

PRESS RELEASE

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Emergency measures to prevent the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal running dry this week

Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust in Wales, has today (4 April) secured an emergency short-term supply of water from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) for the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal.

The canal charity has acted to stave off the prospect that the canal could run dry in the coming days, after restrictions to the canal's historic water supply from the River Usk came into force at the end of last year, exacerbated by the unseasonably dry start to 2025.

The impact of the limited water supply on the canal is already being felt with water levels along its 35-mile length dropping dramatically in recent days and the prospect of this worsening considerably in the days ahead.

Glandŵr Cymru has been in urgent talks to secure a temporary solution to safeguard the much-loved canal whilst a sustainable long-term solution is sought with the help of the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and DCWW.

As an emergency measure the canal charity has diverted money away from planned maintenance and repairs to secure a 'stop gap' water supply. If the canal were to dry out, the effects on the historic structure and thriving ecology could be catastrophic, and jobs and tourism in south Wales irreparably impacted.

Mark Evans, regional director of Glandŵr Cymru, comments: "The emergency short-term supply of water we've secured is vital to ensure that the integrity of the canal itself and all that it supports isn't lost. Our charity is uncertain how long this stop-gap measure can last – it depends on rainfall and other factors – but it will help secure the canal for the coming weeks.

"Buying water at commercial prices is not a sustainable solution to the situation created by the new legislation, nor is our charity in a position to fund capital costs for additional infrastructure work."

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Finding funds for this water to be pumped into the canal will have consequences for the charity's programme of maintenance, introducing risk across the canal network.

Richard Parry, Canal & River Trust chief executive, adds: "It isn't sustainable for a charity to shoulder the full financial burden of this new legislative requirement. The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal has never before faced such restrictions to its water supply or had to pay for the water it needs to stay open for the public to enjoy and for the nature that depends upon it to thrive.

"While this 'sticking plaster' solution buys us some time it is unfortunately short-term only. The pressure remains to urgently find a viable long-term solution for the canal. We will continue to call on the Welsh government to help secure a more sustainable future for this beautiful canal that brings so much to the area. We also welcome the prospect of an informed debate in the Senedd, following the highly successful petition that has quickly passed the threshold of signatories needed, showing the strength of public support for the canal and want to thank everyone who has signed it."

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk