

PRESS RELEASE

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Canal charity completes vital repairs to canal bank washed away in winter floods

The Canal & River Trust has completed major repairs to a section of canal bank that was washed away by the winter floods in Leicester.

The charity has repaired and strengthened a 100 metre section of Grand Union Canal bank that saw significant damage when flood waters from the non-navigable River Soar, which runs parallel to the canal, had overtopped and scoured away the canal wall and towpath on top.

The damage to the wall, near Blue Bank Lock, south of Leicester, was caused when the river overtopped following a succession of heavy winter storms. Storm Babet in October caused initial damage before Storms Gerrit and Henk's heavy rain and flooding saw the bank washed away.

A £500,000 programme of repairs has seen the Trust reinforce the canal wall with new steel piling backfilled with stone and a new towpath laid on top. Leicester City Council provided nearly £44,000 of funding from its Transport Improvement Works capital programme to reinstate the towpath, which is a popular route linking the Great Central Way and nearby Everards Meadows and an important part of the pedestrian and cycleway network

The Trust has also carried out repairs on the approach to Blue Bank Lock, installing more sheet piling and adding new moorings for boats using the lock.

Linný Beaumont, regional director for the Canal & River Trust, said: "This is an example of the devastating impact flooding brought about by climate change can have on our historic waterways, and the work we have to do to protect them for future generations.

"It also emphasises the need for continued support if we're to keep them navigable and secure all the benefits that brings in turn to local people and wildlife. We're grateful to Leicester City Council for helping with the cost of reinstating the towpath which is a popular route with local walkers and cyclists."

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Assistant city mayor Cllr Geoff Whittle, who leads on environment and transport, said: “We’re very pleased to have supported the Canal & River Trust with funding for this project. We want to make it as easy as possible for Leicester people to access our blue and green spaces, because we know the benefits they offer for recreation, mental and physical health. Encouraging people to walk and cycle also helps our environment and air quality.

“Sadly, climate change is presenting us with increased challenges from flooding and extreme weather events, so that we need to conduct repairs like these to ensure people can continue to have access to the recreational spaces we know they value.”

To find out more about the Trust, including how you can support its vital work, go to: [Canal & River Trust](#).

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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.

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