

PRESS RELEASE

16 November 2023

Towpath improvement works completed on the Kennet & Avon Canal at Aldermaston Wharf

A 1½ mile stretch of towpath and canal bank along the historic Kennet & Avon Canal at Aldermaston Wharf has been upgraded by the Canal & River Trust charity, making it easier for boats to moor and improving access for walkers, cyclists and those with wheelchairs or buggies.

The £1.2 million project was funded by the Department for Transport as part of the walking, wheeling and cycling charity, Sustrans', Paths for Everyone programme. It has improved the canal from Aldermaston Wharf heading eastwards to Sulhamstead at Ufton Lane, creating a safer and more enjoyable section of route for everyone.

Bank protection works have made it easier for boats to moor and have created habitats for endangered water voles, whilst an improved towpath surface with increased width means the popular route will be suitable for users all year.

Mark Evans, Canal & River Trust regional director, said: "These improvements have made it easier for us all to explore this section of the canal and enjoy the benefits that being by water can bring for our physical and mental health.

"As a charity the Canal & River Trust benefits massively from support from partners such as Sustrans, which enables us to continue looking after this special place. Improving the canal for both people and wildlife is so important. It also increases the resilience of such an old canal against the extreme weather events that are becoming more commonplace, and is part of the mammoth effort of our volunteers, partners and supporters to help keep canals alive."

Sarah Leeming, Sustrans' director for the south of England, said: "We're so pleased to have worked with Canal & River Trust on these much-needed improvements, and to see the route ready to welcome more people walking, wheeling and cycling.

"Choosing to travel under our own steam in green spaces like this is key to creating a happier and healthier lifestyle, and it also means we can help to protect the many species that call it home.

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“It’s a pleasure to see this upgraded stretch of National Cycle Network Route 4 helping people and wildlife to thrive along the water’s edge for many more years to come.”

To find out more about the work of the Canal & River Trust and how you can support, either through volunteering or making a donation, visit canalrivertrust.org.uk.

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Notes to Editors

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 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