

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Issued: 17 August 2020**

### **CANAL CHARITY LAUNCHES NEW 'OVER 55s' HEALTH AND FITNESS PROGRAMME ON CHESHIRE'S WATERWAYS**

Waterways and wellbeing charity, the Canal & River Trust has launched a new free 12 week health and fitness programme of weekly waterside walks and online support for Cheshire residents aged over 55.

Active Waterways Cheshire aims to encourage less active people to increase their fitness levels and improve their health and wellbeing by taking part in weekly guided walks in Northwich, near the River Weaver and Trent & Mersey Canal; Macclesfield and Congleton near the Macclesfield Canal; and Chester, Nantwich and Ellesmere Port near the Shropshire Union Canal.

And for older residents who are still self-isolating or reluctant to leave home, a weekly one hour Zoom call is on offer, packed full of useful advice, top health tips and mindfulness sessions to encourage people to get back into activity in their own time.

All levels of fitness are catered for and every waterside walk will have a guide and a maximum of five walkers, allowing the group to comply with current social distancing guidelines. Routes will be chosen to provide easy access for people with limited mobility.

Anika Neill, Active Waterways project manager with the Canal & River Trust, said: “We recognise many people have lost confidence in going out and about as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, particularly if they have underlying health conditions.

“This new series of weekly walks and online Zoom sessions is designed to encourage older people to get active again and benefit from the wonderful, relaxing, calm environment offered by Cheshire’s beautiful waterways.

“The walks will be tailored to meet the needs of the group and offer people a chance to make new friends and appreciate the inspiring natural world along the county’s canals and rivers. Research shows us that life truly is better by water so we would encourage anyone who wants to improve their health and well-being to get in touch and join us.”

Supported by £222,000 of National Lottery funding from Sport England, Active Waterways Cheshire is a key initiative within Sport England’s plan ‘Towards an Active Nation’, and focuses on the county’s many beautiful waterways – part of the 2,000 miles of canals and rivers cared for by the Trust.

Sport England research shows that inactivity among people over 55 is responsible for just as many deaths as smoking. In Cheshire and Warrington just over 40 % of the population (c.370,000 people) are over 55 and of these 53% (nearly 200,000) do less than two and a half hours of gentle exercise per week. Active Cheshire research indicates the main reasons for inactivity are health (54%), work and family commitments (26%) and lack of interest (15%).

For more information or to get involved, please go the Canal & River Trust website [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/activewaterways](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/activewaterways) or email the Active Waterways team on [activewaterways@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:activewaterways@canalrivertrust.org.uk).

You can get a taste of what’s in store by enjoying a selection of virtual walks along Cheshire’s glorious waterways at:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/walking/walking-routes>

### **Dates and times of Active Waterways Cheshire walks**

#### **Nantwich**

Date: Thursday 27/08/20 – 12/11/20

Time: 10:00 – 11:00

#### **Macclesfield**

Date: Friday 28/08/20 – 13/11/20

Time: 10:00 – 11:00

**Ellesmere Port**

Date: Wednesday 26/08/20 – 18/11/20

Times: 11am-12pm and 1-2pm

**Chester**

Date: Monday 24/08/20 – 16/11/20

Times: 12.45pm – 1.45pm, *additional times TBC dependent on demand*

**Northwich (Anderton)**

Date: Friday 28/08/20 – 20/11/20

Times: 10am – 11am, *additional times TBC dependent on demand*

Ends

**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).

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