

# PRESS RELEASE

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4 November 2021

## CANAL & RIVER TRUST PUBLISHES BOATER REPORT 2021

The Canal & River Trust has published its Boater Report 2021 for the more than 35,000 leisure licence holders who use its waterways. The Report sets out how the Trust generates its income, including the four fifths of income which comes from non-boating sources, and how the money is invested in the network.

This year the Report highlights examples of the works the Trust carries out to keep the waterways safe and open for navigation. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, this included the completion of almost 100 major projects, on top of 282 planned repairs and 68 arising and emergency repairs. The Trust replaced 92 lock gates and spent £6.5m on dredging and £8.9m on vegetation management.

The Trust's income is derived from a variety of sources, around a quarter coming from the return on its investments, and a quarter from the annual Government grant. Boat licences and income from boating businesses play an important role, contributing around a fifth of the total, while commercial income from utilities and water development accounts for around the same amount. Income also comes from lottery funds, corporate and local authority partnerships, and donations from the public.

In 2020/21 the Trust's income was broadly in line with the previous year at £215.4m (2019/20: £216.1m). This reflects the actions taken in recent years to ensure that income, vital for looking after the ageing waterways infrastructure, is secure. Whilst overall spend on charitable activities decreased year-on-year by £10.8m to £183.3m, partly the result of provisions for Toddbrook Reservoir made a year ago, underlying expenditure on core maintenance, repairs and infrastructure works continued to grow.

Over the past year, the Trust's role in supporting boaters' welfare became even more significant. The Report details some of the progress the Trust has made with statutory partners and agencies, making access to universal credit and health services easier for those living afloat, as well as expanding its safeguarding team.

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Richard Parry, chief executive at the Canal & River Trust, comments: “In a year defined by the coronavirus pandemic, we continued to focus on the core purpose of keeping the waterways safe and accessible. We were able to increase the amount we spent on core maintenance works that keep the canals navigable for boaters and, despite the challenges of lockdown restrictions, we carried out a full winter works programme, whilst also responding to weather impacts to deliver a range of unplanned repairs. In this Report we highlight some of the work, both planned and reactive, that our teams have carried out around the network in the past year.

“The pandemic hasn’t been the only challenge; in these unsettled times, the importance of our grant from government in keeping our waterways safe and available for boaters and other users is evident. The role the waterways play in providing an accessible and attractive ‘on-the-doorstep’ space for millions of people is vital in supporting government policy around health and wellbeing, greener economies and levelling up.

“We hope boaters find the Report useful in giving them an overview of the work we do and how the money is spent. We welcome any feedback on what readers might like to see covered in future years.”

The Report will be provided as a PDF which will be included as a link with licence renewals and new boat licence applications.

The Boater Report can be viewed here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/boaterreports>

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