

PRESS RELEASE

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CANALS & TOWPATHS FLY THE GREEN FLAG FOR QUALITY

The Canal & River Trust is announcing that 40 new miles of waterway, including the iconic locks at Foxton and urban canals in Coventry, Manchester and Stoke, have been awarded prestigious Green Flag status by Keep Britain Tidy.

The past year has seen the waterway and wellbeing charity's plans and volunteering activity impacted by the pandemic. Despite this, the Trust was able to add new stretches across England and Wales to the 400 miles which already hold the quality mark.

Julie Sharman, chief operating officer at Canal & River Trust, comments: "Our efforts to win Green Flags are founded on the principle of local community action. Canals offer amazing green and blue spaces on our doorsteps teeming with nature and wildlife, but we do need the community to act now to help look after these 200-year-old special places.

"I'd like to thank and congratulate everyone who works or volunteers with the Trust, including those in the community who do their 'little bit' to help look after their local canal. The Green Flags are thanks to those efforts. Every action makes a difference, from picking up the odd piece of litter on a towpath walk, getting involved in adopting a stretch of canal, or making a donation to help fund the repairs and maintenance that keeps the canals open and available for people to use. We welcome everyone who wants to come along and make positive changes in their local community."

A stretch of the Rochdale Canal in the heart of Manchester between Dukes Lock on Castle Street and the Aytoun Street Bridge has been added to the existing award, with twelve and a half miles of the city's canal now holding Green Flag status. This is an astonishing transformation in an area that has previously suffered from antisocial behaviour. In Saddleworth in Greater Manchester, a stretch of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal also gained a Green Flag.

2021's City of Culture, Coventry, has another reason to celebrate, with five and half miles of the Coventry Canal receiving a Green Flag, while the Trent & Mersey Canal is bringing quality blue-green space into Stoke, with just over seven and a half miles awarded a Green Flag.

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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

Other waterways achieving Green Flag status include Foxton Locks on the Grand Union Canal, Wigan Lock Flight on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Red Bull to Harding's Wood on the Trent & Mersey Canal, and a further stretch of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

Commenting on the Canal & River Trust's success, Green Flag Award Scheme Manager Paul Todd said: "I would like to congratulate everyone involved in making the canals worthy of a Green Flag Award.

"To meet the requirements demanded by the scheme is testament to the hard work of the staff and volunteers who do so much to ensure that these waterways have high standards of horticulture, safety and environmental management and is a place that supports people to live healthy lives."

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.

To find out more about how to Act Now For Canals and make your area blue, green and better, please visit: canalrivertrust.org.uk/actnowforcanals-and-look-after-the-blue-and-green-space-on-your-doorstep

For more general information about the Trust visit: 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 Wales and England. 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.