



FUND BRITAIN'S WATERWAYS

Fund Britain's Waterways Update, April 2025

The 2025 Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW) campaign cruise is under way! And FBW needs **YOUR** help to get as much attention as possible. Please read on to see how you can support us – and please do pass the message on to colleagues, members, customers and other contacts.



Boats dressed up for the launch at Strawberry Island Boat Club (credit: Duncan Wright)

On 29 March 2025 seven boats set off from Strawberry Island Boat Club, Doncaster, waved off by Doncaster Lady Mayor Ros Jones, Canal & River Trust director Yorkshire & North East Sean McGinley, and the Commodore, President and flag officers of the club. The flotilla is led by Hazel Owen, Chair of the Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs and a member of the FBW steering group.

More boats turned out to greet the flotilla on the River Trent at Gainsborough on 1 April and Newark on 2 April. Both events attracted coverage on BBC regional television news as well as BBC and independent radio. You can watch the coverage of the Gainsborough event [here](#).



The augmented flotilla passing through Gainsborough on 1 April 2025
(credit Rachel Eglinton, Be Seen Be Green Photography)

Six of these boats will journey for 278 miles and through 172 locks to London, being joined by others and attending events along the way before reaching IWA Canalway Cavalcade in Little Venice over the Bank Holiday weekend 3-5 May.

The complete flotilla of more than 30 boats will then travel in convoy up the River Thames and stand off the Palace of Westminster at 11.00 a.m. on Wednesday 7 May. From Westminster the flotilla will head downstream again to West India Docks for a debrief onboard the ship belonging to new FBW member [Theatreship](#).

The boats will then turn north again and make their way to Boston before crossing the Wash to Wisbech and the Anglian waterways, drawing attention across the country to the ongoing need for investment and support for Britain's inland waterways.

The schedule for the cruise to and beyond Westminster can be found [here](#) and a photo report on its progress to date [here](#). You can follow the flotilla by joining the Facebook group [Fund Britain's Waterways – Cruises for 2025](#).

HOW TO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN CRUISE

1. Come to Westminster Bridge on 7 May

We need as many people as possible to show their support on Westminster Bridge from 10:30 a.m. on the day. Boats will travel in convoy up the River Thames, arriving from 10:30 a.m., with the main gathering for viewing by Parliamentarians from the terrace of the Palace of Westminster at 11:00 a.m. Please come along if you can to cheer the flotilla on and engage with passers-by.

If you can come to Westminster Bridge, please contact Frances Phasey on 07734 038297 to join the supporters' WhatsApp group so that you will be updated on the progress of the boats and their expected time of arrival at Westminster.

2. Invite your MP to the terrace on 7 May

Write to your MP highlighting the benefits of waterways, the threat to them and the FBW campaign, and invite them to join key FBW people on the terrace to watch the campaign cruise on 7 May (a template letter for MPs is at <https://waterways.org.uk/FBW-MP-letter-2025>).

3. Take part in the social media push leading up to 7 May

We are asking all FBW members and supporters to join us in posting the same message at the same time on each of the ten days leading up to the Westminster cruise. The message is simple: we need to make sure the government knows that the public want them to protect our canals and rivers.

We ask you to post from your organisation's and/or your own Twitter/X and Facebook accounts using text and photos provided by FBW, as close as possible to 12 noon on each day from Monday 28 April to Tuesday 6 May inclusive. On the day of the cruise 7 May please post as early in the day as possible.

The text and photos to use will be uploaded to the FBW website in advance, at www.waterways.org.uk/fbw2025cruise

After the cruise please do continue to like and share posts with the #FundBritainsWaterways hashtag.

4. Bring your boat to join the flotilla

For details of how to take part please contact Andrew Phasey on theoldmainline@fastmail.fm or 07850 753633.

Thank you for supporting FBW in one more push to get our message across as the Government is finalising its Spending Review, and thank you in advance for your help.

Sent on behalf of the Fund Britain's Waterways steering group

info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk



A campaigner on the Grand Union Canal en route to London (credit: Allyson Marr)