

**Press release****21<sup>st</sup> October 2021**

## **2021 UK River Prize Winner - River Keekle Restoration receives the Nigel Holmes Trophy**

### **Runner-up - Broadwater Brook – Enhancing Places, Inspiring Communities is awarded the RRC Trophy**

This year's winning entry for the prestigious 2021 UK River Prize, which recognises and celebrates the achievements of individuals and organisations committed to improving our rivers, is the 'River Keekle Restoration', led by the West Cumbria Rivers Trust. The announcement was made at the annual UK River Prize Awards Ceremony which was held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Harrogate Majestic Hotel & online on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021.

The UK River Prize is hosted and awarded by the River Restoration Centre, partnered by Arup, Atkins and Natural Resources Wales.

This year's impressive entries were judged by a panel of industry experts, including Martin Janes (The River Restoration Centre), Oliver Lowe (Natural Resources Wales), Pam Nolan (Environment Agency) and Ann Skinner (Independent).

After much deliberation, the winner was announced as the 'River Keekle Restoration' project in Cumbria which restored natural river form and processes to a previously plastic-lined river. The runner-up is 'Broadwater Brook – Enhancing Places, Inspiring Communities' project in West Sussex. Martin Janes (River Restoration Centre Managing Director) presented both projects with their trophies, at the evening celebration. The River Keekle Restoration project was awarded the Nigel Holmes Trophy – named after a hugely influential and passionate river restoration and conservation advocate. The Broadwater Brook – Enhancing Places, Inspiring Communities project was presented with the RRC Trophy, for its regeneration of a polluted urban stream involving the community throughout the work.



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## About the UK River Prize winner - 'River Keekle Restoration'



Applicant: West Cumbria Rivers Trust

### Awarded the Nigel Holmes Trophy



The immediate catchment of the upper River Keekle from Walkmill Bridge to Keekle Bridge was a former opencast coal site. Whilst mining operations were taking place (1987 to 1995) the river was diverted, and in 1996 it was put back along its original course. The river needed lining as ~ 8 million tonnes of mine spoil was now buried underneath where it used to flow. For this reason, a 3 metre clay cap, an HDPE plastic liner and stone boulder weirs were placed along the course of the river before the river could flow back in its natural course.

Following the floods of 1998 and 1999 most of the stone was washed downstream and the liner destroyed in places. The destruction of the liner has escalated over the last 20 years with many torn areas where the river flows under, over and round the side of the liner causing huge erosion in places. There were grave concerns that the river was eroding the clay cap and could therefore start entering the spoil waste, causing toxic heavy metals to flow into the River Ehen. This would have gravely affected fish populations (particularly Atlantic Salmon).



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The River Keele Restoration Project fully removed the liner from a 2.5km stretch of river and replace with stone, gravels, cobbles and boulders to restore the river into a fully functioning, ecologically thriving river with good water quality that is re-connected to its floodplain. In tandem, 180 tonnes of waste plastic was recycled.

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### ***About the Runner up - 'Broadwater Brook – Enhancing Places, Inspiring Communities'***



Applicant: Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust

### **Awarded the RRC Trophy**



The Enhancing Places, Inspiring Communities (EPIC) project has daylighted, through realignment, a 1km section of the Broadwater Brook, located on the edge of Worthing, West Sussex. This ephemeral chalk spring-fed stream sits within the Teville Stream catchment and is fed from groundwater springs within the South Downs National Park, augmented by surface water runoff from urban infrastructure. The Teville Stream catchment is classified (2019) as heavily modified with Bad ecological status under the Water Framework Directive due to Biological Quality, Physio-chemical Quality, and Priority Hazardous Substances.

The aim of the project is to improve and conserve the Broadwater Brook and enhance wetland and hedgerow features within the Sompting Brooks Estate to decrease water



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pollution and increase the biodiversity of the urban greenspace. The project is being monitored across a wide range of water and habitat quality parameters, and has involved over 1000 volunteers to date.

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### **Quotes from two of the 2021 UK River Prize sponsorship partners:**

*“Arup is delighted to continue to partner The UK River Prize in 2021. We work across the whole water cycle joining up ideas and thinking, working with partners and clients to seek best practice, innovation and pragmatic thinking, and we fully support the recognition that this prestigious award provides. We are looking forward to meeting this year’s finalists who we are sure will continue to raise the bar of the UK River Prize.”*

**Mark Fletcher, Global Water Leader, Arup**

*“Atkins is proud to partner the UK River Prize 2021. Our commitment to improving the water environment goes back many years and we are delighted to sponsor this prestigious trophy. Our team looks forward to being able to meet many of you in person in Harrogate.”*

**Dr Kevin Skinner, Associate Director, Atkins**

### **The River Restoration Centre (RRC)**

The River Restoration Centre is the UK's independent expert centre for information and advice on best practice river restoration. We champion the natural and social benefits of restoring our rivers for a sustainable future. Healthy rivers and catchments provide enjoyment and well-being for people, support native wildlife, are more adaptable to climate change and bring economic benefits for a modern society.

Short videos have been submitted by the winner and runner up. 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](http://www.therrc.co.uk/uk-river-prize)

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