

PRESS RELEASE

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CANAL & RIVER TRUST PROPOSES ACTIVE TRAVEL IMPROVEMENTS FOR TOWPATHS

The Canal & River Trust has approached Government with 30 towpath improvement schemes for inner city and urban areas, as the Government signalled plans for a walking and cycling ‘revolution’.

The proposed improvements include places such as Burnley, Wigan, Sheffield, Bradford, Birmingham, Leicester and London. The waterways and wellbeing charity, which looks after 2,000 miles of waterways across England and Wales, is seeking to secure a combination of government and local authority funding for the schemes.

Towpaths are ideally located to provide traffic-free routes in and through many of the country’s towns and cities, connecting people and places. The proposed investment will support more active travel – investment in walking is the most green (sustainable) as well as most inclusive (equitable/affordable) option – reducing obesity and encouraging lifestyle changes to support better physical and mental health, notably in the many disadvantaged communities with waterways on their doorstep.

Richard Parry, chief executive at Canal & River Trust said: “Many of Britain’s historic canal towpaths saw a significant increase in usage during lockdown as people stayed local and discovered these green/blue linear parks on their doorstep. Post lock-down, for the eight million people living by a canal, this trend has continued.

“There is a real opportunity to build upon this – in addition to the increases we’ve seen in people fishing, kayaking, paddle boarding and taking hire boat holidays – with research showing time spent by water makes people healthier and happier. The proposed improvements will support the government’s aims of making walking and cycling easier to access, and encouraging active travel.”

Ends

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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

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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.