

## PRESS RELEASE

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13 October 2020

### **Canal & River Trust publishes its 2019/20 Annual Report and hosts 2020 Annual Public Meeting online**

Canal & River Trust has today (13 October) published its 2019/20 Annual Report & Accounts alongside details of how to view and take part in its Annual Public Meeting being held online on 28 October.

The Annual Report & Accounts chart a year when income, volunteering, and spend on the Trust's charitable activities grew to record levels and a period that also saw extreme weather events contribute to widespread infrastructure damage, including the emergency at Toddbrook Reservoir, and the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Trust's income increased by £6.1 million in 2019/20 to £216.1 million and spend on charitable activities increased by £10.9 million, with underlying expenditure on core maintenance, repairs and infrastructure works continuing to grow.

The implications of the coronavirus pandemic for the Trust, including the furloughing of staff, impact on community activities, volunteering and day-to-day operations, as well as the important role the waterways played during lockdown when the towpaths demonstrated their value in providing accessible green and blue space for local people, are examined in the Report.

The Report acknowledges that, whilst the Trust's income and investments will be affected by the pandemic, the full economic impact of the crisis is not yet fully known. As the Trust prioritises spend on winter works in the months ahead, with a full maintenance and repair programme, it has indicated a likely loss of income in the current year of around 10%.

Whilst boating was put on hold for most during the initial stages of lockdown, the Report does highlight a small growth in boat numbers and income from boating and moorings remaining at just under 20% of income in 2019/20.

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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

Richard Parry, chief executive at the Canal & River Trust, comments: “The Trust is now eight years old and a lot has been achieved in that time, including rising income, increased expenditure on our waterways and growing numbers of supporters and volunteers.

“However this year has been a reminder of the scale of the Trust’s core responsibility, with a series of extreme weather events contributing to widespread infrastructure damage and the important role our waterways play within society, both as a network for boating, but also as vital green and blue corridors in our towns and cities offering on-the-doorstep health and wellbeing benefits to millions of people.”

Allan Leighton, chair of the Canal & River Trust, comments: “I’d once again like to thank colleagues, partners, funders, volunteers and friends for their support this year. Whilst coronavirus control measures continue in 2020/21 and there is uncertainty around the future, we know that the foundation we have laid gives us a strong platform from which to make progress as we see such a vital part of our nation’s industrial history take on a new purpose, to make lives better by water. Our role as a Trust dedicated to improving the lives of millions of local people, offering a ‘Natural Health Service’ for the huge urban populations with canals on their doorstep, is now widely recognised, as well as connecting people to the beautiful countryside our network runs through.

“More than ever, the events of the past year illustrate how resolute the Trust’s commitment to caring for the waterways network has to be, and the scale and range of risks this presents – and our future plans will depend upon sustaining the income we need to ensure that work can be expanded.”

To view the Annual Report & Accounts visit: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/annual-report-and-accounts>

This year the Trust’s Annual Public Meeting will be hosted online with people able to view and submit questions to the Trust’s chief executive and chair. Go to the Canal & River Trust website where the meeting will start at 11am on Wednesday 28 October.

**ENDS**

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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](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)