



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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18 December 2017

### **VOLUNTEERS DONATE 3,500 HOURS TO HELP CHARITY LOOK AFTER SOMERSET CANAL**

A team of volunteers has been busy helping the charity, Canal & River Trust, care for the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal in Somerset.

Volunteers from The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) are working with the Canal & River Trust to improve the canal between Bridgwater Docks and the village of Fordgate and from Creech St. Michael to Taunton.

Working throughout the year the volunteers have donated 3,500 hours of their time in the last eight months to help keep the waterway an attractive place for visitors and boaters, trimming hedges, picking up litter and repainting lock gates.

The canal runs for 14 miles between Bridgwater and Taunton and is an idyllic spot for enjoying a walk throughout the year. This wonderful and peaceful waterway, tucked away in the English countryside, makes an ideal spot for nature enthusiasts. Visitors will also enjoy exploring the Somerset Space Walk – a scaled sculpture trail of the solar system.

Mark Evans, waterways manager at the Canal & River Trust, said: "IWA volunteers do a brilliant job helping us to care for the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal and I would like to thank them all for their dedication and for volunteering their time with us.

"It's groups such as IWA that help us to make a difference to our waterways and we need more organisations and community groups like them to volunteer with the Canal & River Trust. Volunteering along the waterways is a great way to get some fresh air whilst making a difference to your local community - you'll also learn new skills, get fitter and make new friends."

Mike Slade, from IWA West Country Branch, said: "We are a dedicated team of volunteers who regularly work along the canal and have around 130 members who we can call upon to lend a hand. The Bridgwater & Taunton Canal is really special to us and, as it's not connected to the main canal network, it almost feels like this is our very own secret waterway; we just love it and want to help the Canal & River Trust take care of it."

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is 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

For more information on the work of the Canal & River Trust including how you can donate or volunteer to support the work we do please visit [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

For information on IWA West Country Branch please contact [mike.slade@waterways.org.uk](mailto:mike.slade@waterways.org.uk)

## **ENDS**

For further media requests please contact: Sarah Rudy, National Press Officer on 01908 302 584 / 07788 691 219 or email [sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

### **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

IWA is a membership charity that works to protect and restore the country's 6,500 miles of canals and rivers. IWA is a national organisation with a network of volunteers and branches who deploy their expertise and knowledge to work constructively with navigation authorities, government and other organisations. #LoveYourWaterways.

[www.waterways.org.uk](http://www.waterways.org.uk) @IWA UK @inlandwaterwaysassociation