

01 May 2024

Fund Britain's Waterways Announces Nationwide Campaign Weekend



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'Weekend of Action' - A call for enhanced Government support

Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW), a leading advocacy group championing the sustainable future of Britain's canals and rivers, announces a significant weekend of action planned for the upcoming May Day Bank Holiday, 4-6 May 2024.

Events will be taking place across the country on waterways managed by different inland navigation authorities, with the aim of mobilising nationwide support and highlighting the crucial need for increased government funding for the maintenance of Britain's 5,000 miles of inland waterways.

The weekend will feature a series of coordinated activities across various locations, each designed to showcase the cultural, economic, and environmental importance of maintaining our waterways.

Key Events Include:

- **Electrika - Brinklow Marina, Rugby – 3-4 May:** Electrika is the brainchild of Ortomarine, a renowned UK builder of electric narrowboats, with a passion for encouraging the industry towards “going green”. In collaboration with Aquavista, the UK’s largest inland marina operator, they will be organising and promoting this unique and innovative electric boating event. Ortomarine and Aquavista both recognise the importance of canals to their own industries and the many benefits they bring to the community at large. They fully support the FBW initiative and were glad to use Electrika to endorse its aims.
- **Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Lancashire and Cumbria Branch – near Chorley, Lancashire – 4 May, 10am – 4pm:** Come and visit the team on the stand located beside Johnsons Hillock locks on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and show you support for the FBW campaign.



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- **Ripon Motor Boat Club – Waterways Day of Action, Ripon Canal, North Yorkshire - 4 May:** Club members will turn north for the short trip to Ripon Basin, engaging with walkers enjoying the towpath during the Bank Holiday weekend. A small trip boat operates from the basin, where people will be able to see a number of boats adorned with banners and bunting, learn more about the FBW campaign and sign the petition.



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- **Swarkestone Boat Club Cruise, Burton upon Trent, 4 May:** A picturesque expedition to Shobnall Fields was planned for members and associates of the club to show their support for the FBW campaign. Unfortunately, the event is at risk of cancellation because the canal has been closed following severe damage to Barrow Bridge by a vehicle strike.
- **Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Lichfield Branch – Fradley Junction, Staffordshire – 4 May, Great Haywood Junction, Staffordshire – 5 May:** As part of the FBW weekend of action, IWA Lichfield Branch will be at Fradley Junction on Saturday 4 May, and Great Haywood Junction on Sunday 5 May. Drop by to find out more and show your support for the waterways.



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- **Broads Society rally at Acle Bridge, Norfolk - 5 May, 2pm:** The rally, in support of FBW, is campaigning for guaranteed support to the Broads from the government to ensure that the Broads environment is protected and the public has access to enjoy boating, rambling, angling, birdwatching and many other pursuits that enhance our well-being, support tourism and help build the Broads economy.



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- **Norbury Canal Festival, Norbury Junction, Staffordshire 4-6 May:** Celebrate canal heritage with family-friendly festivities, crafts, and local history. Look out for the cheese boat and pizza boat! Enjoy Alpaca trekking, boat trips, live music and much more. It promises to be a great day out for all the family, as well as an opportunity to learn about the FBW campaign.



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- **Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice, London - 4-6 May:** An annual extravaganza of boats, crafts, and community spirit, there's something for everyone! Visitors will enjoy a vibrant canal festival in the heart of London's waterways, which this year will be themed on Fund Britain's Waterways. Whether visiting by boat or on foot, it's a splendid day out for all the family. Soak up the atmosphere surrounded by colourful craft of all shapes and sizes, alongside a multitude of unique stalls, a real ale bar, and delicious foods for all appetites.

Event Opening Times: Saturday and Sunday 10.00 a.m. until 6.00 p.m. (plus illuminated boat procession, from 9.00 p.m. Sunday evening) and Monday 10.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m.



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“These regional events are an essential part of a national weekend of action, which includes activities ranging from community cruises and educational exhibitions to the much-anticipated Inland Waterways Association Canalway Cavalcade in Little Venice. Events like these showcase the community's role in advocating for the preservation and enhancement of the UK's inland waterways. We would encourage everyone in the area to engage with their local event and show their support for sustainable waterway funding”, commented Les Etheridge, Chair of FBW.

