



## PRESS RELEASE

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### NATION'S OUTDOOR MANNERS NEED A REFRESH

- **Poll released today by Canal & River Trust reveals what the public believe constitutes common courtesy in 2016**
- **Old-fashioned manners such as saying please and thank you top the list but modern manners, such as not invading other people's personal space, are becoming just as important**
- **Charity calls on people to make a pledge to improve the harmony and politeness on the nation's waterways**

Visitors to towpaths across the nation are being urged to be considerate to other members of the public when enjoying the UK's great outdoors, as a new poll shows the nation could do with brushing up on its outdoor manners.

The poll, commissioned by the Canal & River Trust as part of its *Share the Space, Drop your Pace* campaign, asked people what irks them when in public places and whether they themselves are guilty of a few when out and about. The research reveals what the public believe constitutes common courtesy in 2016, including 'modern manners' such as not invading other people's personal space and not having your music too loud on headphones.

Amongst the top bugbears were cyclists speeding past people when they're walking (23%), pet owners not cleaning up after their dogs (56%), people taking up too much space on footpaths and walkways (25%), not having an awareness of personal space (19%), and people not concentrating on where they're going because they've too busy looking at their phones (27%).

However, many of us admit to being guilty of the things that annoy us, with only one in five of those surveyed saying they never use their phone while walking on a public walkway (18%), while more than one in five admit they've bumped into people or had a near miss because they been looking at their phone while walking (21%).

The findings also point to a national tendency for 'manners mirroring' with more than three quarters of the public admitting they are only polite to a person if that person is polite to them first (77%). With 1 in 3 people (33%) believing that general politeness is at an all-time low, the Canal & River

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

Trust wants to make the towpaths a haven for good manners. The Trust is asking people to take the lead and set the example for good manners by pledging to improve the harmony and politeness on the nation's waterways. Simply make a pledge to change your manners for the better and share on social media using #SharetheSpace.

Dick Vincent, Canal & River Trust's national towpath ranger, explains: "For many people our towpaths are among their most precious green spaces, antidotes to the pace and stress of the modern world and places to relax and unwind. They are 'super slow ways', providing a slice of peace and calm through the centres of our busiest cities.

"With so many people enjoying our towpaths, it's important that we all make an effort to be considerate towards one another to keep them the special place they are known for. We can all make a difference to someone else's day, and ultimately the overall experience people have when on the towpaths.

"Don't wait for someone to be nice to you before you are nice to them! Whether cycling, running, walking, mooring your boat or fishing, please help by being considerate of others, slowing down and remembering we are all there to enjoy the space in harmony. If you're in a rush, the towpath is not the best place for you so please choose a different route."

During 2015, 385 million visits were made to Canal & River Trust's towpaths by walkers, cyclists, boaters, anglers and runners, a huge number considering they were originally built for horses to tow boats laden with goods.

To help remind people to improve their manners, messages have been sprayed onto the towpath in the busiest areas around England and Wales to encourage people to 'smile and say hi as you go by' and to remember that they are entering 'a hat tipping zone', a nod to times past when people tipped their hats or doffed their caps as a sign of respect or merely as a greeting. Visitors will also be able to soak up wise words from Canal Laureate Luke Kennard who has penned a poem to help tackle towpath troubles.

Share your pledge to have better manners using #SharetheSpace.

For a full list of suggested pledges and for further information about the *Share the Space, Drop your Pace* campaign, visit <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/share-the-space-our-towpath-code>

For further information about the towpath policy 'Better Towpaths for Everyone', visit <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/news/new-policy-aims-to-give-better-towpaths-for-everyone>

**Ends**

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**Images available at:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xrr7df9a6joae7v/AACcKlwRuKk4Jyx6UVcliIT9a?dl=0>

**Notes to editors:**

Our **towpath code** is a common sense guide to sharing the towpath and what to expect of others.

- **Share the space** – towpaths are popular places to be enjoyed by everyone. Please be mindful of others, keep dogs under control, and clean up after them.
- **Drop your pace** – pedestrians have priority on our towpaths so be ready to slow down; if you're in a hurry, consider using an alternative route for your journey.
- **It's a special place** – our waterways are a living heritage with boats, working locks and low bridges so please give way to waterway users and be extra careful where visibility is limited.

