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| signature_3911656339 | **RESTORATION, PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT OF THE ELY VALLEY SSSI PROJECT** |
| Over the past two years South East Wales Rivers Trust has been delivering the RePrEEV (Restoration, Protection, and Enhancement of the Ely Valley SSSI)  project which is funded by the Nature Networks Programme and delivered by the Heritage Lottery Fund, on behalf of the Welsh Government.  Focusing on one of the few riverine SSSI sites in the South Wales valleys, the  Ely Valley SSSI covers an area of 87hectares stretching over 12km of the River Ely,  with Peterston Super Ely sitting right at the heart of it. The site is designated due to  the most significant population of *Aconitum anglicum* (Monkshood or Wolfs Bane).  The trust aimed to address the lack of information about the health of Monkshood within the SSSI whilst also outlining the need for optimum habitats and shading. The project also looked to create more understanding of the impact of invasive plant species (e.g. Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed).  In order to deliver the project, the Trust worked with local landowners, local volunteers, and other organisational partners to deliver the project goals.   * Across the Ely River the project created 31,223m2 of riparian buffer zone achieved through landowners allowing the Trust to install a series of   fencing schemes keeping grazing livestock back from the edge of the riverbank, as well as blocking dogs and walkers from the areas allowing  the habitat and wildlife to flourish.   * The Trust worked with local landowners, contractors and volunteers tackling invasive non-native species, including Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, Buddleia, Cherry Laurel and Mink. * The project tackled 30,459m2 of invasive species through contractor spraying and felling, as well as through the hard work of volunteers physically pulling   and cutting down the plant species.   * Volunteers were also at the forefront of delivering the Trusts tree planting target. On the back of Cherry Laurel clearance. Volunteers planted around 1000 native tree species aiming to create more biodiversity within the woodland. Species planted included Oak, Hazel, Hawthorn, Aspen, Field Maple, Cherry, Willow, Alder, and Elm. * Across the project the Trust worked with 127 volunteers, covering 335   hours of work. | |

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| In terms of direct work in Peterston Super-Ely, the Trust are hugely grateful to  the local landowners, volunteers and local organisations for their support across  this project.  Through community engagement the project has delivered fencing schemes  creating riparian buffer zones, invasive species treatment, installation of an interpretation board, footpath clearance work, and the delivery of a European  Eel educational programme in the local Peterston Super Ely primary school.  For more information on the project and how to walk and explore the Ely Valley  please visit: -  <https://sewrt.org.uk/restoration-protection-and-enhancement-of-ely-valley-sssi-repreev/>  Please contact the Trust on [enquires@sewrt.org](mailto:enquires@sewrt.org) to ask about future projects and volunteering opportunities. | |