

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **CHESHIRE'S OVER 55s INVITED TO JOIN NEW 'ACTIVE WATERWAYS' WINTER WALKS PROGRAMME**

The Canal & River Trust waterways and wellbeing charity invites Cheshire's Over 55s to beat the winter blues by joining a new, free 'Active Waterways' 12 week walks programme starting in November.

The aim is to help participants improve their mental and physical health by joining in gentle exercise along the county's beautiful canals and rivers, plus an opportunity to meet new people and learn more about the area's rich waterway heritage.

This latest series of weekly one hour walks will run from 1 November to 4 February, with five different local guided walking programmes organised around Northwich, Macclesfield, Chester, Nantwich and Ellesmere Port. All routes are accessible for walking aids and wheelchairs.

Poppy Learman, Active Waterways project manager with the Canal & River Trust, said: "We are thrilled with the success of earlier programmes and the difference they have made to so many people's lives. We recognise many older people have lost confidence in going out and about as a result of the coronavirus lockdowns.

"Many of our participants have experienced loneliness or isolation so the group activities have been particularly designed to bring people under similar circumstances together. Over 65% of previous participants thought the sessions had encouraged them to become more active. Many discovered picturesque new local walks and a few have decided they would like to take their involvement further by volunteering with the Canal & River Trust.

"Research shows us that life truly is better by water so we would encourage anyone who wants to improve their health and wellbeing to get in touch and join us on these weekly saunters exploring the county's beautiful waterways."

Julie Lange, who joined the previous Nantwich Active Waterways programme, said: "It's been good for my mental health and physical health. I feel that my stamina has been built up. The first week I

was a bit breathless but I kept pushing myself. But I feel now that my level of fitness has improved and I can feel that my legs are stronger.”

Supported by £222,000 of National Lottery funding from Sport England, Active Waterways Cheshire is a key initiative within Sport England’s plan ‘Towards an Active Nation’, and focuses on the county’s many beautiful waterways – part of the 2,000 miles of canals and rivers cared for by the Trust.

Sport England research shows that inactivity among people over 55 is responsible for just as many deaths as smoking. In Cheshire and Warrington just over 40 % of the population (c.370,000 people) are over 55 and of these 53% (nearly 200,000) do less than two and a half hours of gentle exercise per week.

**For more information or to reserve a place on the Active Cheshire walks programme, please go to the Trust’s website: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/activewaterways](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/activewaterways) . For enquiries please call 07990 612700 or email the Active Waterways team on [activewaterways@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:activewaterways@canalrivertrust.org.uk).**

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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).

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