



Fund Britain's Waterways welcomes the opportunity to talk to a new Government

Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW) welcomes the opportunity that the general election brings to speak to a new government and reinforce the widely acknowledged benefits that our inland waterways provide.

FBW recognises that the impact and cost of Covid and the Ukraine War has left the country's financial position in a poor state. Both the Labour and Conservative parties have made it clear that if elected they do not intend to raise taxes and that to balance the books spending will be very tightly controlled.

Health, education and security are obvious and important areas in need of funding and cost many billions of pounds. To fund our inland waterways properly would cost a small (in government terms) investment measured in millions not billions of pounds. In return, the country continues to obtain billions of pounds of benefits for health, economic and environmental benefits much of which in less well-off areas.

Government spending needs to be carefully targeted to achieve best value. The return achieved from a small additional investment in waterways makes it money exceedingly well spent.

We are already seeing the waterways deteriorating and businesses suffering. If underinvestment continues this will become worse until a tipping point is reached and waterways have to be closed, wasting the benefits as well as the millions of hours of volunteer time and millions of pounds of public money that have gone into the current network.

Les Etheridge, Chair of FBW, said "FBW welcomes the opportunity to speak to a new government after the general election. There will be many new faces at Westminster and our members look forward to talking with their local MP and illustrating the worth of our inland waterways."

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

The benefits of Britain's inland waterways are documented in:

- The latest [British Marine Economic Benefits report \(April 2024\)](#) which includes:

The combined economic contribution of the inland boating sector and its wider associated tourism generated in the UK was £7.6bn in total for the year 2022/23. (Includes - £1.6bn from inland marine industry plus £6bn from wider tourism generated by expenditure of those participating in inland boating and other inland watersports on non-boating goods and services such as food and hospitality)

Employment - the inland marine industry provides 41,166 total jobs. However, wider tourism associated with inland boating provides 295,886 jobs - so not only does inland boating directly employ over 41,000 people but it supports almost a further 300,000 jobs through its associated wider tourism.

- ['Waterways for Today' report](#) published by the Inland Waterways Association (November 2022)
- ['Valuing Our Waterways' report](#) published by the Canal & River Trust with social value experts Simetrica-Jacobs, with all methodology aligning with 2022 HM Treasury Green Book valuation techniques (November 2022)

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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