

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **RESTORING TODDBROOK RESERVOIR COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT LAUNCHED**

A specialist outdoor mural artist has been brought in to work on the Toddbrook Reservoir restoration project by the Canal & River Trust charity to decorate two round turret structures being created as part of a new overflow spillway next to Whaley Bridge Memorial Park.

Staffordshire artist Tom Edwards, who runs We are Culla, will be leading on a community arts project to work with local residents and nearby schools on a suitable design.

Over the next few months, Tom will be devising different concepts and has issued an open invitation for adults and children to get in touch to suggest themes or motifs from local nature, history, culture or industry, they would like to see incorporated into the final designs for the six-metre-high turrets. He will be hosting a drop-in community art session on Saturday 9 December (10am – 2pm) at the Transhipment Warehouse in Whaley Bridge canal basin and would like to receive suggestions by 15 December 2023.

In the new year, Tom will be leading on a further drop-in community art session on Saturday 20 January (10am – 2pm) to decorate the construction hoardings in the town's Memorial Park.

Tom Edwards said: "I am delighted to be leading on this exciting art project. My style of work is very broad, encompassing everything from impressionism through to geometric minimalism. Most of my work is produced for a specific setting, and as such I like to work with my audience to find a style and approach which best suits its location. I love to paint organic shapes, plants and wildlife and especially birds."

A busy summer of construction work for the Trust's main contractor Kier has resulted in significant progress to create the new overflow spillway at Toddbrook Reservoir. The project involves removing the auxiliary spillway that was damaged in summer 2019 and replacing it with a new spillway structure to the north of the dam. This features a side weir, tumble bay, spillway channel and stilling basin, which will link into the existing bypass channel flowing through the park into the River Goyt.

Canal & River Trust project manager Tom Greenwood said: "The two round turrets are crucial elements for controlling waterflow down the spillway and we are delighted Tom has joined with us to help the new structures blend into the landscape as sensitively as possible.

"We've made good progress on the construction project over the last few months. In the upper section, by the reservoir, most of the piling has been completed and the new side weir and tumble bay features have been excavated. Lower down the slope, sheet piling and concrete-piled foundations have been installed for the new stilling basin. Once all the piling and excavation work is finished, the next major phase will be to start lining the new structure with reinforced concrete to create the spillway channel.

"We would like to thank everyone who lives nearby, particularly close neighbours, for their patience and understanding during this main construction phase. Our principal contractor, Kier, is working hard to minimise disruption caused by the work."

At the end of the main construction works, the old concrete panels from the 1970s auxiliary spillway will be removed and the dam slope grassed over. A new playground will be rebuilt in the Memorial Park, which will also be re-landscaped with trees, wildlife habitats, additional paths and a new footbridge over the bypass channel. The sailing club will be relocated behind the new tumble bay, where it will feature a new slipway, clubhouse, boat storage and car park.

**For more information about the project and how to get involved in the community art project, please go to the Canal & River Trust website:**

**<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/restoring-toddbrook-reservoir>.**

**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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