

PRESS RELEASE

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Tees Barrage £3 million major restoration programme reaches halfway milestone during 25th anniversary year

This weekend marks the midway point of a five-year major restoration project at the Tees Barrage, owned and operated by waterway and wellbeing charity, Canal & River Trust.

Costing an estimated £3 million in total, with a £525,000 contribution towards the project thanks to players of the People's Postcode Lottery, the project is the most extensive repairs programme to be undertaken at the Barrage to date. All four gates and cylinders - fundamental components of the Barrage – are being refurbished for the first time since it opened in 1995.

A 150-tonne crane and team of expert engineers from Canal & River Trust will be working through the night on Sunday 11 October to complete the latest series of works - to refurbish the second of the four original 12-metre long cylinders used to operate the 88-tonne belly gates of the Barrage. The carefully managed process will involve refilling with river water the caissons in front of the belly gates before using the crane, aided by specialist divers, to take out the enormous planks that have been holding back the river water and allowing the refurbishment to take place.

Sean McGinley, director for Yorkshire and North East at Canal & River Trust, said: "With controlled water flow of the River Tees, to prevent flooding and the effects of tidal change, the Tees Barrage continues to play a fundamental role in regenerating the Tees waterfront. It helps to create an attractive place to enjoy watersports, recreational activities, spotting wildlife and relaxing with friends and family.

"Of the many structures our charity looks after, Tees Barrage is truly unique, unlike anywhere else on our network. Thanks to the generous support of players of People's Postcode Lottery we can ensure the longevity of the Barrage for generations to come."

George Poole from Canal & River Trust has been project managing the restoration programme. He added: "It's been a complex project and it's great to reach this midway point in the project. With the cylinders expected to have another 25-year lifespan, it'll be a long time before we get

Canal & River Trust, Toll House, Delamere Terrace, London, W2 6ND

T: 0203 3204 4514 **E:** press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk **W:** www.canalrivertrust.org.uk **Twitter:** [@CanalRiverTrust](https://twitter.com/CanalRiverTrust)

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to see something like this again – so a great opportunity to see behind the scenes just some of the work we do across the charity.”

Canal & River Trust is keen to encourage more people to take advantage of their local canal or river as research shows that spending time by water is good for both physical and mental health.

The construction of the Tees Barrage has made the area a visitor hotspot and has seen watersports in the area flourish, with canoeing, dragon boat racing, jet skiing, paddleboarding, rowing, windsurfing, water-skiing, white water rafting, sailing, angling and even powerboat racing all taking place.

Tees Barrage cost £55 million to build and is an impressive structure standing 70 metres wide. It is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The construction included a lock for boat navigation, fish passes for migratory fish and it even generates electricity from tidal power.

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For further media requests please contact:

Lizzie Dealey

m 07789 934871

e lizzie.dealey@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Tees Barrage

The UK's largest civil engineering projects of its time, the Tees Barrage comprises a river barrage, road bridge, footbridge, barge lock, fish pass and white-water course.

Tees Barrage Park

This newly formed destination partnership aims to promote to residents and visitors the wider offer around Tees Barrage to include the barrage structure itself, Tees Active white water course and the nearby nature reserves on the north and south side of the river managed by the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust. All of these features – the barrage, the activity centre, two nature reserves – are well interlinked with cycle ways / footpaths.

Canal & River Trust

Canal & River Trust is the waterways and wellbeing charity that 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

People's Postcode Lottery

Since 2012, players of People's Lottery have raised £12.5million for Canal & River Trust. This includes many important projects from community outreach and habitat protection to large-scale structural projects.