



Canal &  
River Trust

## PRESS RELEASE

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### ROCHDALE CANAL COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT RUNNER UP IN BBC ONE DAYTIME PROGRAMME

A community 'linear larder' garden along the banks of the Rochdale Canal was a runner-up in a new BBC One daytime TV series, *'Let's Get a Good Thing Going'*, broadcast on Friday 22 December.

Incredible Edible Todmorden was one of four community groups bidding for funds in an episode based around Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. The pitch was eventually won by an environmental group Slow the Flow Calderdale, formed after the devastating floods of Boxing Day 2015 to create more natural flood defences in the area.

Jon Stopp, a volunteer waterway partner with the Canal & River Trust charity, which manages 2,000 miles of canals, led the quest for more funds to install public benches, bird boxes and fruit trees along the canal towpath.

The waterside gardens grew out of the Trust's wider community canal connections project in the Calder Valley, launched in 2012. Dozens of small patches of public land have now been cultivated as plots for growing herbs, fruit and vegetables, which people can then harvest for free.

And although not coming out top in the local community vote, all the projects were winners, with the experience resulting in a number of positive spin offs.

For Incredible Edible, the Canal & River Trust donated some wood which Jon has cleverly recycled into a waterside bench, with the help of volunteers. A member of the public has also donated a bird box – hopefully the first of several along the canal.

Jon said: "The whole of the Calder Valley was devastated by the flooding and although much of the fractured infrastructure has been fixed, re-energising the community has not been quite so easy.

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“There has been a huge increase in stress and anxiety-related mental issues which will take much longer to heal. The show allowed Incredible Edible to interact with other community groups and raise awareness of the wonderful healing qualities of being by water.

“It’s easy to get involved working with the Trust on a whole range of projects, including creating fruit and vegetable plots on spare land along our canal towpaths. Incredible Edible Todmorden is a great model for improving well-being and can be replicated anywhere on the canal network.”

For more information about donating or volunteering with the Canal & River Trust charity, check out the website [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk) or ring 0303 040 4040. To discover more about Incredible Edible go to their website [www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk](http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk).

## **ENDS**

### **For further media requests please contact:**

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### **Notes to editors:**

**The Canal & River Trust** is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation’s third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites. We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature. [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk) / @CanalRiverTrust / @crtcomms

The Rochdale is one of three trans-Pennine canals and runs for 33 miles between Manchester city centre and Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire. It was reopened to boaters in 2002 after a major restoration.