

PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release

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Fund Britain's Waterways flotilla to Westminster, 8th May 2024

A large flotilla of boats will be travelling in convoy up the River Thames and standing off the Palace of Westminster, to draw the attention of Parliament to the [Fund Britain's Waterways](#) (FBW) campaign.

The campaign was launched at the end of June 2023 in response to the inadequate funding and deteriorating state of Britain's network of canals and navigable rivers. Three well-reported Campaign Cruises were held in 2023, in Birmingham, Gloucester and past the Palace of Westminster, and the campaign continues to gather momentum. From boaters and local businesses to the many different recreational groups and individuals who value our waterways, we are all united in now looking towards Westminster and seeking support from our parliamentarians.

A national weekend of action over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend (4th to 6th May 2024) will culminate in a second Campaign Cruise past the Houses of Parliament during the lunchtime period on Wednesday 8th May. Parliamentarians are invited to view the event from a specially chartered boat and express their support for the continued maintenance of the waterways. Other supporters are invited to cheer the boats on from Westminster Bridge and talk to the public about the campaign and its petition, which has already received over 50,000 signatures.

Over 30 boats from various parts of the country are already on route to Westminster. Despite adverse weather and challenges of emergency repairs on canals and flooding on rivers along the way, the boaters are determined to help FBW gain the attention of Parliament. The flotilla, including privately owned narrowboats and commercial working boats dressed with Fund Britain's Waterways banners, will pass under Westminster Bridge after travelling upstream along the Thames from Limehouse Basin. The boats will then stand off the Palace of Westminster for around 10 minutes and collectively sound their horns to draw the attention of Parliament and the general public to the need to safeguard the future of Britain's inland waterways.

Andrew Phasey, Royal Yachting Association representative and organiser of the Cruise, said “We believe this event is timely as concern for the future of Britain’s inland waterways is mounting, with navigation authorities already struggling to safely maintain the network in the face of ever more frequent episodes of extreme weather. We need as many people as possible to show their support on Westminster Bridge on the day. If you are able to do so, please contact Frances Phasey on 07734 038297 to join the supporters’ WhatsApp group. In this way you will be updated on the progress of the boats and their expected time of arrival at Westminster.”

About Fund Britain’s Waterways (FBW):

FBW brings together a wide range of organisations with the sole purpose of campaigning collectively for an increase in government funding of Britain’s inland waterways to avert their decline, and to promote awareness of the huge economic, environmental and social well-being value they provide. Established in June 2023, it already has over 120 members representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways.

Contact:

For further information about Fund Britain’s Waterways, contact info@fundbritainwaterways.org.uk

For further information about the cruise, including precise timings on the day of the cruise, please email theoldmainline@fastmail.fm or phone 07850 753633.