



Dr. Sarah-Jane Richards,
HM Assistant Coroner, for the Coroner area of South Wales Central,

The Coroner's Office,
The Old Courthouse,
Courthouse Street
Pontypridd
CF37 1JW

10 May 2022

Dear Madam,

**RE: Mrs Margaret May Lewis – Deceased
Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths**

I am the Director for the West Midlands 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 14th March 2022 (the "PFD Notice"), following the conclusion of the Inquest into the death of Mrs Margaret May Lewis who sadly died on 6th November 2020.

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

The PFD Notice states that the Montgomeryshire canal and its adjacent towpath is a popular venue for adults with children and dogs; and joggers many of whom will wear earphones. They, like Mrs. Lewis who was thought to be wearing earphones at the time, will need to cross the B4398 (which has a 60 mph speed limit) to continue their exercise. With the increasing popularity of noiseless electric cars, the frequency of wearing of earphones whilst taking exercise and the B4398 having a 60mph speed limit, HM Coroner considers that there is a risk of reoccurrence of such an accident.

In the opinion of HM Coroner, action should be taken to prevent future deaths and she believes that the Trust and Powys County Council have the power to take such action, namely,

- Provide warning signage on the tow path at the 'kissing' gates either side of the B4398 noting the Highway Code for pedestrians with the added warning of wearing earphones when crossing a road with a 60mph speed limit.
- Provide warning signage on B4398 of pedestrians crossing the road with dogs and children possibly wearing earphones.

THE MONTGOMERY CANAL

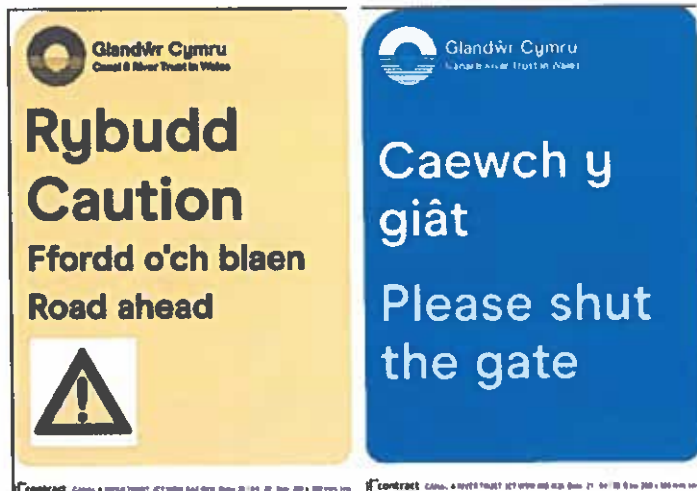
The Montgomery Canal is one of the most important canals in the country for nature, much of it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Welsh section is of international importance, designated a Special Area of Conservation for its aquatic plants.

The Montgomery Canal towpath is moderately used by local people and sees pedestrians and some cyclists. The towpath does have many sections where the towpath stops at a road and then restarts on the other side of the road. In order to ensure that any user of the canal prepares for the crossing there is a barrier in the form of a kissing gate as per photograph below.



These gates allow the towpath user to slow and prepare for the crossing and provide an adequate measure as a physical barrier to hi-light to the towpath user to stop.

Currently, there is no highways signage on the 'Kissing Gates' as we are not responsible for risk control measures for the Highway itself and the barrier that the gate provides, slows and stops the user at the end of our towpath. However, at your request, we have designed warning signage to be placed on front and rear of the 'kissing' gates either side of the B4398 which will read as follows:

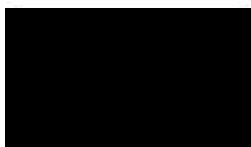


We have sent our design out for quotation (which is currently awaited) and we are in a position to place our order immediately. We will be reliant on the delivery of the signs (which can often take a couple of weeks) but we will erect these as soon as possible thereafter.

For your information, we have identified a further 30 similar gates on the Welsh section of the canal where we will place these signs and 10 gates on the English section (as the Montgomery canal crosses the Welsh/English border) we will be ordering a number of Bi-lingual Welsh/English and for the Welsh side of the border (and then just English for the English side).

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,



Regional Director
West Midlands
Canal and River Trust

Approval

I endorse this report and the details within it

Name: Julie Sharman Date: 10/05/2022

Title: Chief Operating Officer, Canal and River Trust

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Sharman', written in a cursive style.