

Fund Britain's Waterways Update, June 2024

Dear FBW member/supporter,

The unexpectedly early announcement of the General Election has focused many minds, including those of the FBW steering group. A [press release](#) has been issued welcoming the opportunity to talk to a new government and reinforce the widely acknowledged benefits and the outstandingly good return on investment that our inland waterways provide, as well as the deterioration that has already started and the impact on business. Please do try to speak to candidates in your area and get these messages across if you possibly can.

In the meantime activities to continue raising awareness continue around the country. Please read on and **support us in as many ways as you can** – and please do pass the message on to your colleagues, members, customers and other contacts.

Navigation Authority Meetings

The notes from the meeting with CRT on 10 April 2024 are now available [on the FBW website](#), together with the video recording of the session. We are inviting other navigation authorities to participate in similar sessions and will announce them as soon as possible. FBW members will again have the opportunity to submit questions in advance and to watch a livestream of the meeting.

Waterway Events

Reports on the May Day Bank Holiday Weekend of Action and the second Westminster cruise are now available [on the website](#). It really is heartening to see how many people were involved in events and how widely they were distributed, from Lancashire and Yorkshire in the north to London via the West and East Midlands and Norfolk.

The annual Crick Boat Show took place from 24-27 May and we were grateful to the organisers for supporting FBW by providing a well-located stand and a speaking slot and by helping to promote the campaign. We were also exceedingly grateful to the FBW members who generously contributed their time and enthusiasm on the stand to talk to visitors, explain the campaign and encourage people to sign the petition. Despite the sometimes very wet conditions underfoot the show was well attended and a great number of good conversations resulted. The Special Talk on FBW on the Saturday by Mike Wills (IWA National Chair) was also well received. Overall it was surprising to realise the low level of awareness of the funding situation of the waterways even among boaters, and all who were involved agreed it was a very worthwhile exercise.

Coinciding with the Crick Boat Show, FBW was also well represented at both the Tall Ships Festival in Gloucester and the BCN Society's annual Marathon Challenge. Photos of these and other events can be seen [here](#).

The programme of events over summer where FBW will have a presence is [here](#). Please do support these events, and also let us know if you could promote FBW at other events. And please send us as many photos as possible to help us keep a photographic record of activity.

IWA Boaters' Survey

In support of FBW, IWA asked boaters for their views on the state of the inland waterways network and how it impacted on their cruising in 2023. The survey was intended both to provide a snapshot of current conditions and as a benchmark to enable the identification of future deterioration if funding continues to be inadequate. As with FBW, it covered all navigations in Britain, and it gathered crucial insight into various aspects such as

condition of locks, depth of water, ease of mooring and provision of services. 726 boaters responded anonymously during March and painted a picture of declining condition since their previous cruises and in the long term over the total period that they had been boating. This really does back up FBW's argument that our waterways are already deteriorating and action is needed urgently.

You can read the IWA press release about the results of the survey and a summary of the results [here](#).

FBW Volunteer Roles

Thank you to the many people who have volunteered to help the campaign in many different ways. Recently the steering group has been delighted to welcome Stephen Busby as volunteer Project Manager, and Laura Kite as a volunteer working to increase membership of FBW.

Further volunteers would be of great assistance to the group who have run the campaign for the last 12 months, as we still need more resources to keep pushing forward. Please have a [look](#) at the areas where we particularly need more support and get in touch if you can help.

FBW Membership

FBW now has over 130 member organisations, which is excellent but we need even more, particularly those who have non boating interests in the waterways. Please do encourage any organisation with an interest in the inland waterways to join FBW and let us have suggestions for those we should invite by emailing membership@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk

And of course, please do keep encouraging signatures on the petition, attending events, supporting FBW on social media and raising awareness as widely as possible. Please send photos of all your FBW activities to info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk.

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