

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **New towpath solar lights illuminate walking routes along Wolverhampton canals**

Waterways and wellbeing charity, Canal & River Trust, working in partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council, has installed solar-powered lights along the canals in Wolverhampton to improve walking and cycling routes along the city's towpaths.

The lights have been installed along six miles of canal with one every ten metres, along the Main Line Canal from Coseley to the bottom of the Wolverhampton Lock Flight and along Wyrley & Essington Canal from Wolverhampton Train Station to the Bentley Retail Park.

The project is being part funded by Priority 4 of the European Regional Development Fund which supports the shift towards low carbon economies.

Powered by sunlight the lights will illuminate at dusk and will remain on until sunrise. Each of the 1,000 lights has been fitted with special 'bat hats' to ensure these nocturnal mammals are not distracted by the light being emitted from the towpath as they hunt for food and navigate along the canal.

James Dennison, enterprise manager at Canal & River Trust, said "These eco-friendly lights have been installed on Wolverhampton's busiest canal towpaths and are going to bring major improvements for everyone who uses the waterway routes.

"Our canals are great places to visit throughout the year, and now local people don't have to limit their use of these important routes to just daylight hours. The lights will mean our towpaths can be used as green walking and cycling routes year-round, allowing the local community to experience the health benefits of being next to water."

Councillor Steve Evans, City of Wolverhampton Council's cabinet member for city environment and climate change, said: "We're really pleased to have worked on this project in partnership with the Canal & River Trust to make such a difference to our fantastic canals and towpaths. We're very lucky to have a wonderful canal network in our city and it's important we do all we can to help residents and visitors enjoy it.

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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

“The new solar lights will make sure our canals and towpaths remain a safe and attractive option all year round. They are a valuable addition to our network of cycling and walking routes across the city, which we are continuing to extend and improve.

“The installation of these lights is part of our city’s Smart Infrastructure Project. This project includes Smart Lighting, which is currently converting Wolverhampton’s streetlights from older higher energy sodium lamps into low energy LEDs.

“Projects like these will help us to lower our carbon emissions, reduce our energy consumption and enable people to choose alternative methods of transport, supporting our commitment to make City of Wolverhampton Council carbon-neutral by 2028.”

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

The project is receiving up to £2,403,136 of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>