

TRUST COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT PUBLIC PROTOCOL

PUBLIC SPACES

UPDATED 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

1 TRUST PUBLIC SPACES

1.1 Introduction

This protocol sets out the measures to be taken to mitigate the risk of transmission of Covid-19 to the public when accessing Trust land and waterways.

2 THE USE OF OUR TOWPATHS AND OTHER TRUST PUBLIC SPACES ACCESSIBLE ON FOOT

2.1 Assessing the risk

The Trust has identified the following risks of transmission from towpath users:

- Airborne transmission through proximity with other towpath users coming from the opposite direction.
- Airborne transmission through proximity with other towpath or Trust open space users congregating in particular locations.
- Surface transmission through hand contact with communal surfaces such as gates, handrails etc.

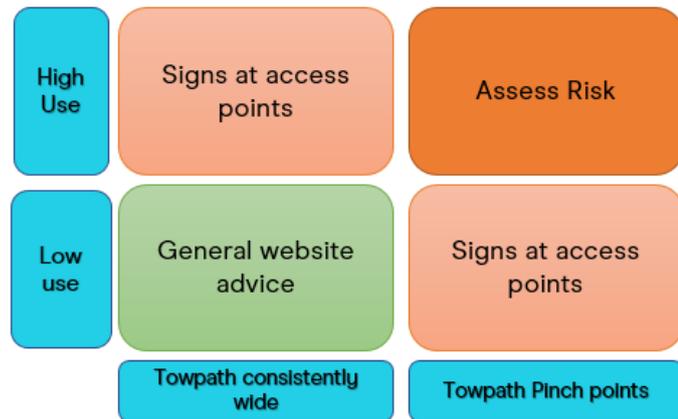
Area operation managers will continue to review changes in use to towpaths and other public spaces managed by the Trust and assess risks regularly / dynamically throughout the period of continuing Covid-19 restrictions.

This review will focus predominately on urban and other high use areas. In low use or remote rural locations, the Trust believes the public should be able to use these safely without any further measures, provided social distancing rules are generally complied with.

The level of risk presented is directly related to the volume of people, the activities undertaken, and the space available. In addition to the Trust's overall risk assessments, customer feedback/social media and the Trust's own observations will be used to identify arising specific places/ areas of concern.

The towpath matrix below can be used to simply assess options;

In areas of high use where there are pinch points such as tunnels, narrow bridge holes or other constraints which are not obvious or cannot be reasonably mitigated by the visitor, then area operations managers will assess the risks and, if required, introduce additional signage to inform customers of the risk present.



2.2 Managing the risk

In locations where there is an identified risk of high-volume footfall or general waterway use, temporary signage (as shown) will be installed to encourage suitable behaviour. This replaces the 'Limit your Use' signage which has been present throughout the lockdown

The signage measures listed below should be applied as appropriate to the nature of the towpath:

- Signage as shown will be installed at access points in locations assessed as high use or where the combination of uses can present challenges (eg moored boats). The signage describes the appropriate behaviour expected from the public on the towpath to mitigate potential risks.
- Where the assessment identifies a higher level of risk; review if additional signs or other bespoke measures would provide suitable mitigation.
- Where towpath the width has been reduced by temporary structures, remove obstructions which create these pinch points where it is possible and practical to do so, for example moveable planters.



- In specific circumstances where towpath narrowing cannot be mitigated and the risks are not obvious, most critically when towpaths pass through tunnels, there may be a need for additional signage specifically to give warning that care should be taken. See signage options below.



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 CANAL & RIVER TRUST (CT-NAT-MISC-028) Date: 29 / 05 / 20 Size: 210 x 297 mm. (k).



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 CANAL & RIVER TRUST (CT-NAT-MISC-026) Date: 29 / 05 / 20 Size: 210 x 297 mm. (k).

- Although the Trust is not able to ensure that all gates, stiles, benches, bike rails and other structures on the towpaths and other open access land across its network are clean at all times, signs may be erected where this is practicable and where risk assessments support this, to ask people to avoid congregating in crowds and to minimise contact with these structures.

2.3 TRUST PLASTIC CHALLENGE

The Trust is promoting a [plastic challenge](#) for members of the public to pick up pieces of plastic rubbish from its towpaths and has updated its guidance on hygiene to minimise risks of Covid-19 transmission from this activity.

3 ON THE WATER- BOATING

A boater cruising the waterway on their own boat is in control of the risks whilst aboard their boat and should not come within 2m of other people when on their boat.

Boats are generally fitted with running water and customers are advised to follow government guidance on regular handwashing. Boaters without running water should ensure they are equipped with suitable hand gel or wipes which meet the government guidance.

3.1 Assessing the risk

The Trust has identified that types of locations may present a risk of transmission of Covid-19. These are primarily where a boater / other waterspace user has an interaction with the land, and include:

- User operated structures i.e. locks, moveable bridges
- Boat handling, including sharing broad beam locks or river locks, use of ropes etc.
- Visitor or home moorings, particularly through use of mooring bollards
- Interaction with other members of the public
- Interaction with canoeists, paddle boards, etc.
- Interaction with Trust people

3.2 Managing the risk

All boaters using the wider cruising network will be reminded of the government guidance for regular handwashing or sanitising whilst navigating via the Boaters' Update.

