



PRESS RELEASE

24 October

West London's canal towpaths to get a facelift

A new project to improve over 16 miles of west London's canal towpaths is taking shape at a time when over 60 million visits are being made to the capital's canals each year, making them busier than at any other time in history.

The work is being carried out by the Canal & River Trust – the charity which cares for 60 miles of waterways in Greater London – with funding from Transport for London (TfL).

It will see major improvements along the Grand Union Canal between Paddington and West Drayton including re-surfacing, access improvements, new signs and clearing back trees, bushes and undergrowth. The aim is improve the towpaths for boaters, cyclists, walkers, runners and people with pushchairs and wheelchairs.

The route will be incorporated in TfL's Quietways network across London of high quality, well signed routes, guiding people along less-busy backstreets, parks, along waterways or tree lined streets.

The Trust is holding a series of drop-in sessions along the route on-board its information boat *Jena* and is encouraging anyone with ideas or views on the improvements to come along or get in touch.

The work will run from the end of 2016 through to 2018 in phases, starting between Ladbroke Grove and Old Oak Lane and finishing at West Drayton. Trimming hedges and trees has started along the route to clear the way for surfacing improvements.

The investment comes as the Trust recently launched a towpath code 'Better Towpaths for Everyone' following consultation with more than 2,000 towpath visitors and interest groups. The top three issues raised were the need for improvements to the towpaths, better signage and better behaviour between visitors. For more information visit <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/news/new-policy-aims-to-give-better-towpaths-for-everyone>

Susannah Miller, Canal & River Trust project co-ordinator, said: “London’s canals have enjoyed a real growth in popularity over recent years. They’ve become cool, great places to visit and relax, or as attractive routes to get places, whether that’s by water or the towpath. We’ve seen in other areas where we’ve made towpath improvements how much it can help people, but to be able to upgrade such a huge stretch is really unprecedented. It will hopefully make visiting the canal better for those who already love it, as well as encouraging more people to find out what the waterways have to offer.”

For more information about the project, including the dates of the drop-in sessions, visit canalrivertrust.org.uk/bettertowpaths

More detail about the 200-year old Grand Union Canal is available at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network/paddington-arm-grand-union-canal>

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Notes to editors

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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.

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