

PRESS RELEASE

4 June 2018

CANAL & RIVER TRUST HOSTS ENGINEERING LESSON AT MIDDLEWICH CANAL BREACH FOR LOCAL SCHOOL CHILDREN

Youngsters from St Mary's Primary School in Middlewich enjoyed a chance to be engineers for a day with the Canal & River Trust charity when they donned hard hats and high vis jackets to see a rare canal breach on their doorstep.

Andy Johnson, the Trust's project manager who is overseeing the repair works, took a class of Year Six children to see the giant hole which appeared in the canal after an embankment collapsed on the 200-year-old Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal on Thursday 15 March.

In preparation for the site visit, Trust staff visited St Mary's to explain the project at a school assembly in early May and after half term will be returning to discuss the children's engineering solutions.

Ani Sutton, an engagement manager with the Trust, explained: "A canal breach of this magnitude is a very rare event so we are keen to create as many positives as we can out of the setback. We have hosted a number of community groups at the site and the emergency work has been a brilliant opportunity to enthuse local schoolchildren about engineering and the amazing canal they have on their doorstep.

"The youngsters loved getting dressed up in the safety gear, like real civil engineers, and who knows, we may have inspired some to try engineering as a career. It certainly strikes home the challenge of maintaining a man-made canal network which is around two centuries old.

"Canals are wonderful places to walk and cycle so we hope that the children will return when the repairs have been completed and enjoy the fantastic waterway which runs through their neighbourhood."

The Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of waterways, has launched an emergency appeal towards the extensive repair works which are likely to cost around £3 million. More than £25,000 has already been raised towards funding the project which will take several months to complete.

Andy Johnson explained: "Our emergency response started the day after the breach happened to make the site safe by removing debris blocking the River Wheelock, installing dams either side of the breach, removing dangerous trees and rescuing stranded boats. Since then a temporary access road and construction site compound have been established next to the breach and an access route along the canal bed is being constructed.

"Behind the scenes, specialists have been ensuring the ecology, heritage and environment around the breach is safe-guarded and engineers have been working on the complex design plan required to repair the

Canal & River Trust, Toll House, Delamere Terrace, London, W2 6ND

T: 0203 3204 4514 **E:** press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk **W:** www.canalrivertrust.org.uk **Twitter:** [@CanalRiverTrust](https://twitter.com/CanalRiverTrust)

Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. 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: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

embankment. This is nearing completion, our contractor is making good progress with the preparation work and repairs to the breach itself are expected to start in mid-June.”

For more information about becoming a Friend of the Canal & River Trust or donating to the Emergency Appeal, please go to www.canalrivertrust.org.uk or alternatively text LEAK515 to 70070 to donate £5. All donations go directly to repairing the canal.

- ends-

For further media requests please contact:

Lynn Pegler, Canal & River Trust press office

m 07783 686246

e lynn.pegler@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 real difference to people’s lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to transform their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk @CanalRiverTrust @crtcomms