

Fund Britain's Waterways Update for Members, January 2024

Happy New Year to all our members! Here's hoping 2024 will bring better times for our waterways.

In this update we look back at 2023 and forward to our plans for 2024, and set out ways in which we need your support.

FBW's first six months

After launching at the end of June 2023, in six months FBW created an impressive coalition of member organisations totalling well over one hundred, representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways. A public petition attracted close to 50,000 signatures. Three well-reported Campaign Cruises in Birmingham, Gloucester and past the Palace of Westminster on the Thames have substantially raised awareness of the challenges facing our canals and rivers and the need for action.

FBW's plans for 2024

Our plans for 2024 include an important weekend of action over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend (4-6 May 2024) to highlight the impact of insufficient funding for Britain's 5,000 miles of inland waterways.

The weekend of action is planned to take place across the country on waterways managed by different inland navigation authorities. It will coincide with IWA's annual Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice in London, which this year will be themed on Fund Britain's Waterways.

Boaters attending Cavalcade are invited to join a Campaign Cruise past the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday 8 May, as the culmination of the weekend of action. Parliamentarians will be encouraged to view the event and express their support for the continued maintenance of the waterways to enable them to keep on delivering economic, health, environmental and well-being benefits.

We hope that activities taking place across the country over the weekend will attract local and national media attention, building up to the Westminster Cruise on 8 May for which we will be aiming for national coverage.

FBW's ask to members

In order to make politicians sit up and take notice we need to demonstrate how many people (voters!) care about the inland waterways. The steering group needs support from all our member organisations, particularly in the following ways:

1. Please encourage all organisations that you know with an interest in the inland waterways to join FBW by contacting membership@fundbritainwaterways.org.uk
2. Please encourage everybody you know to sign the petition available at www.fundbritainwaterways.org.uk.
3. We are looking for local groups to organise events during the weekend of action to spread the word that waterways need to be properly funded to stop them from falling into decline. Events can be as simple as a few boats gathered together at a "public" location where flyers can be handed out and people be

encouraged to sign our petition or get more involved. If you or your organisation could organise an event over the weekend, please contact Hazel Owen hazelowen.awcc@outlook.com and 07929 204811.

4. Please also contact Hazel if you can help promote the FBW cause at any events you are involved in at any time throughout the year.

Members of the FBW steering group are available [here](#) and brief biographies of the personnel representing those steering groups are available [here](#).

Thank you in advance for your support.

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⚠ We need your help to #FundBritainsWaterways

Join the campaign to protect our canals and rivers from funding cuts.

With your help, the waterways stand a better chance of securing the investment they need.