

# PRESS RELEASE

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## FLYING THE GREEN FLAG FOR HIGH STANDARDS: CANALS AWARDED QUALITY STATUS

Waterways and wellbeing charity Canal & River Trust is announcing that 100 miles of waterways across England and Wales have been awarded prestigious Green Flag status by Keep Britain Tidy. The new stretches join 300 miles which already hold the quality mark.

This year sees urban waterways celebrating a green renaissance. On the doorstep for millions of local people, urban canals offer unparalleled access to green and blue space with significant health and wellbeing benefits. The importance of urban waterways was illustrated during lockdown, when people ‘stayed local’ and discovered their neighbourhood towpaths, providing them with free, accessible space to exercise and take some time to unwind.

The Rochdale Canal in Manchester City Centre received Green Flag status with improvements including creating cobbled gardens and planters, increased volunteer litter picks, removal of graffiti, and the installation of safety equipment. Also in the North West, the Stanley Lock Flight in Liverpool gained the award, whilst in the West Midlands, the Green Flag status has been given to a 4½ mile stretch of the Main Line Canal from central Birmingham to Smethwick. This marks a remarkable transformation for the canal, with partnership working turning it into a place where wildlife can thrive. The entire Nottingham & Beeston Canal has also been awarded Green Flag status, after the Trust improved habitats for wildlife along the canal in the city centre by planting wildflower verges alongside the towpath and installing floating reedbeds.

Other waterways achieving Green Flag status include the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, a stretch of the Regent’s Canal in East London, the Selby Canal, and the Tees Barrage Park. A full list of waterways that have been awarded Green Flags this year can be found in the Notes to Editors.

Julie Sharman, chief operating officer at the Canal & River Trust, comments: “Canals and rivers are special places, cherished by the communities they run through, and providing wellbeing benefits for those who spend time by the water. This year we have seen people discover their local waterways as places to exercise, take a breath of fresh air, and find a moment of peace during the pandemic. It’s more important than ever to look after them and we are delighted that

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more and more officially meet the Green Flag standard, especially in urban centres where they provide such valuable green and blue space.

“A Green Flag Award comes after a lot of hard work and I’d like to thank and congratulate everyone who works or volunteers with the Trust, including everyone who does their bit to look after them – from picking up the odd piece of litter on a towpath walk or making a donation towards the work we do. They play a big part in making our waterways welcoming and attractive, and helping them achieve Green Flag status.”

Commenting on the Canal & River Trust’s success, Keep Britain Tidy chief executive Allison Ogden-Newton OBE, said: “This year, more than ever, our parks and green spaces have been a lifeline and we know that millions of people have used them to relax, meet friends, exercise or simply escape for a short time.

“It is testament to the incredible dedication and hard work of staff and volunteers that, despite the challenges that went along with record numbers of visitors, the Canal & River Trust has achieved the highest international standards demanded by the Green Flag Award.”

The Green Flag Award scheme, managed by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for their management across the United Kingdom and around the world. The status recognizes that canals and their towpaths meet these criteria and play an important role in the local community, offering great places to relax, exercise, escape for a while, and get close to nature.

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**Notes to editors**

**The Canal & River Trust** cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and river navigations 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) @CanalRiverTrust

**Canal & River Trust sites which hold Green Flag Status (new entries marked with an asterisk)**

Birmingham Canal Navigation (Revolution Walk)\*

Bridgwater & Taunton Canal

Chesterfield Canal (Kiveton Park to West Stockwith)

Erewash Canal

Gloucester & Sharpness Canal (Saul Junction)\*

Grand Union Canal (Hanwell Flight)  
Kennet & Avon Canal  
Lancaster Canal  
Leeds & Liverpool Canal (Greenberfield to Barrowford)\*  
Leeds & Liverpool Canal (Stanley Flight)\*  
Leeds & Liverpool Canal (Yorkshire)  
Macclesfield Canal  
Macclesfield Canal (Sutton Reservoir)\*  
Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal\*  
Nottingham & Beeston Canal\*  
Peak Forest Canal  
Pocklington Canal  
Regent's Canal (Kingsland Basin and Regent's Canal Nature Reserve)\*  
Ripon Canal  
River Lee Navigation (Stonebridge Lock)  
River Stort (Harlow Mill)\*  
Rochdale Canal (Manchester Locks 87 to 89)\*  
Selby Canal\*  
Shropshire Union Canal (Middlewich to Audlem)  
Tees Barrage Park\*  
Weaver Navigation (Runcorn to Winsford)\*

**The Green Flag Awards** Scheme (<http://greenflagaward.org/>) is run by the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, under licence from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, in partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful, Keep Wales Tidy and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful.

Keep Britain Tidy is a leading environmental charity. We run programmes including Eco-Schools, the Green Flag Award for parks and green spaces and the Blue Flag/ Seaside Awards for beaches. We also campaign for the country to be litter free and waste less. To find out more about Keep Britain Tidy, our programmes and campaigns visit [www.keepbritaintidy.org](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org).

Any green space that is freely accessible to the public is eligible to enter for a Green Flag Award. Awards are given on an annual basis and winners must apply each year to renew their Green Flag Award status. A Green Flag Community Award recognises quality sites managed by voluntary and community groups. Green Heritage Site Accreditation is judged on the treatment of the site's historic features and the standard of conservation.