

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: 11th July 2025

Fund Britain's Waterways campaigning on the Walsall Canal

On Saturday 12th July 2025 a convoy of narrowboats will be cruising the Walsall Canal as part of an Explorer Cruise run by the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society (BCNS), flying the flags of the Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW) campaign. This is the first time that such a large group of boats has visited the canal since its reopening by the Canal & River Trust after a 10-month cleanup of a 12-mile stretch following a toxic chemical spill in August 2024. The boaters will be aiming to highlight the many benefits the canal provides and to encourage and promote its use – not only for boating but also for walking, jogging, cycling, angling, canoeing and more.

The Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW) coalition has been campaigning since June 2023 for an increase in government funding of our canals and rivers to avert their decline, and to promote awareness of the huge economic, environmental, and social well-being value they provide. This year the campaign has been gathering ever wider public support through a long-running and varied campaign cruise.

The journey began with an initial group of boats setting off from Doncaster on 29th March which grew to a 26-strong flotilla in London delivering a clear message to Government from the Thames on 7th May. Since then the boats took different routes to spread awareness across the country of the value of our waterways and the challenges they face, some racking up over 600 miles and 365 locks on their way to Boston, where they met before a spectacular mass crossing of the Wash on 25th June to the Fenland and Middle Level waterways. The flotilla has now split up with boats making their way to various destinations, and a couple of the members are participating in the current Explorer Cruise.

Stephen Busby, leader of the Explorer Cruise and volunteer project manager for FBW, said: "Our Explorer Cruise is going to be some of the first boats and certainly the first convoy of boats down the Walsall Canal since its reopening. Through these cruises we

aim to show people under-used parts and hidden gems of the canals across Birmingham and the wider West Midlands, and what a hugely valuable resource we have on our doorstep. The BCNS is a member and committed supporter of FBW, and on this cruise we will be flying the FBW flags to draw attention to the need to fight for funding to secure the future of all our canals and rivers.”

ENDS

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

Photographs accompanying this release:



1. Launch of the 2025 FBW campaign cruise at Strawberry Island Boat Club, Doncaster, 29 March 2025 (credit: Duncan Wright)



2. FBW flotilla in Gainsborough, 1 April 2025 (credit: Stephen Busby)



3. FBW flotilla taking the message to Parliament, 7 May 2025 (credit: Liz Rayner)



4. FBW flotilla crossing the Wash, 25 June 2025 (credit: Shirley Sefton)



5. FBW flotilla on a sandbank in the Wash waiting for the tide during the crossing on 25 June 2025 (credit: Hazel Owen)

Contact:

For further information about the Explorer Cruise on 12th July, contact Stephen Busby (stephen.j.busby@gmail.com, 07486 984677)

For more information about the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society, please visit <https://bcnsociety.com/>

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