

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **OLYMPIC CHAMPION OFFICIALLY OPENS NEW IMPROVED ACCESS TO ASHTON CANAL IN GUIDE BRIDGE**

Chris Boardman, Olympic champion and Greater Manchester's Cycling and Walking Commissioner, has officially opened a project to improve access to the Ashton Canal, making it easier for people to enjoy traffic-free travel into Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester and incorporate some relaxing time by the water into their daily routines.

The Canal & River Trust, the waterways and wellbeing charity that cares for the seven-mile Ashton Canal, has completed work installing a new access ramp to the towpath in Guide Bridge, Audenshaw.

Thanks to £724k funding from Transport for Greater Manchester through the Department for Transport's Cycle City Ambition Grant, the new ramp, from Guide Lane, has created a safe access point to the waterside that is suitable for walkers, cyclists, wheelchairs and prams.

Lucy Rogers, Strategic Programme Delivery Manager at Canal & River Trust, said: "This new access will make such a big difference to people who live nearby, allowing them to get on to the towpath easily and safely.

"We know that being by the water is good for our health and wellbeing so we're encouraging as many people as possible to get out onto the canal for walking, cycling and going for a stroll with your family to feed the ducks and other wildlife."

Chris Boardman, added "This may seem like a small improvement, but the difference they can make to people's daily lives can be huge.

"The new ramp allows someone who may have never considered walking or cycling from the station to the local stop, the opportunity to do so and enjoy a pleasant and safe journey, leaving the car at home for those shorter journeys.

Councillor Dizidra Noor, TfGM Committee's Cycling and Walking Champion, added: "Travelling by bike or on foot are easy and convenient ways of getting around and are great for the family budget.

"The new ramp and improvements along the Ashton Canal will better connect local neighbourhoods and communities, meaning more people will find it easier than ever to travel to employment, education and leisure opportunities."

Installing the ramp is part of continuing investment to improve cycling infrastructure in Greater Manchester through the Department for Transport's Cycle City Ambition Grant. In 2015, resurfacing of the Ashton Canal towpath was completed thanks to £1.2m of funding, and other enhancements such as solar lighting, signage and dog waste bins have been delivered thanks to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

To find out more about your local canal and how you can benefit from spending time by the water, visit:

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

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**Notes to Editors**

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)