

MEDIA RELEASE



For immediate release

Date: 10 December 2024

Extension to Navigation welcomed at meeting with Middle Level CEO

Representatives from the Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW) coalition held a detailed discussion with the Chief Executive of the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC), Paul Burrows on 20th November who addressed a range of questions that had been raised by FBW members. Topics ranged from MLC finances, strategy, fees and customer facilities following the introduction of boat licencing in 2020. FBW was represented by members with specific knowledge of the Middle Level Navigations, including John Revell, Simon Judge, Anne Husar and Paula Syred.

FBW members welcomed the MLC plans to further improve the facilities for boaters. The extension of navigation further along Monks Lode was particularly welcomed at a time when other navigation authorities are struggling to keep waterways open.

Paul emphasised the link between flood protection and navigation on the Middle Level and how safety must always come first. This was why Salters Lode Lock although fully operational had to remain closed earlier in 2024 until the dredging of the Denver Crossing had been completed - silt from the dredging work could have otherwise resulted in a log getting stuck in the flood gates with potentially disastrous results.

Climate change was recognised as a major challenge for MLC, particularly given that key infrastructure is reaching end of life and there are important choices ahead. There are real concerns that the level of investment required will be beyond the reach of local ratepayers and users of their waterways. The level of public investment needs to be reconsidered.

Detailed notes of the meeting can be found on the [FBW website](#) and a recording of the session will also be available.

Les Etheridge, Chair of FBW said

"I must congratulate Paul Burrows on the energy and commitment he brings to his role. The Middle Level being below sea level makes it particularly vulnerable to flooding and adds to the challenges. I wish Paul and the MLC well with their ideas and plans to increase the level of public benefit and economic growth including from the opportunities that the planned Fens Reservoir would provide"

Paul Burrows, CEO of MLC said

"I'd like to thank the Fund Britain's Waterways coalition for hosting me and for the support. We have a unique navigable system on the Middle Level and whilst the investment challenges ahead are there, I'm keen that we work with the boating community to continue to develop and deliver bite-sized and sustainable improvements that I recognise are needed."

ENDS

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 140 members representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways.

FBW's wider membership were able to watch a livestream of the event and a summary of the discussion and a recording will be published on FBW's website shortly.

FBW plans for 2025 include similar discussions with other inland navigation authorities as well as a campaign cruise to highlight the impact of insufficient funding for Britain's 5,000 miles of inland waterways.

Boaters attending IWA Canalway Cavalcade will be joining a Campaign Cruise past the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday 7th May to coincide with a reception for MPs and Lords in a room overlooking the River Thames. Parliamentarians will be invited to attend and express their support for the continued maintenance of the waterways to enable them to keep on delivering economic, health, environmental and well-being benefits.

For further information:

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