



## PRESS RELEASE

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21<sup>st</sup> June 2017

Videos and photos -

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/84ftf297hiz3uvw/AACNTLivHQb8EpTkEuJ4L2FTa?dl=0>

### ENJOY LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE SAYS CANAL CHARITY

- Canal charity drafts in support from 'sleeping policeman' to urge people to slow down when on the nation's towpaths
  - Speedsters encouraged to enjoy the slow lane

With Canal & River Trust's towpaths fast becoming one of the nation's favourite places to relax, the charity is urging people to slow down to ensure they remain the special places millions of people enjoy visiting every year.

In a recent survey\* by the Canal & River Trust as part of its *Share the Space, Drop your Pace* campaign, nearly a quarter (23%) of people said their biggest bugbears in public places is when cyclists speed past them so the charity is helping to remind people to watch their speed. With half of Brits (50%) going out of their way to find a quieter/greener area to escape the hustle and bustle of main roads this will be welcome news to those who like life by the water.

Throughout the summer the charity will spray messages on the towpath in the busiest areas around England and Wales to encourage people to 'slow down and look around' and that there's 'no need to rush, just relax'. Visitors will also be able to spot a 3D image of a sleeping policeman at certain points along the towpath encouraging people to drop their pace, a light-hearted nod to the physical speed measure often seen on roads.

During 2016, 396 million visits were made to charity's towpaths by walkers, cyclists, boaters, anglers and runners, a huge number considering they were originally designed for horses to tow boats laden with goods.

Dick Vincent, Canal & River Trust's national towpath ranger, says: "Towpaths are wonderful places to visit, whether you use them every day to commute to work or visit them occasionally for a nice walk after Sunday lunch. They are calm green spaces in the concrete jungles of cities and people come to them to relax and unwind from the stresses of everyday life. Unfortunately, some people

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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

chose to go too fast when they are cycling or running on the towpaths and this is causing problems for other visitors, particularly during commuting hours.

“Pedestrian’s take priority on our towpaths so we’re asking people who cycle and run too fast to please slow down and take time to enjoy their towpath visit. If you are trying to beat the clock on an app or in a rush to get to work, the towpaths are not for you so choose another route.

Due to the heritage and environmental constraints and the need to make sure towpaths are easy for everyone to access, there are limited opportunities for the charity to add physical speed measures to the towpaths and the survey showed that 73 per cent of people agreed that physical speed measures are either a bad idea (50%) or should be used only as a last resort (23%).

Dick continues: “We hope our new recruit will help us spread the message, and a smile, to slow down and to enjoy your time on our historic slow lanes. Life is much better by the water...but you might end up in it if you go too fast! Slow down and enjoy the ride.”

Sam Jones at national charity and campaigning body Cycling UK, says: “I cycle to work every day along our towpaths and love nothing more than exploring our beautiful waterway routes. Travelling at a leisurely pace I can truly enjoy the beauty of the seasons along our banks and chat with others passing by from families to boaters moored up. I’d urge everyone to hop on their wheels and enjoy the tranquillity of the towpaths this summer, but don’t just rush through and miss it! It’s not a motorway, so if you find you’re travelling a little too fast around others, take it easy and then everyone can enjoy our canals equally.”

National towpath ranger Dick Vincent and the sleeping policeman will be on tour this summer visiting hot spots across England and Wales where people may need a reminder to travel slowly.

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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**Videos and photos**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/84ftf297hiz3uvw/AACNTLivHQB8EpTKEuJ4L2FTa?dl=0>

**Links to videos on YouTube**

Towpath is no place for personal bests - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A\\_Ne\\_IBkrY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A_Ne_IBkrY)

Sleeping policeman - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WUCcbw2w-U>

**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)

**\*Research**

The research for The Canal and River Trust was carried out between:

24 / 08 / 2016 and 31 / 08 / 2016

Sample: 2,061 UK Adults

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).

The Canal & River Trust hosted an online survey on Citizen Space between 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017. The survey had 3,841 responses.