

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Charity completes towpath improvements on Shropshire Union Canal at Market Drayton**

Waterways and wellbeing charity, Canal & River Trust, has recently finished work on a £212,000 project to improve a 1,200 metre stretch of towpath on the Shropshire Union Canal at Market Drayton.

The newly resurfaced towpath, which has been completed in time for the floating market at Market Drayton taking place on 25 September, stretches from Victoria Wharf at Bridge 65 to the Market Drayton Aqueduct. The now weatherproof towpath will allow the thousands of boaters and local people who use this section of canal to have easy access to the waterways throughout the year.

The work has been part-funded by a grant from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Rural Tourism Infrastructure programme. The project has helped to create a pothole and mud-free rural green route that will help connect communities and allows local people and visitors to explore their local canal whatever the weather.

Richard Preston, from Canal & River Trust, said: “The canal and towpath at Market Drayton is a really popular place for boaters to stop and visit the local shops and with local people using it as part of their everyday route into town.

“This improvement will mean people visiting the canal can dodge the puddles when it rains, and we’ve also improved the access to the canal so anyone with a pushchair or in a wheelchair should now find it much easier to get onto the towpath.

“Having a green space right in the heart of the town is really important for local communities and our research shows that spending time next to water can make you feel happier and healthier. Now this towpath is finished I hope people will visit and enjoy the benefits of being next to water all year round.”

Cllr Tim Manton, Market Drayton Town Council, said: “Market Drayton Town Council are extremely happy with the new and improved towpath and there has been nothing but favourable comments so far, it is such a vast improvement. The canal and its infrastructure are extremely

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

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

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important for us here in Market Drayton, not only does it bring significant levels of tourism for the town but is also serves as a vital asset used daily by our community. It has been a pleasure to work with Canal & River Trust and their contractors on these improvements and we look forward to continuing a growing and strong relationship moving forward.”

This towpath improvement is part of a wider package of works aimed at improving the towpath of rural canals in Shropshire and Staffordshire for boaters, local people and tourists visiting the area. Towpath improvements have already been completed along the Trent & Mersey Canal at Great Haywood with the next phase of improvements taking place on the Llangollen Canal at Lions Quay.

For more information on the work of the Canal & River Trust including how you can donate money or volunteer your time visit [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

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For further media requests please contact Sarah Rudy on 07788 691219 or email [sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

### **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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