Find out more about the May Day Bank Holiday weekend of action at <https://waterways.org.uk/waterways/sites/fund-britains-waterways-overview/fund-britains-waterways-future-activities>

Westminster Campaign Cruise



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The weekend of action will culminate with the Westminster Campaign Cruise, on Wednesday, 8 May 2024. This flagship event will see a flotilla of around 30 boats stand together off the Houses of Parliament and sound their horns to highlight the campaign to both the public and key decision makers. The flotilla includes over 20 privately owned canal boats, some of which will have travelled over 350 miles to reach Westminster.

The public are invited to join FBW supporters gathering on Westminster Bridge from 12:15pm to witness this spectacular on-the-water demonstration.

Parliamentarians and other dignitaries supporting the campaign have been invited to view the flotilla from the water on the specially chartered vessel, 'MV Valulla', including notable figures such as Sir Michael Fabricant MP and Professor Martin Bigg.

Sir Michael Fabricant commented: "Our canals and rivers and their associated towpaths and historic bridges, reservoirs, aqueducts and tunnels and other infrastructure all play an important part in the lives of millions of Britons. It is vital that we keep this 250-year-old heritage alive and maintained for the benefit of future generations."

FBW's efforts have already gathered significant momentum, with over 50,000 signatures on their public petition advocating for better policies and support.



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Campaign supporter Griff Rhys Jones OBE, Patron of the River Stour Association and the Stour and Orwell Association commented: "Our rivers and waterways are the essential lifeblood to Great Britain. If we abuse or neglect or poison, block or ignore, pollute, damage over-exploit, drain, choke or infect our natural water supplies, then the health of the entire nation is at risk. As a treasured public asset, the government must help to keep them running, clean and beautiful. The navigation authorities and the thousands of volunteers who help care for our waterways need more support from government to maintain this critical network."

Sir Tim Smit KBE, Founder of the Eden Project said: "Funding Britain's Waterways is one of the most important investments our nation can make. They are the arteries which link our country together in a magnificent fusion of industry, potential and pleasure. There is no other national asset

so perfectly designed to enable citizens to enjoy Britain's beautiful countryside and be inspired by past generations to help address today's social and environmental challenges. For me, most importantly they provide access for millions of people to take in the clean air of the country, set in landscapes that still seduce the imagination with dreams of living within nature and being an active part of it."

While the Rt Hon Wendy Morton MP added: "This campaign cruise illustrates the passion and concern people have for the future of our amazing network of inland waterways. It highlights the importance of safeguarding the network for future generations to enjoy whilst also helping bring economic prosperity to local communities such as those within my own constituency."

For more information about Fund Britain's Waterways, visit [Fund Britain's Waterways](#).

To sign the petition, visit <https://www.change.org/p/fundbritainswaterways>

Join us, show your support, and help ensure that Britain's waterways continue to thrive for generations to come.

Founded in June 2023, Fund Britain's Waterways represents hundreds of thousands of waterway users and enthusiasts. Dedicated to securing sustainable governmental support, FBW emphasizes the waterways' role in enhancing community well-being, bolstering tourism, and preserving the nation's heritage.

#FundBritainsWaterways #SaveOurWaterways

Notes to the Editor

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 more than 125 members representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways and secured over 50,000 signatures to its public petition.

Founding members of the Fund Britain's Waterways campaign include:

- The Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs

- British Marine
- The Inland Waterways Association
- The National Association of Boat Owners
- The Royal Yachting Association

Contact:

For further information about Fund Britain's Waterways, contact info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk

Downloads



Canalway Cavalcade - credit Inland Waterways Association collection

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Johnsons-Hillocks-Locks - credit Inland Waterways Association collection

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Ripon Canal Basin - credit Inland Waterways Association collection - John Lower

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Fradley-Junction - credit Inland Waterways Association collection - David-Archer

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Broads-cruiser-and-sailing-dinghies - credit Inland Waterways Association collection - Martin-Hayden

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Norbury Junction, Shropshire Union Canal Sue O'Hare

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Canalway Cavalcade - credit Inland Waterways Association collection - Roger Squires

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Fund Britain's Waterways Westminster Campaign Cruise 2

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