The **Canal & River Trust** is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

**Suggested pledges**

I pledge to offer my seat on public transport to someone today #SharetheSpace

I pledge not to look at my phone while walking #SharetheSpace

I pledge to always pick up my dog's mess #SharetheSpace

I pledge to make a more conscious effort to be polite #SharetheSpace

I pledge to be aware of people's personal space #SharetheSpace

I pledge to wake up 10 minutes earlier so as not to rush to work #SharetheSpace

I pledge to say hello to at least one person a day #SharetheSpace

I pledge to smile at people more #SharetheSpace

I pledge to stop, look and listen at nature around me #SharetheSpace

I pledge to pick up litter when I see it #SharetheSpace

I pledge to slow down when cycling on the towpaths #SharetheSpace

I pledge to help my fellow boater to enjoy life aboard #SharetheSpace

I pledge to say good morning to someone on my way to work #SharetheSpace

I pledge that if I am in a hurry, I will not to use the towpath to cycle #SharetheSpace

I pledge not to fish by the locks #SharetheSpace

I pledge to say thanks when I pass people jogging / on my bike #SharetheSpace

I pledge to look both ways as I step onto the towpath (like I would on a busy road) #SharetheSpace

I pledge to turn down the music on my headphones #SharetheSpace

## Research

All research conducted adheres to the MRS Codes of Conduct (2010) in the UK and ICC/ESOMAR World Research Guidelines. Opinion Matters is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and is fully compliant with the Data Protection Act (1998).

### Top 5 Traditional Manners

1. Saying please and thank you (55%)
2. Holding the door open (32%)
3. Queuing in an orderly fashion (24%)
4. Saying good morning to passers-by (16%)
5. Offering to help people carry bags/with push chairs (12%)

### Top 5 Modern Manners

1. Acknowledging peoples' personal space (22%)
2. Letting people off public transport before you get on (11%)
3. Avoiding using your phone so you don't bump in to people (7%)
4. Not playing music too loud through your head phones (5%)
5. Moving down the carriage when public transport is busy (2%)

**Rudest** day of the week designated as **Monday between 08:30-09:00.**

**Most polite** day of the week designated as **Friday between 10:00 – 10:30.**

### Regional breakdown of research

<b>Percentage of people who feel that general politeness is at an all-time low</b>	
London	<b>23%</b>
South East	<b>34%</b>
South West	<b>35%</b>
East	<b>38%</b>
Midlands	<b>30%</b>
North East	<b>23%</b>
North West	<b>32%</b>
Yorkshire	<b>38%</b>
Wales	<b>32%</b>
Northern Ireland	<b>35%</b>
Scotland	<b>35%</b>

<b>Percentage of people who believe that because of the recent news agenda it is more important to be polite than ever before</b>	
London	<b>45%</b>
South East	<b>40%</b>

South West	<b>51%</b>
East	<b>47%</b>
Midlands	<b>50%</b>
North East	<b>48%</b>
North West	<b>50%</b>
Yorkshire	<b>44%</b>
Wales	<b>41%</b>
Northern Ireland	<b>44%</b>
Scotland	<b>48%</b>

<b>Percentage of people who say that if people are polite to them they will be polite back</b>	
London	<b>66%</b>
South East	<b>79%</b>
South West	<b>79%</b>
East	<b>73%</b>
Midlands	<b>77%</b>
North East	<b>83%</b>
North West	<b>77%</b>
Yorkshire	<b>79%</b>
Wales	<b>82%</b>
Northern Ireland	<b>86%</b>
Scotland	<b>76%</b>

<b>What do you think are the three most important examples of manners in today's society?</b>	Saying please and thank you	Giving up your seat on transport to the elderly/people with children/pregnant women/those less able to stand	Holding the door open	Acknowledging other people's personal space
London	46%	42%		26%
South East	60%	44%	31%	
South West	55%	41%	35%	
East	54%	46%	32%	
Midlands	53%	47%	37%	
North East	64%	35%	30%	

North West	62%	49%	33%	
Yorkshire	60%	44%	35%	
Wales	54%	40%	32%	
Northern Ireland	60%	54%	40%	
Scotland	54%	41%	32%	

### What are the five things that annoy people the most when in public?

<b>What are the top five things that annoy people the most when in public?</b>	People who don't clean up after their dogs	People who aren't concentrating on where they are going because they are looking at their phone	Cyclists who speed past me when I'm walking	People who don't have an awareness of personal space	People who stop abruptly	People who take up the whole pavement when walking	Getting stuck behind a slow walker
London	41%	23%	27%		25%	26%	
South East	55%	28%	24%		20%	26%	
South West	55%	26%	28%		21%	29%	
East	56%	35%	20%		21%	20%	
Midlands	62%	30%	25%			26%	18%
North East	54%	19%	25%	23%		31%	
North West	59%	29%	22%		22%	24%	
Yorkshire	57%	30%		21%	27%	28%	
Wales	54%	31%	19%		23%	29%	
Northern Ireland	69%	23%	23%	19%	19%		
Scotland	62%	27%	24%	21%	24%		