

PRESS RELEASE

18 November 2021

ACTIVE WATERWAYS CHESHIRE VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATE NATIONAL AWARD

Twenty seven volunteers from the Active Waterways Cheshire project have been presented with a national volunteering award by the Canal & River Trust waterways and wellbeing charity and the Marsh Charitable Trust.

The Marsh Trust Awards celebrate volunteer excellence and the amazing range of activities delivered by teams and individuals across the Canal & River Trust's 2,000 mile network of waterways in England and Wales. In the North West region, a group of volunteer walk leaders were presented with their awards at a special ceremony held at Anderton Boat Lift, near Northwich, on Wednesday 17 November.

The Cheshire volunteers are all involved in leading guided walks programmes in Chester, Ellesmere Port, Nantwich, Northwich and Macclesfield as part of the three year Active Waterways project, delivered in partnership with Sport England, to encourage over 55s in the county to get active and feel better by water.

Poppy Learman, Active Waterways Cheshire project leader for the Canal & River Trust, said: "The volunteer walk leaders are an inspiration and I offer my congratulations to them all. They had to adapt quickly to changes forced on us by COVID-19, supporting the Active Waterways team to deliver online programmes during the lockdown periods. Since the easing of restrictions, they have returned to guiding the 12-week walking programmes across the county. For many participants who were socially isolated during lockdown, this was their first time socialising and participating in group activities again.

"Active Waterways volunteers share their enthusiasm of the canal and river networks and their knowledge of the local history, heritage, flora and fauna. They often integrate mindfulness activities into the walks and invite participants to socialise further after the walk over a coffee. Many have now been volunteering for several 12-week programmes – a testament to their dedication to this worthwhile project and the joy that it brings people."

Christine Mellor, head of volunteering at Canal & River Trust, said: "Volunteers are incredibly important to the Trust. The past 18 months have been challenging, with the coronavirus pandemic affecting volunteering, and I was so thankful to see our volunteers back in force as the restrictions eased. We are reaching out to communities to act now for canals and have this opportunity to

Canal & River Trust

E: press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk **W:** www.canalrivertrust.org.uk **Twitter:** [@CanalRiverTrust](https://twitter.com/CanalRiverTrust)

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recognise some of our volunteers who have made such a significant contribution in maintaining the beauty of our waterways. I'd encourage anyone who is interested in volunteering for the Trust to get in touch - there are so many opportunities on our website in your local area. Come along and get involved!"

Brian Marsh OBE, chair at the Marsh Charitable Trust, said: "We are pleased to be able to work with the Canal & River Trust once again to deliver these awards, recognising those who give their time to volunteer on our nation's waterways, enhancing their heritage and supporting the wellbeing of those who use them. This year we have been able to celebrate the achievements of more volunteers, both individuals and teams, across six regions of the UK and we hope to continue to highlight these invaluable commitments in years to come."

North West 2021 award winners are: Keith Pickton, Stuart Goode, David Hall, Janet Pitwell, Jacqui Dunbavin, Lynn Johnson, Steven Tideswell, Tom Dawson, Catherine Golightly, Malcolm Craig, Christopher Evans, Rosemary Smith, Paula Ford, John Brighthouse, Kath Ward, Eileen Room, Karen Waters, Tim Purrier, Wendy Thomas, Jim Robertson, Beverley Moore, William Taylor, John Goodman, Kathryn Broad, Graham Percival, Jeff Fairweather, Jennifer Budworth

For more information about the work of the Canal & River Trust, including how you can volunteer or donate, visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

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Photo caption. Active Waterways Cheshire volunteers were presented with national Marsh Trust volunteer awards at a special ceremony at Anderton Boat Lift. Pictured here are: Poppy Learman (Project Lead), Rosemary Smith, David Hall, Lynn Johnson, Malcolm Craig, Jim Robertson, Madeline Fowler (Project Coordinator).

For further media requests please contact:

Lynn Pegler, Canal & River Trust
m 07783 686246 e lynn.pegler@canalrivertrust.org.uk
NW Communications Manager

Notes to Editors

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and river navigations 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 @CanalRiverTrust

The Marsh Charitable Trust is a grant-making body supporting registered charities. The Trust also runs the Marsh Awards scheme, to recognise the achievements of those who strive to make our world a better place through volunteering or academic excellence. Founded in 1981, by Brian Marsh OBE, the Trust now runs over 80 Awards with a number of partner organisations and supports a growing number of smaller charities through its grant making programme.