



Mr Martin Fleming  
HM Senior Coroner for West Yorkshire, Western  
HM Coroner's Office  
Cater Building  
1 Cater Street  
Bradford  
BD1 5AS

4 May 2022

Dear Sir

**RE: Tomi Obi Solomon – Deceased  
Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths**

I am the Director for the Yorkshire and North East Region, for Canal and River Trust (the “**Trust**”) and I am responding on behalf of the Trust in relation to the Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Further Deaths notice dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (the “**PFD Notice**”), following the conclusion of the Inquest into the death of Tomi Obi Solomon who sadly died on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

Our thoughts are very much with the family and friends of Tomi. On behalf of the Trust, we were greatly saddened by Tomi's tragic death last year and offer our sincere condolences to his family.

**THE CANAL AND RIVER TRUST – AN OVERVIEW**

The Canal & River Trust came into being as a Charity on 2nd July 2012 – the biggest ever single transfer of state infrastructure into a charitable body – and included 2,000 miles of historic canals, rivers, reservoirs and docks across England and Wales.

The network flows from London to Lancaster and Wales to the Wash, connecting most of the country's major towns and cities. There were around 750 million visits to the waterways in 2020/21, around 34,000 licensed boats on the network (more than during the Industrial Revolution). The Trust is also the largest owner of fishing rights in the UK and has 100,000 angling customers.

The Canal & River Trust spent an estimated £183m on our charitable activities in 2020/21. The Trust is the third largest owner of Listed structures/buildings in the UK, has over 1,000 wildlife conservation sites, 63 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and 46 Scheduled Monuments.

**THE PFD NOTICE**

During the course of the Inquest, it was noted that there is no signage on the bridge or the embankments to the river which prohibit swimming or using the bridge as a jumping off point. In the opinion of HM Coroner, there is a risk that future deaths could occur unless action is taken.

Given the locations popularity with many teenagers in the area, HM Coroner has asked that the Trust (along with Tenant Investments and Calderdale Council) consider the appropriateness of the existing safety measures on the bridge (the Trust identify this as Bridge 19) and surrounding area and whether actions are necessary to deter such activities in order to further occurrences and like tragedies.

**Canal & River Trust**

National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 4FW  
T 0303 040 4040 E [canalrivertrust.org.uk/contact-us](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/contact-us)

## **BRIDGE 19**

Bridge 19 to the east of Brighouse is a narrow highway bridge, which is only used by pedestrians and cyclists and is outside of the Trust's responsibility. It is accessed by Huntingdon Road and is the responsibility of Calderdale Council as Highways Authority. Calderdale Council also have responsibility for the riverbanks adjacent to the bridge entrance at Huntingdon Road.

Bridge 19 is located over a river section of the Calder and Hebble Navigation running from Sowerby Bridge in the west to Wakefield in the east and at this point, the Trust is Navigation Authority only and has no ownership for anything other than the water space.

As the Trust has no legal rights of ownership or control over Bridge 19 or the surrounding land it is unable to erect signage. However, with the owner's permission we commit to working collaboratively with them to install signage as recommended by HM Coroner.

To this end, the Trust has made contact with Tenant Investments, who have kindly shared their response to HM Coroner to the PFD Notice. We understand from this, that they do not have any ownership or control of land surrounding Bridge 19, and as such, their ability to take action is limited. They are however, willing to display signage recommended by HM Coroner.

The Trust has made several unsuccessful attempts to engage in discussion with Calderdale Council, since receipt of the PFD Notice. We very much hope that that your office can assist in establishing contact between the Trust and Calderdale Council to progress this action.

## **THE CANAL AND RIVER TRUST APPROACH TO VISITOR SAFETY**

The Trust takes the safety of all our people, visitors, and the public very seriously and have built up a wealth of experience over the years in identifying appropriate site and locally based control measures necessary. When measured against the millions of visitors (there were around 750 million visits to the waterways in 2020/21) the incidents of accidental drowning in our Canals and Rivers are remarkably low. Nonetheless, we continue to strive to reduce even these low figures.

The principal means of ensuring the safety of visitors to the Trust's property is achieved through regular inspections to identify and manage defects, programmed maintenance of the network.

Teams regularly inspect areas across our network of waterways. The local team that covers the Calder & Hebble consists of a manager with a team of four who look after the 35km of this navigation, 7 days a week 365 days per year. The team have a range of tasks including daily water level checks across their area, undertaking planned preventative maintenance of structures, addressing defects e.g., removing vegetation, filling in potholes; and responding to customers. Visiting and inspecting every asset or length of canal is therefore prioritised on need. We also have asset inspectors as part of our engineering team who walk every kilometre of towpath bi-monthly recording any defects and actions required as a method of monitoring and assessing change.

The Trust manages its visitor safety by balancing benefits and risks of access to the waterway to provide overall public benefit whilst acting as a responsible custodian. Due to the nature of canals and rivers the environment can't be totally risk-free nor would we want to stop important recreational and learning activities where the risks are considered reasonable. Time spent on recreation, exploration and learning makes a major contribution to people's health and wellbeing, a key component of the Trust's charitable

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objectives. The Trust wants to ensure that we have taken all reasonable steps to avoid risks to the public, and deciding what interventions are reasonable to take requires sound judgement. We need to be careful not to spoil the things that attracted people to visit us in the first place and recognise that everyone involved near water has some responsibility for ensuring their own safety.

## GUIDANCE AND CAMPAIGNS

To aid the management process we have adopted the guiding principles developed by the [VSG Managing Visitor Safety at Historic Built Environment](#) and RoSPA. The Trust also works with partners where it can. For example, the Trust is a member of the [National Water Safety Forum](#) and has pledged to work towards the [national drowning strategy 2016 -2020](#). We work in partnership with organisations all over England and Wales to reach more people with important water safety messages. We are a key member of the National Water Safety Forum, a voluntary association of organisations that have a wide variety of interests and responsibilities for water safety. We are also part of local water safety partnerships across England, and we take our role within these partnerships extremely seriously and value working together with groups to push out water safety messages and actions.

We give lots of [public safety guidance](#) and information on our web site as well as conducting targeted safety campaigns, such as those around water safety. For example; we [partner with the RNLI](#) on their [Don't Drink and Drown](#) campaign - as well as our own national and regional [summer](#) and [winter](#) water safety campaigns.

We have delivered specific sessions on water safety in the Calderdale area, more specifically:

- All primary schools (83 in total) have been offered free water safety sessions (virtual or face to face);
- **765** booklets on water safety have been ordered from flier link;
- 11 sessions of our virtual water safety workshops have been ordered and delivered to **579** pupils;
- 12 sessions of face to face water safety training have been delivered through flier link to **691** pupils;
- From April 2021 to date, 1270 participants have attended water safety sessions (virtual & face to face) in Calderdale
- From April 2021 to the end of March 2022, 8164 participants have attended water safety sessions (virtual & face to face) in Yorkshire and the North East.

If I can be of further assistance to HM Coroner or if you would like to discuss my response, please do get in touch.

Yours faithfully



Director, Yorkshire & North East

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**Canal &  
River Trust**

**Approval**

I endorse this report and the details within it

████████████████████

Date: 04/05/2022

Title: Chief Operating Officer

Signed:

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH65 4FW