

PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release

Date: 12th March 2025

Fund Britain's Waterways flotilla to Westminster and beyond

A flotilla of more than 30 boats will be travelling in convoy up the River Thames and standing off the Palace of Westminster in one more push from [Fund Britain's Waterways](#) (FBW) to urge government to review waterways funding.

Support the FBW Flotilla in Gainsborough on 1st April 2025

The journey begins with a group of six boats setting off from Strawberry Island Boat Club in Doncaster on 29th March 2025 as the start of the major FBW campaign cruise to and beyond the heart of government, culminating outside the Palace of Westminster on 7th May before continuing to the east of England. This year's flotilla is led by Hazel Owen, Chair of the AWCC (Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs) and a member of the FBW steering group. It will take the initial group of boats 21 days to cover the 278 miles and 172 locks to London.

There is still the chance to join the flotilla [1].

The boats will join the tidal River Trent at Keadby on 1st April and progress upstream. At around 8:30 a.m. on 1st April, boats from the Chesterfield Canal at West Stockwith will join the flotilla. The combined flotilla will then pass through Gainsborough around 10:00 a.m., where they will be greeted by more boats and supporters on land. **Please note: this is a "passing through" event due to tidal schedules**, so make sure to be at the river pathways near the bridge in Gainsborough by 9:30 a.m. If you're able, you could also visit West Stockwith at 8:00 a.m. to catch the flotilla as it sets out.

Support the FBW flotilla along the way

The Gainsborough event is the first of many leading up to the main Campaign Cruise at Westminster. Details of the schedule will be updated at <https://waterways.org.uk/fbw-campaign-cruise>. You can follow progress by joining the Facebook group [Fund Britain's Waterways – Cruises for 2025](#).

On Wednesday 7th May 2025 the complete flotilla is scheduled to arrive in Westminster from 10:30 a.m., with the main gathering off the Palace of Westminster at 11:00 a.m. The boaters would appreciate support from as many people on Westminster Bridge as possible.

From Westminster the FBW flotilla will continue its journey north and cross the Wash to the Anglian waterways, drawing attention across the country to the ongoing need for investment and support for Britain's inland waterways. The initial group of boats is scheduled to return to Doncaster in August, 20 weeks after setting off.

The FBW Campaign

The FBW campaign was launched in 2023 to highlight the severe underfunding and deteriorating condition of the country's network of canals and navigable rivers. The campaign continues to seek support of parliamentarians and the general public to secure the necessary resources for the upkeep of these vital waterways.

Hazel Owen, who will lead the flotilla, said: "The need for greater investment in our waterways has never been clearer. This flotilla is not just about boats; it represents the voices of everyone who cares about the future of our canals and rivers. We must show Parliament that we are serious about safeguarding these precious resources."

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Notes to editors

[1] **To take part in the Cruise on a boat in the flotilla:** For details please contact Andrew Phasey on info@funbritainswaterways.org.uk or 07850 753633.

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 over 150 members representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways.

Contact:

For further information about Fund Britain's Waterways, contact info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk