

PRESS RELEASE

4 August 2022

David Orr CBE proposed for appointment as next Canal & River Trust chair

The Canal & River Trust is proposing to appoint David Orr CBE as its new chair subject to formal approval at the meeting of the charity's Council in September and subsequent endorsement by fellow Board members the following day.

David will join the Trust for an initial term of three years in the unpaid role and, alongside the charity's other volunteer board directors, will lead the Trust's decisions on policy and strategy, legal oversight of the Trust's wide range of statutory duties, and provide direction to the Trust's chief executive and his team.

David joins the Trust following a 30-year career working in the housing association sector at chief executive level where he lobbied for, and worked to provide, good quality homes and great neighbourhoods for people on low incomes first at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and then as chief executive of the National Housing Federation. Since retiring from executive positions in 2018, David has continued in non-executive roles, including chairing the Clarion Housing Association.

An enthusiast for the nation's canal network, David often takes daily walks along the network and has enjoyed many canal boat holidays. He will replace Allan Leighton, who steps down having completed his three terms on the Canal & River Trust Board, including serving as Chair since 2015.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, deputy chair of the Trust and chair of the Trust's Joint Council & Trustees Appointments Committee, comments: "We are delighted to welcome David to the Trust and thank Allan for his powerful leadership and unwavering commitment over the past eight years which has seen the Trust take great strides forward as a new charity.

"David's understanding of the Trust's purpose and value to society, together with his passion for campaigning and experience of engagement in political circles, will be vitally important as we

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

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

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work alongside our partners in government to secure the support and funding needed to protect and preserve the canal network and the range of significant benefits it provides to people and communities.”

David Orr comments: “The canal system across England and Wales is the finest network of industrial heritage in the world, still navigated by boats 250 years after it was built. The creation of the Canal & River Trust ten years ago has been transformational in the way the waterways are cared for – with more people and more diverse communities using them and involved in their care and upkeep than ever before.

“I am delighted to be joining the Trust at this critical stage in its development and look forward to working with fellow trustees and all the employees and volunteers at the Trust to fulfil the waterways’ huge potential to shape society, bringing nature into cities, improving community wellbeing and tackling health inequalities, as well as supporting jobs and local economies. These special places are vulnerable to the changing climate and we will be working tirelessly to secure their future and maximise the benefit they provide.”

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For further information, please contact:

Jonathan Ludford, Canal & River Trust

m 07747 897783 e jonathan.ludford@canalrivertrust.org.uk

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
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