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PRESS RELEASE

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Volunteers brave the water for Horsham river clean-up

Rusty bicycles, shopping trolleys and a car tyre were just some of the items found and removed by volunteers taking part in a river clean-up in Horsham, West Sussex last week.

Organised and led by the Arun & Rother Rivers Trust, as part of the Arun and Rother Connections (ARC) project, which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the river clean-up took place on the River Arun, upstream of Worthing Road, on Thursday, 6 November 2014. Over 20 people, including volunteers from the Horsham Green Gym community group, several of the ARC partner organisations and Horsham District Council, braved cold water and bad weather to remove large volumes of rubbish that puts the river, and the wildlife that live in it, at risk.

Working in teams, the volunteers cleaned the channel, picked litter and cut back vegetation along the bankside and the public footpath that runs parallel with the river.

Last year, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded a £1.1million grant to a partnership project, the Arun and Rother Connections: Linking Landscape and Community (ARC) for restoration work on the upper River Arun. The organisations involved in the project have committed to holding at least two river clean-ups each year.

Sir Sebastian Anstruther, Chairman of the Arun & Rother Rivers Trust, which is a partner of the project, said: "The volunteers worked extremely hard to remove all the rubbish from this stretch of river, and it is wonderful to see local people playing their part to help breathe life back into the Arun."

"Events like this restore the environment and connect communities to their local rivers. They are also a great way for people to meet neighbours, keep active and benefit from the fresh air. The health of the rivers and their surrounding environments rely on the active support of both the local community and tourists. We hope this work inspires others to get involved in similar projects, and for the wider community to help protect the environment by disposing of rubbish carefully. We have much to do to protect and improve our rivers, but by working together I am convinced that even the most complex issues can be addressed."

Find out how you can help get involved in action to protect and restore the rivers in our catchment, by going to <http://www.rrt.org.uk/>.

-Ends-

Notes to editors:**Arun and Rother Connections (ARC)**

The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which has provided £1.1m. The partners are the RSPB, Natural England, the Arun and Rother Rivers Trust, West Sussex County Council, the Environment Agency, the Sussex Wildlife Trust, and the Sussex Downs National Park Authority.

The Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported almost 35,000 projects with more than £5.5bn across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk.

