

PRESS RELEASE

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TRUST WELCOMES GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVE TRAVEL ANNOUNCEMENT

Today's Department for Transport announcement of increased funding for infrastructure upgrades to support the active travel boom is welcomed by the Canal & River Trust, with several towpath enhancements included in the package of works announced.

Working in partnership with Sustrans, the Trust has been allocated over £2m of investment to improve 9km of towpaths that form part of the National Cycle Network and address improved access and barriers to use in other locations.

During the current financial year, the Trust will deliver investment along towpaths in Chester (Shropshire Union Canal), Dudley (Birmingham Mainline Canal), Long Itchington in Warwickshire, and Leighton Buzzard (both Grand Union Canal).

Richard Parry, chief executive of Canal & River Trust, comments: "With this additional investment, our waterways and towpaths can offer sustainable transport routes and an important 'natural health service' right across much of the country. During the coronavirus pandemic lockdown, towpath usage in many urban residential areas increased dramatically, confirming their vital role in providing access to the outdoors. No other UK organisation has 2,000 miles of freely accessible green and blue space, so close to so many people, in areas of most need.

"Working with partners we are able to transform towpaths into off-road routes for walking and cycling for both commuting and recreation all year round. However canals are special places and our Memorandum of Understanding with Sustrans recognises the unique historic nature of towpaths and the range of different users who must be respected. Our code is clear that pedestrians and those accessing the water have priority and cyclists in particular should be considerate of others – cyclists wanting to travel at speed should use alternative routes away from the canal."

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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.

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