport City Council. We work in partnership with the canal owners, Glandwr Cymru, the Canal and Rivers Trust in Wales, Torfaen County Borough Council, Newport City Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council. Whist our main base is at Fourteen Locks, we operate two eco-friendly electrically driven Community Boats at Goytre Wharf Llanover, a beautiful location within the Brecon Beacons National Park.*

*The canal is a 200-year old historical, leisure and economic resource, running from Brecon to Newport. About 35 miles at its northern end is navigable and a popular tourist attraction, with the remaining 5 miles from Cwmbran to Newport, and 4 miles from Newport to Cwmcarn, left to be restored. The unrestored section is well placed to serve the local urban communities of Cwmbran, Newport and Risca.*