



**Canal &  
River Trust**

Making life better by water

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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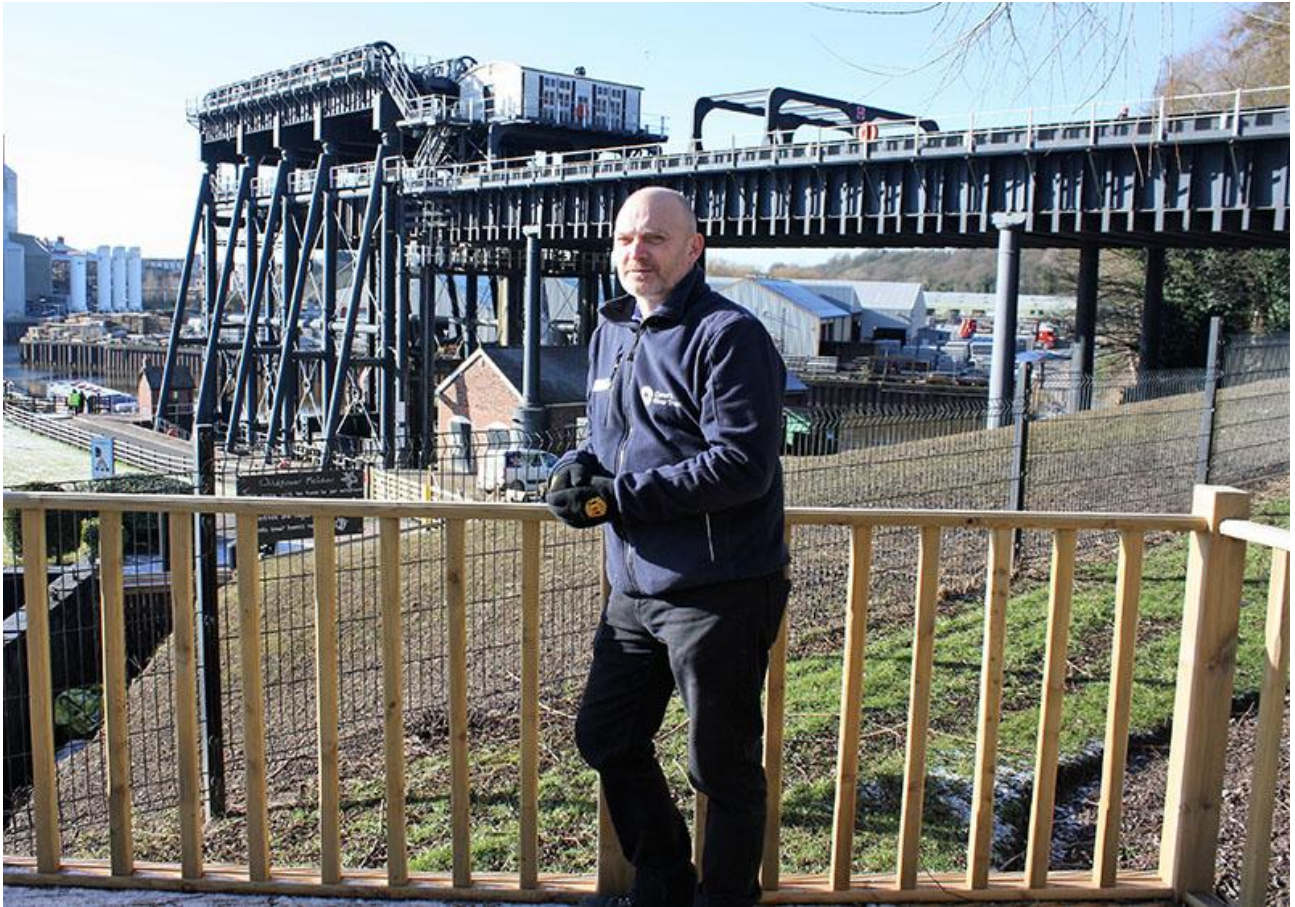
### **ANDERTON BOAT LIFT POISED FOR POST LOCKDOWN LIFT OFF!**

Britain's Cathedral of the Canals, Anderton Boat Lift, is ready for lift off later this spring when Covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifted.

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The Northwich visitor attraction, run by the Canal & River Trust charity, is currently closed in line with the national lockdown but, behind-the-scenes, a number of upgrade projects are about to be delivered in time for the planned Covid-safe re-opening.

The play area has recently been upgraded and a smart new viewing platform installed near to the visitor centre. The trip boat embarkation point at the bottom of the lift is due for re-surfacing and private boaters will soon find it easier to access the boat lift grounds from the River Weaver, thanks to new moorings on the edge of Anderton Nature Park and a new wooden bridge connecting them into the boat lift site.

Plans are also progressing on constructing a new hydro-electric plant on the bywash channel which flows along the edge of the Lift's grounds from the Trent & Mersey Canal at the top and connects into the River Weaver, 50 feet below. This is likely to be completed next summer and will then contribute electricity to power the Anderton Boat Lift and visitor centre.

Throughout the winter lockdown, the Canal & River Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of waterways across England and Wales, has continued to provide limited private boat passage through the boat lift for essential journeys. This was briefly interrupted in January and early February due to frozen operating controls, followed by flooding caused by Storm Christoph, but this service has now resumed.

Ani Sutton, destinations and attractions manager with the Trust, said: “It has been an extremely challenging time at the Anderton Boat Lift, not only dealing with constantly changing lockdown restrictions but also the effects of extreme weather.

“The bottom of the lift was completely submerged by flood water as the Weaver levels rose after record rainfall from Storm Christoph, but I am delighted to say all our delicate historic operating equipment has now dried out and we don’t seem to have suffered any major long-term problems.

“However just west of the boat lift, the storms did wreak havoc by causing a major landslip on the Trent & Mersey Canal at Barnton. This has blocked the canal navigation and it’s unlikely that boats coming from the north will be able to access the boat lift before mid-summer at the earliest.

“Longer term the boat lift is due to have a major maintenance programme, which means it could be out of operation for a prolonged period of between 6 – 18 months. It is now nearly two decades since it was re-opened after a £7 million refurbishment in 2002. The lift structure needs repainting, the control system upgrading and the hydraulic ram cylinders, which support the two caissons, potentially need remedial work.

“We are still awaiting vital specialist reports, which have been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. These will help the Trust to assess what needs to be done, in the least obtrusive way. Whatever happens we can reassure boaters and visitors that maintenance work is probably unlikely to start for another 18 months, meaning we would hope to have two clear summer seasons of normal operation, unless Covid-19 restrictions impact on us again.”

One of the seven wonders of the waterways, the Anderton Boat Lift is hoping to open again to visitors this spring, offering free access to the visitor centre, heritage displays, coffee shop and children’s play area. If Covid-19 restrictions allow, the plan will be to introduce socially-distanced boat trips through the lift later in the season.

For more information about visiting Anderton Boat Lift and Cheshire’s waterways, becoming a Trust volunteer or Friend supporter, please check out the website: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk).

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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 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.

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