

To residents and users of the Oxford Canal Towpath

This towpath forms part of the Oxford Canal and is owned and managed by the Canal and River Trust.

In Oxfordshire the towpath is also a designated Public Right of Way, governed by national highways legislation and forming a key transport route in the city. Public Rights of Way cannot be closed for health reasons without specific legislation being passed by government. Therefore no organisation or individual is permitted to close or obstruct the right of way.

This is a difficult and uncertain time creating significant stress and anxiety for all. We continue to ask everyone in the city to act with kindness, respect and consideration to each other to help us get through this unprecedented event.

Use of the towpath

Clear signage has been installed to advise people of the need to limit use, to find alternative routes and to be respectful near moorings. This reflects Government guidance.

We are aware that concerns have been raised regarding the use of the Oxford Canal towpath by members of the public for exercise and not adhering to rules on social distancing and whether this has implications for additional risk to people on residential moorings. We are also aware of reports that barriers have been placed on the towpath.

We urge people taking exercise to use other open spaces local to where they live to reduce levels of use on the towpath in close proximity to residential moorings.

In any outside space people should respect the needs of local residents and other users and maintain social distancing [2m] at all times.

Boaters should clearly display signs on their boats if they are self-isolating to ensure the public are aware and can act accordingly.

No towpath should be barriered, to ensure safe and emergency access where needed

At this time we expect everyone to act considerately and continue to observe government rules on social distancing and to restrict their outside journeys to only essential travel. We appreciate that this is difficult for those living on boats with limited room and for whom the only outside space may be the Public Right of Way.