

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**21st August 2018**

**Community comes together to celebrate cycling and walking boost for canal**  
**Important link re-opens following improvement works as part of a £2.9m scheme of canal towpath upgrades across West Yorkshire**

A community celebration was held at Silsden last weekend (Saturday 18 August) to mark the official re-opening of a section of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, following improvement works as part of a £2.9m package to boost cycling and walking access on West Yorkshire towpaths.

The 2.7km section between Riddlesden and Silsden has been resurfaced, building on previous improvements from Kirkstall to Shipley and providing people with high quality, traffic-free cycling and walking routes.

The scheme is part of West Yorkshire Combined Authority's £60m CityConnect programme aimed at encouraging more people to cycle and walk.

Members of the local community were joined by John Grogan, MP for Keighley and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways, Cllr Kim Groves, Chair of West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Transport Committee, Cllr Taj Salam, Cycling Champion at Bradford Council, and Mike Marshall, Customer Operations Manager at Canal & River Trust, the charity that cares for the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

Cllr Kim Groves, Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Transport Committee, said: "These improvements will provide people travelling by bike or on foot with safe, scenic traffic-free routes all year round.

"As well as providing missing links in local cycling and walking infrastructure, these improvements – alongside other schemes across the region – are helping open up access to some of our best countryside, including the Yorkshire Dales.

"Through our CityConnect programme, the Combined Authority is working in partnership to connect people to employment and opportunities, and encourage more of us to travel in a way which benefits our health, the environment and our economy."

The schemes are funded by the Department of Transport (DfT) and delivered by the Combined Authority's CityConnect programme in partnership with the Canal & River Trust, the charity which cares for the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, and local authority partners.

Mike Marshall, Customer Operations manager at the Canal & River Trust, said: “Yorkshire’s canals are at the heart of communities across the region, making towpaths the ideal way for millions of people to enjoy a slice of fresh air in their daily lives. We’re delighted to work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and local authority projects on these towpath improvement schemes, which will ensure residents and visitors can make the most of the canals all year round.”

Cllr Taj Salam, Bradford Council’s Cycling Champion, said: “It is great to have the Riddlesden and Silsden towpath upgraded and improved, giving individuals and families from across district access to traffic-free cycling and walking routes.

“I am excited to be part of the programme that provides routes connecting some of the most beautiful and scenic areas of the district, so that people from all walks of life have the opportunity and encouragement enjoy the outdoors and benefit their health.”

John Grogan, MP for Keighley and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways, said: “The Leeds & Liverpool Canal is one of the glories of the North of England and carried the lifeblood of the industrial revolution.

“I hope the completion of work on this section of the towpath today will encourage residents of Silsden and Keighley to make even greater use of it and also attract visitors.”

Improvement on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, which is part of Sustrans’ National Cycle Network, is one of four canal towpath schemes across West Yorkshire.

The Calder & Hebble Navigation towpath between Sowerby Bridge and Hollas Lane Bridge recently re-opened following improvement works.

Works are currently underway between Huddersfield and Milnsbridge on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal towpath, while the Rochdale Canal is to benefit from improvements to create a 10km route linking Sowerby Bridge to Mytholmroyd and Hebden Bridge.

A further £1.5 million of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT), announced earlier this summer, will see this extend to Todmorden.

Find out how CityConnect can help you, your business, school or community cycle and walk more at [www.cyclecityconnect.co.uk](http://www.cyclecityconnect.co.uk).

For more information on your local canal and to find out how life’s better by water visit [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk).

**ENDS**

**CityConnect**

- CityConnect is a West Yorkshire Combined Authority programme that works in partnership with local councils to improve cycling facilities across West Yorkshire and York and encourages more people to walk or cycle for short journeys.
- The CityConnect programme is funded through the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Cycle City Ambition Grant (CCAG) and local match funding. CityConnect Walking is funded through the DfT's Cycling and Walking to Work Fund.
- In 2016, the team completed work on the 14km Cycle Superhighway between Leeds and Bradford, in partnership Leeds City Council and City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. Future work will see an addition £22m of funding used to deliver cycling infrastructure improvement projects in Kirklees, Wakefield, Calderdale, Bradford, Leeds and York.
- Through CityConnect, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority also delivers cycling awareness campaigns and works with local businesses and education providers to support them to be more cycle friendly.
- For more information visit [www.cyclecityconnect.co.uk](http://www.cyclecityconnect.co.uk).

### **West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

West Yorkshire Combined Authority works in partnership with local councils and businesses to ensure that everyone in our region benefits from a strong, successful economy and a modern, accessible transport network. By championing the region's interests nationally and internationally, the Combined Authority secures the investment to deliver better transport and housing, help businesses to grow and create jobs. For more information visit [www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk](http://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk).

### **Canal & River Trust**

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day. [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)