Reflecting the acknowledgement on the practical limits of land managers' ability to regularly clean gates and other structures contained in the Defra guidance on accessing green spaces safely, the Trust is not able to ensure that every surface that a boater touches across its 2,000+ mile network is clean at all times.

The Trust has considered whether to prevent the sharing of broad beam locks and has concluded, for operational and water resources reasons, that this is not practicable and that social distancing should still be possible in these locks.

All boaters will be asked to wash their hands (following government guidance) as soon as possible after touching any of the following surfaces:

- Lock balance beams
- Lift bridges
- Swing bridges
- Mooring bollards
- User operated structures with control panels
- Gates
- Or any other touch point which may have been contaminated by others

At Trust-operated structures, boaters will be asked to avoid touching surfaces themselves and rely on Trust people to operate the structure.

At customer facilities, where boaters require to use them, specific hygiene guidance is provided (as shown) and regular cleaning and inspections will be carried out.

4 ON THE WATER - CANOEING/ROWING/OTHER PADDLESPORTS

4.1 Assessing the risk

From 13 May, the Trust is happy for individual canoeists, rowers and other paddle-sport participants to use Trust waters subject to the usual conditions and provided rules around social distancing and limits on gatherings are observed.

4.2 Canoeing and Paddleboarding

The majority of paddlers are licensed through the British Canoeing Waterways Licence, with a minority licensed via the Trust. British Canoeing is providing [advice to all members on their website](#) regarding safety during Covid-19 and this should be followed when using the Trust's waterways.

Following the government announcement on 9 July the Trust is able to permit canoe events from 1 August, subject to event-specific risk assessment which must include the measures set out in the [British Canoeing guidance](#) including the following:

- The capacity and density of the participants on the course should always allow for social distancing. Organisers should consider pinch points on the course before, during and after the event and manage them according to social distancing guidelines.
- Organisers should aim to avoid busy areas of Trust waters and take great care to maintain social distancing at access and egress points.

4.3 Rowing

Rowers using the Trust waters should follow the latest advice British Rowing advice on coronavirus, [published on their website](#) and updated from time to time.

The Trust will consider suitable risk assessments and measures for rowing events, pending further lifting of restrictions by Government.

5 ON THE TOWPATH - ANGLING

5.1 Assessing the risk

From 13 May, the Trust is happy for anglers to use the Trust waters subject to the usual conditions and the rules on social distancing and gatherings being observed.

Further detailed guidance is available on the Trust [website page on Coronavirus and Angling](#).



5.2 Individual Anglers

Anglers should only fish in locations where they can maintain a safe distance from members of the public, moorings or other waterway users. Anglers should ensure they can position their kit without effectively narrowing the width of the available towpath which could make social distancing more difficult for other users.

5.3 Let's Fish Events

Following the lifting of restrictions on outdoor sport and recreation, the Trust plans to re-commence Let's Fish events from 18 July. The exemptions under the Rules of Six cover these kind of charity-organised outdoor activities to enable these events to continue with more than 6 people.

Each event will require a site-specific risk assessment to include the following measures:

- Advance booking to ensure participant capacity is not exceeded, with staggered start times and no welcome station provided
- Event participants should be reminded not to attend in groups of more than 6 and current social distancing guidelines should be maintained between groups of event participants and members of the public
- Configuration of entrance and exits, with sessions to start and finish promptly, to avoid congregation of participants,
- Separate outdoor waiting area for those accompanying participants (e.g. parents, carers) with sufficient space to enable social distancing
- Maximum ratio for sessions of coach to participants of 1:2
- Cleaning of equipment (with sanitised wipes) before and after each session
- Intervals of at least 15 minutes between sessions
- Coaches to ensure all personal clothing and tabard is cleaned before each day
- Rigs and hooks should be made in advance of the event (in sufficient numbers to last the day)
- Bait should be made in advance of the event (in sufficient quantity to last the day) and only introduced into the water by the coach
- No food and drink to be provided, with coaches encouraged to bring their own prepared meals, to avoid sharing and participants asked not to bring food and drink (other than for medical reasons)
- Use of toilets and other welfare facilities should be managed to ensure social distancing through queueing, signage floor markings, with a '1 in, 1 out' approach – in accordance with the Trust's Customer Service Facilities Protocol

6 ON THE TOWPATH – LET'S WALK AND OTHER WALKING EVENTS

6.1 Assessing the Risk

Following the lifting of restrictions on outdoor sport and recreation, the Trust is re-commencing some Let's Walk and other walking-based events on its towpaths. The exemptions under the Rules of Six cover these kind of charity-organised outdoor activities to enable the Trust to continue with these events for more than 6 people.

These events are different from general towpath use by members of the public, in that they bring a group of people together, to walk along a stretch of towpath, accompanied by a Trust walk leader.

