

# PRESS RELEASE

---

9 November 2022

## Work starts to improve canal towpaths across Rowley Regis

The charity, Canal & River Trust, working in partnership with Sandwell Council, has been able to start improvements to the towpath and access points on several of its canals which will enable local people in Rowley Regis to have easier year-round access to the leisure and tranquillity that the waterways provide.

Thanks to £2.3 million funding secured as part of the Government-funded Towns Fund Programme, the Canal Network Connectivity Project will deliver four and half miles of towpath improvements along the Netherton Tunnel Branch Canal, the Gower Branch Canal, the Old Mainline Canal, and the Dudley No.2 Canal.

The Towns Fund is part of the Government's plan for Levelling Up the UK economy. Towns across England have been awarded funding from the Government to address their growth constraints, deliver economic benefits and improve the lives of people within their communities. The overarching aims of the Towns Fund are to drive sustainable economic regeneration and productivity across the UK.

The work is expected to last until Spring 2023 and will involve a combination of resurfacing and refurbishing sections of towpaths, including widening narrow stretches where possible. The project will enable boaters and the community to use their local towpath whatever the weather as part of their commute to work or school, their leisurely daily stroll or bike ride.

Access to the canal will also be improved making it easier for mobility users to have access to this important green space in the town.

James Dennison, from Canal & River Trust, said: "We are delighted to have received this funding from the Towns Fund Programme to improve our canals. Used by more people and in more ways than the great Georgian canal engineers could ever have envisaged, our canals are enjoying a second gold age. They are home to much loved wildlife and are vital green space used by millions of people in our towns and cities. Our canal network has an important role to play in the decades ahead, for the wellbeing of communities, protecting biodiversity and mitigating the effects of a changing climate.

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

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

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

"To protect and preserve these special places and ensure they don't fall back into the dark days of dereliction and decline that was the story of the early and mid-20th century, we need Government, partners, funders, and the community to join us and raise the money and resources required to care for this amazing historic network. With increasing frequency of flooding and drought, and the rising costs of materials we need support now more than ever."

Councillor Peter Hughes, Sandwell Council's Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, said: "This is the first Rowley Regis Town Deal scheme to commence following Government approval in July and I would like to thank Canal & River Trust for delivering this project. It's fantastic news that work has started to improve the towpaths in Rowley Regis, the improvements will help promote active travel and improve connectivity within and between communities.

"The Rowley Regis Town Deal investment of £19m forms part of the £67.5m Sandwell Towns Fund Programme. All Towns Fund projects are included in the £1.8billion Regeneration Pipeline, where a number of transport and active travel improvements are planned to be delivered by 2027."

For more information on Canal & River Trust including how you can volunteer and donate money to support our work please visit [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)

For more information on Sandwell's regeneration plan please visit [www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk](http://www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk)

-ENDS-

For further media requests please contact: Sarah Rudy Communications and Campaigns Manager, Canal & River Trust on 07788 691219 or email [sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk)

## 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](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk) @CanalRiverTrust