

PRESS RELEASE

13th July 2021

Link to water safety film for teenagers and young people -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l455hrePgl8>

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS PROMPT CANAL CHARITY TO ASK TEENAGERS TO STAY OUT OF THE WATER THIS SUMMER

- As temperatures rise teenagers ignore safety in favour of fun dips with friends
 - There are hidden risks under the surface, particularly in locks and canals
 - Charity asks teenagers not to jump into locks or from bridges this summer

The Canal & River Trust, the waterways and wellbeing charity which cares for 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales, is urging teenagers to stay out of canals, rivers, reservoirs and docks during the summer holidays.

To raise awareness of the potential desperate consequences of young people jumping into locks and from bridges, the Trust has launched a new fictional film about the guilt a teenager feels when his friend drowns in a lock after he encouraged him to jump in.

Summer is one of the most popular times for people to visit Britain's canals and rivers and the Trust is expecting many of its waterways to be particularly popular. However, 62% of the accidental water-related deaths in 2021 happened at inland waters such as canals, rivers, lakes, quarries and reservoirs (1).

With World Drowning Prevention Day taking place on 25th July at the start of the summer holidays, Canal & River Trust is asking young people to experience all the safe ways to enjoy the canals this summer but to avoid getting in the water:

- Canal and river water will be really cold, even in the summer, and immersion in cold water could bring on cold water shock. Have a cool drink instead.

Canal & River Trust, Toll House, Delamere Terrace, London, W2 6ND

T: 0203 3204 4514 E: press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk W: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk Twitter: [@CanalRiverTrust](https://twitter.com/CanalRiverTrust)

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 e, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

- If you want to jump and dive, head to your local swimming pool. Canals can be shallow and you could seriously hurt yourself if you jump from a bridge, while locks are a lot deeper than expected.
- Lounge in the shade of waterside trees, rather than get tangled in waterway reeds.
- Have an ice cream at a waterside café.
- Keep your cool – chill out by the water and enjoy the feeling of peacefulness it brings you.

Anne Gardner-Aston, director of health & safety at the Canal & River Trust explains: “Canals and rivers are lovely relaxing places to spend time during the warm weather, but it’s important that children and teenagers are aware of the dangers of cooling off by going for a dip with friends. The consequences can be devastating.

“Inland waterways, like canals, rivers, reservoirs and docks can look really inviting but you can’t tell what is below the surface. The water often isn’t clear and you won’t be able to see the depth or any obstacles in the water, and even on a hot day the water can be extremely cold. Jumping into locks or into canals from bridges is a terrible idea and can cause nasty injuries. If you want to swim, go to a pool or find an open water swimming club near you by visiting our website.”

For tips on how to talk to teenagers and young people about water safety and staying safe near canals and rivers, go to: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/safety-on-our-waterways/water-safety-for-teenagers-and-young-people>

For younger children, the Canal & River Trust ‘Explorers’ water safety programme, which focuses on children in Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum, aims to help children learn about and enjoy their local canal or river safely. It can also be used towards a number of Cub Scout and Brownie badges. Dozens of volunteers nationwide help the Trust each year by visiting schools and speaking to youth groups about their local canal or river. If you’d like to see the free resources available or if you’re interested in helping the Trust educate young people about their local canal or river, visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers

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For further media requests please contact:

Claire Gauci campaigns manager, Canal & River Trust

m 07920 22 68 22

e claire.gauci@canalrivertrust.org.uk

#BeWaterSafe #RespectTheWater

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 @CanalRiverTrust

The Canal & River Trust is a member of the **National Water Safety Forum** (NWSF), a UK-focused, voluntary network, working together in order to reduce water-related deaths and associated harm.

Reference:

- (1) Statistic based on the WAID data (Water Incident Database) 2021 published by the National Water Safety Forum.