

PRESS RELEASE

9 April 2020

STAY AT HOME THIS EASTER WEEKEND AND SUPPORT THE NHS SAYS CANAL & RIVER TRUST

Ahead of the Easter weekend, waterways & wellbeing charity Canal & River Trust is calling on people to follow Government guidance to stay at home. It is reminding those who do venture out that use of local canal towpaths should be strictly limited with people keeping their distance from other people and moored boats.

The charity, which looks after 2,000 miles of waterways across England & Wales and appreciates the importance of canals in urban areas for providing green space, is advising people that towpaths should be strictly for local use during the coronavirus pandemic. People must follow social distancing measures at all times, taking extra care on narrow towpaths.

Richard Parry, chief executive at Canal & River Trust, said: “While the weather may make it seem tempting to go for a towpath walk, remember that public health officials have stressed the importance of people staying at home, saying that the single most important action we can all take in fighting coronavirus is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

“Our plea to everyone thinking of using the towpath is to be mindful of others and act always with consideration and with respect. If we all continue to observe government guidance - to strictly apply social distancing, and follow advice to stay local and limit towpath use - then together we can combat this pandemic, and be able to enjoy getting back out on or by our waterways when we’ve beaten it.”

There are particular issues with using towpaths as they are often narrow and, in some places, have people living in boats moored alongside. Where a local journey is unavoidable, the Trust is asking people to try and avoid stretches with multiple moored boats, use the full width of the towpath when passing, keep moving, and stand aside to allow others to pass, in single file.

The Trust is putting up banners, signs and posters at busy locations to remind people to limit their use of towpaths and is building a vast library of canal-related films, images, interactive

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content and stories for people to enjoy safely at home to get their enjoyment of the waterways virtually.

For more information on the Trust's response to coronavirus, please visit:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/safety-on-our-waterways/coronavirus>

To explore the waterways virtually, please visit: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/our-campaigns/canals-at-home-our-best-bits>

Ends

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