



# FUND BRITAIN'S WATERWAYS

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## **Government receives wake-up call from inland waterways campaigners**

*Inland waterways campaign group, [Fund Britain's Waterways](#), takes its message to Westminster.*

It was a spectacle for both the eyes and ears on Wednesday (08 May) as the call to safeguard Britain's inland waterways reached the Palace of Westminster.

A 20-strong flotilla delivered an unmistakable message to Government for funding to protect the future of our inland waterways.

The flotilla included a mix of commercial freight vessels, several sea kayaks and 17 privately owned narrowboats, some of which had travelled over 350 miles battling

against the severe weather and failing canal infrastructure, determined to reach Westminster. United together, they sounded their horns to cheers from supporters on Westminster Bridge, capturing the attention of many MPs who had just attended Prime Minister's questions.

The flotilla was a culmination of Fund Britain's Waterways' May Bank Holiday Weekend of Action, with events being held across the country to highlight the impact of insufficient funding on our rivers and canals.

Welcoming the flotilla were crowds of inland supporters and representatives from the campaign's alliance of organisations, including Dame Sheila Hancock DBE, and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Waterways, Sir Michael Fabricant MP.

Fund Britain's Waterways is a coalition of organisations representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways campaigning to safeguard the future of Britain's 5,000-mile network of cherished canals and rivers. The campaign calls for recognition of the importance of Britain's inland waterways for their environmental, leisure, heritage, and commercial freight value.

Les Etheridge, Fund Britain's Waterways Chair, said: "It has been fantastic to have boats travel from across the country to gather outside the Palace of Westminster. Supporting inland waterways is vital in continuing to enable people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy and connect with their local stretch of water.

"Our waterways are a bustling network that links communities, provides employment and leisure opportunities, which are underpinned by the network's unique heritage. They also play a valuable role in water and flood risk management and provide a haven for wildlife."

Mel Hide, RYA Director of External Affairs, said: "Britain's inland waterways play an integral role in millions of people's leisure and well-being. Without support and funding this national asset will undoubtedly fall into decline.

"The campaign cruise at Westminster highlights the community spirit and passion waterways inspire in people of all ages and raises awareness of why safeguarding our blue spaces for future generations to enjoy is vital."

Show your support for the Britain's canals and rivers by signing the Fund Britain's Waterways [petition](#).

[Download high-res photos.](#)

## **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**

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