

PRESS RELEASE

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ROCHDALE CANAL GETS £180,000 WINTER MAKEOVER

The Canal & River Trust, the national waterways and wellbeing charity, has carried out more than £180,000 worth of repairs and upgrades to the Rochdale Canal, near Rochdale, this winter.

Work at Lock 36, at the summit of the canal near Littleborough, will enable the Canal & River Trust to have greater control over the water flowing east into Yorkshire towards the terminus of the canal at Sowerby Bridge. This will make it easier to respond to changing conditions and supply appropriate volumes to keep boats afloat and sustain wildlife in the man-made waterway.

Two centuries ago, when the Rochdale Canal was constructed as a major trans-Pennine freight route for boats, it enjoyed more sources of water supply than today. Following the decline and abandonment of the canal in the latter part of last century, several traditional water feeds became unavailable, so when the canal was magnificently restored in 2002 it had to rely on fewer water supply options.

These new water controls, installed as part of this winter's repairs and upgrades, will help to manage the existing water feeds from Chelburn Reservoir and various Pennine streams so water is conserved and supplied when it is needed most during the busy summer boating season.

In a separate project at Lock 49, near Rochdale town centre, tons of debris have been removed with the help of a spider crane, and an unusual rotted timber lock chamber floor has been replaced with new oak planks. The lock gates are being repaired to cut down on leakage, which will again help to conserve water on this beautiful upland canal.

Mark Wigley, construction manager with the Canal & River Trust, said: "Boating on the Rochdale Canal is growing in popularity every summer and we are keen to ensure the canal has enough water to keep it operational throughout the year, no matter what the weather's like. These improvements will help towards that goal.

"Although the canal was originally built to carry coal and other goods during the Industrial Revolution, it has now reinvented itself as a leisure destination and a haven for wildlife. Modern canals offer an amazing, tranquil space, where everything slows down – a great place to escape the pressures of modern life."

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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 Canal & River Trust's vital winter waterway repair programme or how to volunteer with the canal charity, visit 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.

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