

PRESS RELEASE

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ELLESMERE PORT NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUM REOPENS TO VISITORS ON 20 MAY

The Canal & River Trust charity's National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port reopens to visitors on Thursday 20 May with a host of new attractions, after more than a year of closure due to the coronavirus lockdown.

An amazing new floating garden, audio trail and extra outdoor café seating have been added to the fantastic boating displays on offer at the seven acre, former docklands site, on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal and the Shropshire Union Canal. On Saturday 29 May, they will also be joined by an extensive new children's play area.

Initially the museum will be open four days a week, Thursday – Sunday. And on most Sundays throughout the summer, starting on 27 June, the museum will be transformed into a living heritage 'Canal Town'. This will give visitors the extra special experience of being transported back in time to the global port heydays of the late 19th century. Old ship warehouses, Victorian toll houses, worker cottages, locks, docks and stables will be brought alive by special set-dressing and volunteers offering free guided tours, storytelling, street games, family history, dressing-up and children's activities.

Throughout the summer months, the museum will also host a series of activity programmes, including Let's Fish free angling taster sessions, Let's Walk guided tours, Let's Stretch family yoga sessions and Let's Paddle canoeing activities.

Stunning visual waterway images by the Trust's first photographer-in-residence Jonathan Goldberg will also be on display and a range of fascinating boating

artefacts from the museum's extensive collection will provide a window on a lost maritime world.



Ani Sutton, destination and attraction manager for the Canal & River Trust, said: “We can’t wait to welcome back visitors to the National Waterways Museum. We have put together a diverse package of engaging activities to appeal to both adults and children. Whether you’re mad on boats, love history or fancy trying your hand at fishing for the first time, we will be offering a wide range of tempting attractions to appeal to everyone.

“We are particularly excited to watch the development of our new floating garden, in the shape of a narrowboat, funded by the support of players of the People’s Postcode Lottery. This will create a new biodiverse habitat for dozens of different species of flora and fauna, including dragonflies, pollinators and water insects.

“All our museum buildings and staff will adopt the current government covid-19 guidance to provide visitors with an uplifting, enjoyable and *safe* experience. Let’s hope that we now have a permanent pathway out of lockdown and we won’t have to take the terrible decision to shut our doors to the public again. Please come and give us your support – we would love to see you!”

The Canal & River Trust National Waterways museum, grounds, café and shop will be open Thursday – Sunday, 10am – 4pm, from 20 May. For more information about visiting, ‘Canal Town’ dates, special events and activities, check out the Canal &

River Trust website:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/places-to-visit/national-waterways-museum>. Adult tickets cost £9.75, children £6 and families £25.

The Trust's other sister visitor attraction in Cheshire, the Anderton Boat Lift, is currently open on Saturdays and Sunday only, 10am-4pm, for access to the grounds and takeaway refreshments. The visitor centre is expected to open later in May and boat trips restart in mid-summer.

For the latest visitor information go to:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/places-to-visit/anderton-boat-lift-visitor-centre>

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Notes to Editors

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and river navigations 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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