

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **NEW BOLTON WATERSIDE COMMUNITY ORCHARD BOOSTS WILDLIFE AND COMBATS FLOOD RISK**

A new waterside community orchard and woodland has been planted along a canal towpath near Bolton, on a slope between the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal and the River Irwell, to improve biodiversity and help protect the area from flooding.

The Canal & River Trust waterways and wellbeing charity, which cares for the canal-side plot, the Environment Agency and volunteers from the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal Society are all working together to enhance the local environment and combat flood risk for residents around Prestolee and Nob End Locks.

The £8,800 project has involved covering two hectares of scrubland with fruit trees to improve soil stability, increase biodiversity and limit the impact of harmful non-native species, like giant hogweed.

Funded by a grant of £8,000 from the Environment Agency, 50 large ‘statement’ trees, plus smaller trees and shrubs, have been planted on the slope between the canal and the river.

Canal & River Trust ecologist Tom King said: “This is a fantastic natural solution to improving the local environment and protecting the area from flooding. Roots from the trees will help to bind the soil together and absorb run-off, slowing down the flow of water during periods of heavy rainfall. It will also help to improve biodiversity along the two waterways and eventually provide free fruit to local residents – a win-win project for everyone!”

Adam Chapman, from the Environment Agency, commented: “Prestolee Locks, adjacent to Nob End Site of Scientific Interest in Bolton, was selected as part of a

nationwide programme of tree planting to protect the water environment. A thousand trees have been planted at the Nob End Community Woodland, which will help to reduce erosion of the river banks, act as a sponge to soak up rainwater and improve the visual impact of the landscape.”

Chris Nash, fundraising officer at Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal Society added: “This is a great example of the environmental benefits for our local community which can be achieved when the Canal & River Trust and the canal society work together on a project.”

The Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal has been derelict for many years but several sections remain in water, providing wonderful walking and cycling routes, and great spots for fishing. The canal originally ran north from Salford on the River Irwell to Prestolee, near Little Lever, where it split into two, with the main line continuing to Bury and a branch heading northwest to Bolton.

Some sections have been partly restored by dedicated volunteers from the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal Society and there are wider aspirations to bring more of the canal back to life.

For more information about visiting the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal and volunteering opportunities with the Canal & River Trust, please go to the website: [canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk)

## **ENDS**

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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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