

# PRESS RELEASE

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## CANAL CHARITY PLANS REPAIRS AT 159 SITES THIS WINTER

The Canal & River Trust has published a programme of winter repairs and conservation work to protect the nation's historic canals and help to keep this important national infrastructure available for boaters, local communities and visitors.

The programme takes place between November and March when the canals are quieter, to minimise the impact on navigation. These works, sometimes significant engineering projects, are the core of the charity's year-round maintenance work. A host of important repair, heritage and conservation tasks will be carried out at 159 sites across England and Wales.

The Trust will be installing 129 new lock gates, handcrafted in its specialist workshops, at Caen Hill Flight on the Kennet & Avon Canal, Hatton Flight and Braunston on the Grand Union Canal, Acton's Lock on the Regent's Canal in central London, and on the Rochdale Canal and Birmingham Canal Navigations amongst others. Other work includes masonry repairs to bridges, tunnels and wash walls, work to fix leaks and preserve water for navigation, and inspections of important infrastructure including Islington Tunnel, York Street Aqueduct in Burnley, and Gloucester Lock.

Malcolm Horne, chief infrastructure & programmes officer, said: "Our canals are as important now as they were at the height of the Industrial Revolution – but age and increasingly frequent and extreme weather events are taking their toll, meaning our work to repair and maintain the canals is needed now more than ever. The work we are carrying out this winter is part of our ongoing investment programme to keep canals alive and accessible for navigation for boaters, as well as acting as linear parks benefiting local people and wildlife."

In addition to the winter works, the Trust is midway through a multi-million-pound programme of reservoir repairs to help ensure the resilience of the water needed to keep canals topped up, with continued investment to safeguard the water supply from the Trust's reservoirs – the oldest in the country. Work has taken place, or been scheduled, at over two-thirds of the charity's 71 reservoirs. In addition, repairs along canal beds, canal walls and at locks will help ensure millions of litres of water aren't lost from the network's ageing structures. The Trust is also continuing to invest in its dredging programme throughout the year to improve navigation.

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