



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **LOCAL COMMUNITY ENCOURAGED TO GET ACTIVE AS TOWPATH IMPROVEMENTS GET UNDERWAY**

A section of canal towpath in Wolverhampton is set to be improved giving local people a more attractive place to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and get closer to nature.

The Canal & River Trust, the charity that cares for 2,000 miles of waterways across England and Wales, is set to improve just over half a kilometre of towpath along the Bradley Arm of the Old Main Line Canal in Bilston.

With the Black Country's towpaths becoming increasingly popular with people looking to keep active, get away from it all or enjoy a more tranquil route to work or the shops, the improvements are expected to make getting out and about that much easier.

The existing towpath is unsurfaced and is often muddy in wet weather. The works starting this week, being carried out in partnership with City of Wolverhampton Council, will see the path between Deepfields Junction towards Highfields Road widened and given a more durable surface. Once finished, the new path will drain much better meaning that the local community can enjoy exploring their local canal without getting their feet wet.

The path will link with existing cycling and walking routes, extending opportunities for local people to enjoy an active lifestyle and leave the car at home. It also passes a housing development giving residents an easily accessible, attractive route to work, school or local shops.

Funding for the £200,000 project has mostly come from the Local Growth Fund. Works are due to start in early February and last for approximately ten weeks.

Dr Ewan Hamnett from the Canal & River Trust's West Midlands Waterway Partnership said; "Inactivity is a serious health risk and we strongly believe that the Black Country's network of canals can really help local people enjoy a healthier lifestyle. That's why this investment in improving the towpath is very welcome.

"Canals are fantastic, free places on the doorstep where local people can get out into the fresh air for a run, walk or steady bike ride as part of their daily routines. By investing in schemes such as

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this we can encourage people to stay active and avoid preventable diseases - which means they lead happier, healthier lives and pressure on the local health system is relieved.

“As a partnership we have an exciting vision for the full restoration of the Bradley Arm and projects such as this complement that aspiration and are a fantastic way of bringing the canal to life.”

Councillor Steve Evans, Cabinet Member for City Environment, said “This investment is an important part of the work the Council and its partners are undertaking to regenerate and stimulate prosperity and growth in Bilston, and to bring about significant environmental improvements for existing and future residents.”

The Trust and the City of Wolverhampton Council expect to be able to complete the section of towpath between Highfields Road and Dudley Street in the near future, subject to full funding being approved.

Whilst works are being carried out the towpath will be closed and these closures will be advertised locally.

Contractors undertaking the works will be using part of the Bilston Urban Village site as a compound and material storage area with controlled, secure access being taken off Coseley Road.

For more information about the Canal & River Trust visit [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk).

## **ENDS**

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### **Notes to editors:**

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) / @CanalRiverTrust / @crtcomms