



Fund Britain's Waterways Update, November 2024

The need for investment was a highlight of the Chancellor's Budget but sadly no mention was made of the need for investment in our inland waterways. The good news was that no funding cuts were announced. FBW has issued a press release which you can read [here](#).

On Wednesday 20 November between 10:30 and 13:00 we are holding a session with the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) at which MLC Chief Executive Paul Burrows will answer questions submitted in advance by FBW members. The session will be online and FBW members will be able to watch on MS Teams by registering using this [link](#). The questions will be available on the website shortly.

The social media push took place in early October and signatures on the petition are now over 53,000 but many more are still required. A big thank you to all members and others who took part including the following. Apologies if we have missed anybody, but if you posted and we haven't spotted it please let us know.

Angling Trust
Basingstoke Canal Society
British Marine
Buckingham Canal Society
Calder Navigation Society
CRT
CRT Boating
CRT Wales & South West
Fox Narrowboats
Heather Wastie
IWA
IWA Shrewsbury District & North Wales Branch
Kev Maslin
London Canal Museum
Minimal List
NABO
Paula Syred
Valentina Recla
WRG

Thank you also to those who have offered to display an FBW banner. The more banners we can display in public places the better so if you have somewhere suitable please let us know at info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk. A selection of photographs of banners can be seen [here](#).

Plans for 2025 are developing and will include a Westminster Cruise on 7 May backed up with a reception for MPs and Lords so that they can hear about the campaign and see the boats outside on the river. Details will be on the website shortly, but boaters who wish to join the cruise or a subsequent crossing of the Wash can express their interest by emailing Frances and Andrew Phasey at theoldmainline@fastmail.fm. The more boats we have on the cruise the stronger the point we make, so please consider joining what will be a boating experience of a lifetime.

Tony Hales, former Chair of British Waterways and initial Chair of CRT, has produced a video for FBW which can be viewed [here](#). In the press release accompanying her final report as Waterways Ombudsman Sarah Daniel said

“The waterways are cherished by many and the passion for their upkeep is clear from complainants and the Trust alike. It is becoming apparent how difficult it is going to be for the Trust to maintain standards and services with dwindling resources and increasing demand and I wish them well in managing this.”

The combination of Tony and Sarah’s comments reinforces to me why a review of government funding for our inland waterways is so important.

With boater satisfaction at an all-time low with CRT, it is pleasing to see them starting to take measures to improve the maintenance situation starting with a programme to repair all the broken paddles. CRT had stopped publishing data on the number of unplanned navigation closure days after 2019/20. FBW is pleased that CRT has promised to resume publishing this data and also provided us with the missing data, which clearly illustrates why boater satisfaction has declined sharply.

FBW relies on volunteers to run the campaign, and we need more. Please see [volunteer vacancies](#). In particular we want to sign up local authorities as FBW members. We need a volunteer to contact local authorities and ask them to join. Could this be you or somebody in your organisation?

Our volunteers will be active at Floodex and the Waterways Management Show at Excel in London on 27 and 28 November, promoting the campaign on stand C51 and also making presentations in the Waterways Theatre at 13:30 on the Wednesday and 11:30 on the Thursday. There is free entry to the show and your support would be very welcome. Details of the show available [here](#).

We would like to organise additional events such as walks to publicise the campaign. Could you organise an event? Let us know so we can help publicise it and display your photos afterwards.

FBW has been funded from donations from member organisations and individuals for which we are very grateful. Current funds are around £4,000. We are trying to arrange a reception at Westminster next year to get the FBW message across to MPs face to face. Receptions at Westminster are very expensive, and we need to raise funds to meet the costs. To make a donation please either make a bank transfer (which avoids any costs) by requesting bank details from info@fundbritainwaterways.org.uk or use this [link](#). Thank you for your support.

Thank you in advance for your offers of help and support.

Les Etheridge, Chair of Fund Britain's Waterways
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