

PRESS RELEASE

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NEW 'CANALATHON' CHALLENGE LAUNCHED ACROSS THE NATION'S WATERWAYS

People across England and Wales are being challenged to put on their trainers and take to the towpaths in a new 'Canalathon' to raise money to protect the nation's 200-year-old canals and the wildlife-rich green corridors that they provide.

The Canal & River Trust, the charity which looks after 2,000 miles of waterways across England & Wales, is asking people to walk or run 26.2 miles along their local canal or river over the whole of July.

Almost nine million people live less than a mile from one of the Trust's waterways, making them popular and accessible places to exercise. In towns and cities they provide vital blue and green spaces where people can escape the hustle and bustle of daily life and clear their heads, with spending time by their local canal proved to make people feel healthier and happier.

During the pandemic the popularity of canal towpaths in towns and urban areas increased as people discovered the waterways on their doorsteps as places to exercise and spend time amongst nature. The Canalathon is an opportunity for people to now raise money to help the Canal & River Trust protect and preserve the nation's historic waterways which, at over 200 years old, require constant care and maintenance from the Trust and its volunteers.

There are lots of ways to get involved in the Canalathon. It isn't a race or a competition, and participants can walk or run the 26.2 miles all in one go or in bite-sized chunks, working at a pace that suits them, over the course of a month. The challenge can be completed alone or in a team of family, friends, or colleagues.

Hamish Shilliday, head of individual and legacy giving at Canal & River Trust, said: "Canalathon is about getting people active outdoors and enjoying pure escapism by their favourite stretch of water. Canals are great places to relax so take the time to appreciate the environment and look out for – and inspire! – other people on the towpaths.

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire

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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: National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 4FW

“Getting active along our waterways isn’t just good for the nation’s health, but it’s good for our canals too. It’s a fantastic way to get out and raise money to go towards safeguarding our canals, helping waterway wildlife flourish, and protecting our 200-year-old canal heritage in the face of climate change.

“From helping us fight plastic pollution in our waterways to protecting the future of our historic network of navigations, the money people raise by taking part in Canalathon will do so much for our canals and rivers, for the communities who enjoy them and for the wildlife that depends on them. As the Canal & River Trust celebrates its tenth anniversary this summer, together, we can make life better by water.”

Canal & River Trust Ambassador, entrepreneur, broadcaster and author, Saira Khan said:
“Canalathon is a fun and exciting challenge to get people moving and discovering the massive health and wellbeing benefits of exercising along the Canal & River Trust’s waterways this summer. It’s a great way to enjoy the fresh air, soak up the scenery, get closer to nature, and get a little bit fitter into the bargain, all while raising money for a fantastic cause.”

People can sign up to the challenge on the Canal & River Trust website canalrivertrust.org.uk/canalathon then create a Just Giving page and track their miles through Strava.

The Canal & River Trust has a Strava Club www.strava.com/clubs/Canal_River_Trust where people can meet fellow participants and get updates as they progress through the challenge.

Details of how to volunteer or donate money to support your local canal can be found at: canalrivertrust.org.uk.

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For further media requests please contact:

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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