6.2 Managing the Risk

Although groups of up to 30 people are permitted to get together for an outside group activity, the Trust may choose to put lower limits due to constraints on towpath space and resourcing to effectively manage social distancing.

A task specific risk assessment should be carried out by the Trust walk leader, which should include the following measures:

- The Trust walk leader must have read and understood the Trust Covid-19 Toolbox Talk prior to undertaking any walking events
- Walking groups should meet in an area that does not have a high footfall, parking away from the towpath and meeting at a predetermined time
- Walking groups should avoid any obstruction or hindrance to public passage to the towpath or other Trust land and water space that makes social distancing more difficult for others
- Walks should be planned to avoid stopping or congregating in enclosed spaces where social distancing is difficult
- Group size should be ideally limited to 15 people (13 visitors plus 2 Trust walk leaders) unless it can be demonstrated that up to 30 people can be managed safely.
- A pre-booking system must be in place (via Eventbrite) to ensure that group size is managed and this should remind people not to attend if they have any Covid-19 symptoms
- Sufficient numbers of Trust walking leaders should be on hand to adequately manage and oversee measures, with contingency plan to deal with over-capacity or inclement weather (which cannot involve going indoors)
- Event participants should be reminded not to attend in groups of more than 6 and current social distancing guidelines should be maintained between groups of event participants and members of the public
- Event participants should be briefed on arrival on all safety measures
- Walk leaders and participants should use their own clothing, with no use of pooled or shared kit
- Walk leaders and participants should be asked to sanitise hands before, during and after the event
- Food and drink should not be provided at the event, with walk leaders and participants asked to avoid consuming food (as far as possible) during the event and to bring their own drinks and avoid sharing
- Events should remain outdoors at all times, except for use of public or Trust toilets and or welfare facilities in line with the Trust Protocol on Customer Service Facilities

An on-site dynamic risk assessment should be completed on the day of the event and the event should be cancelled if these measures are not in place.

7 CAR PARKS

The Trust has numerous car parks across its network, many of these are small, without charge, and left open at all times as there is no barrier in place. One exception is the car park at Stoke Bruerne which is pay to stay.

The Trust currently has 12 Pay and Display (P&D) Car Parks under the National contract which is held with CP Plus. These are:

- Bradford On Avon
- Caen Hill
- Hatton

- Foxton
- Fradley
- Gunthorpe (not operational at the moment due to ongoing vandalism issues)
- Pewsey
- Saul Junction
- Startops, Tring
- Sutton Cheney
- Trevor
- Warwick Parkway

7.1 Assessing the risk

The main risk posed from use of pay to stay car parks is risk of virus transmission due to contact payment. At popular destinations, there is a risk of overcrowding at honey pot sites which may be exacerbated by having car parking facilities on site.

7.2 Managing the Risk

At ten of the Trust's national contract sites we have contactless payment available, at the other two payments are suspended. In addition, payment for parking at Stoke Bruerne is suspended.

Signs will be placed at these ten sites advising customers to use the contactless payment option to avoid risk of transmission of the virus.

Before payments are reinstated at sites where they are currently suspended, the Trust will ensure the provision of a contactless payments option for customers



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8 THIRD PARTY WATERWAY EVENTS

8.1 Following the further lifting of restrictions, from 4 July is now able to allow the resumption of (predominantly outdoors-based) third-party waterway events on its land and water space in a controlled manner.

8.2 The Trust provides licences for such events on application following a process set out on its website, which are given on condition of the carrying out of risk assessment and suitable health and safety measures being put in place by the persons responsible for the event.

8.3 The licence process has been amended to include specific requirements in third party risk assessments to address Covid risk, including the following measures:

- Limiting numbers of people attending at one time (e.g. through bookable/ticketed entry only for maximum numbers, staggered opening times for different groups attending, clear entry and exit points)
- Ensure chosen locations allow for sufficient outdoor space to enable social distancing at the event

- Ensuring that people stay outdoors as far as possible, with limits on numbers inside at any one time
- Configuration of the event space to ensure social distancing can be observed (e.g. one-way flows, space between stalls/boats, barriers, floor markings etc)
- Avoiding activities that encourage congregation of people (e.g. performances, demonstrations, talks etc)
- Avoid causing any obstruction or hindrance to public passage to the towpath or other Trust land and water space that makes social distancing more difficult for others
- Suitable cleaning and on-site hygiene (e.g. hand sanitiser, running hot water and soap)
- Any publicity material to ask people not to arrive in groups of more than 6 people, to socially distance and keep hands clean
- Have sufficient numbers of people on hand to adequately manage and oversee these measures, with contingency plans to deal with over-capacity, inclement weather (which cannot involve holding the event inside)
- Liaise with local authorities and local police to ensure they are satisfied with the event taking place and the measures put in place
- Ensure contingency measures are in place in the event that capacity is exceeded (e.g. queueing system, holding areas, stewarding, public speaker systems etc)
- Test runs to verify the effectiveness of measures