

# PRESS RELEASE

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## CANAL & RIVER TRUST REPORTS INCREASE IN CHARITABLE SPEND AND FURTHER GROWTH IN VOLUNTEERING AND SUPPORT

**-2018/19 Annual Report & Accounts published-**

The Canal & River Trust has published its 2018/19 Annual Report & Accounts which detail continued investment in its 2,000 miles of waterways across England & Wales as well as further growth in the number of volunteers and supporters helping to look after their local canal or river.

Spending on the Canal & River Trust's charitable activities topped £156m whilst those volunteering for the Trust gave a record 670,000 hours of their time. Green Flag status continued to grow with 250 miles of waterway now holding the quality assurance mark at year end (now 300 miles), there was a small rise in boats on the network, and record numbers of children were engaged through the Trust's education programme.

Chair Allan Leighton comments: "The past year has seen continued progress as the Trust works towards its ambition of living waterways that transform places and enrich lives.

"We know that being either on or beside our waterways offers many different things to different people. This past year we've begun to make the case for the huge role the Trust and our waterways can play in society and truly be a national asset for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – a 'natural health service' supporting communities across England and Wales to realise the wellbeing benefits of time spent by water.

"This year we have maintained the investment in the network that is so vital to all our 4 million regular users - boaters, anglers and towpath visitors - whilst taking the decision to reposition the Trust to raise awareness of the hugely important role that waterways

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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

are playing in improving the daily lives of millions of people. As we look towards the 2020s, we know that the foundation we have laid in this first phase of the Trust's life will give us a strong platform from which to build a powerful case for ongoing funding, and a compelling appeal to a broader audience, to make their lives better by water."

Chief executive Richard Parry comments: "Whilst delivering our waterway operation, maintenance and repair remains our priority, we are striving for greater efficiency so that our funds can go further. The past year has seen us reminded of the scale of our core responsibility with some extreme weather contributing to infrastructure damage and to severe water shortages in many areas in the peak summer months.

"Our capacity to deliver on our broader strategic agenda has been strengthened this year through a major restructure that has seen accountability devolved into regional teams whose priorities reflect the needs and aspirations of each area that they serve.

"The renaissance of the canals continues to go from strength to strength and the network we manage today is in better health than ever, with many thousands of volunteers now helping us to care for the navigations we operate, and an ever-expanding range of partner groups working alongside us to make a difference to the waterways in their local communities. The ongoing value of our canal and river navigations is no longer in doubt, and the numbers already spending time on or by our waterways proves their enduring popularity. With environmental causes gaining more support than ever before, the Trust is active in embracing the 'think global but act local' message to deliver beauty and wellbeing on the doorstep for millions of people."

Highlights in the 2018/19 Annual Report & Accounts include:

- An increase in charitable spending to £156m with record spend on waterway operation, maintenance and repair
- Growth in volunteering to 671,000 hours, with the first volunteer recording 10,000 hours of service for the Trust, and a 27% growth in volunteer lock keepers to 1,130
- A further increase as Keep Britain Tidy's Green Flag status awarded to 250 miles of canals at year end (now 300 miles)
- 420 local groups – canal adoption groups, corporate volunteers and community groups – helping to care for the Trust's canals
- Over 92,000 children enjoyed face-to-face sessions with the Trust's Explorer's team and nearly 4,000 adults and children took part in a 'Let's Fish!' taster-session
- An increase in boats of 0.5% to 34,367 with boating accounting for around 22% of overall income

- The publication of the first Boater Report explaining how the Trust generates income, including the contribution from boaters, and how the money is spent across the network
- A growth in Friends (those making a regular financial donation) rising 18% to almost 29,000

To view the Trust's 2017/18 Annual Report & Accounts visit:

[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/annual-report-and-accounts](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/annual-report-and-accounts).

The Trust will be holding an Annual Public Meeting on 19 September at Austin Court, Birmingham. For more information, including how you can register your attendance, go to: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/events/2019-09-19-canal-and-river-trust-annual-public-meeting-2019](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/events/2019-09-19-canal-and-river-trust-annual-public-meeting-2019).

**Ends**

For more media information contact [press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk) 020 3204 4514

### **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)