

# PRESS RELEASE

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15 May 2025

## CANAL & RIVER TRUST ANNOUNCES NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Canal & River Trust is today (15 May 2025) announcing the appointment of Campbell Robb as its new chief executive. Campbell will be joining the charity on 6 October, after six years leading the social justice charity Nacro as its chief executive.

Canal & River Trust is the UK's largest canal charity, caring for a 2,000-mile network of canals and navigable rivers that connect many urban and rural areas. The charity maintains and protects these 250-year-old waterways – the canals, embankments, culverts and reservoirs, as well as their bridges, locks and towpaths, along with their vital ecosystems – against the growing impact of climate change and more extreme weather, providing constant upkeep and investment to ensure they continue to offer an incredible range of benefits.

Before joining Nacro, Campbell was chief executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, steering the organisation through a significant change programme. Prior to this he spent seven years as chief executive of Shelter, building its ability to support more people than ever before and leading the organisation's response to some of the biggest changes to housing and welfare policy in generations. Campbell also brings government experience: before joining Shelter, he was the first Director General of the Office of the Third Sector, an adviser to HM Treasury, and was previously Director of Public Policy at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

David Orr, chair at Canal & River Trust, comments: "The UK's canals represent an extraordinary and enduring link to our industrial heritage. Today they play multiple roles, offering communities the chance to engage with nature and boost their mental and physical health, providing essential corridors for wildlife and biodiversity, and even helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. As age, reduced funding, and extreme weather take their toll, our charity's mission of caring for them has never been more important.

"I am delighted that Campbell will be joining the Canal & River Trust as its new chief executive. He brings a wealth of experience from across the charity sector, including 15 years in similar

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire

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roles where he has successfully strengthened organisations to respond to challenges and opportunities. I look forward to working with him to secure the longer-term future of our canals.”

Campbell Robb comments, “The role of chief executive of the Canal & River Trust is one of the most exciting roles in the public and voluntary sectors and one I am delighted to take on. To act as a steward for the history and protect the future of these amazing living monuments will be a challenge, but also an opportunity. I am also committed to the importance of community. In everything I do I wish to support, create and be part of communities. The canals and rivers are vital for those who live there, work there and volunteer there, as well as the wildlife they foster and support. To be part of that and to help them all thrive will be a privilege.”

Campbell Robb replaces Richard Parry, who joined the Trust in 2013, a year after its creation, and who has led the Trust through its critical formative years to become an established and well-supported national charity.

David Orr continues: “I’d like to extend my sincere thanks to Richard for the outstanding contribution he has made over the past 12 years. Under his leadership, the Trust has grown into a widely respected national charity. He has steered the organisation through both challenges and successes with commitment and clarity, always championing the unique value of our canal network. I wish him well in his future endeavours.”

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**Notes to editors:**

The 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 people’s lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By 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](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)