



Steering Group Members, December 2025



Hazel Owen, AWCC National Chair and Chair of Fund Britain's Waterways

Hi, I'm Hazel, a seasoned inland waterways enthusiast with over 20 years of experience navigating our beautiful water systems. Having made Strawberry Island my home base in the North East of the waterways system, I have explored and cruised a significant portion of the inland waterways, becoming well-versed in their intricacies and hidden gems.

It is my love for these waterways that led to my involvement with the Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs (AWCC), where I currently hold the esteemed position of National Chair. Subsequently becoming involved in the Fund Britain's Waterways Campaign, advocating for proper funding and resources to ensure the preservation and enhancement of our cherished waterways.

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Ed Helps, British Marine Inland Association Chair

I am currently the Chair of the British Marine Inland Association following a 6 year tenure on the British Marine and Boat Shows boards. Prior to semi-retirement I was Managing Director of ABC Leisure Group and remain a non-executive board director. I am a Trustee of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Society and was a Trustee of the Droitwich Canals Trust during its restoration. I have had a lifelong relationship with canals having been a canoeist competing on many canals around the country.

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Anne Husar, NABO Chair

My Fund Britain's Waterways credentials include nearly 20 years liveaboard on our 70ft narrowboat during which time we've cruised many of the English canals and rivers, also most of the European ones too. A long-time NABO Council member and former Chair, a boater recently described me as a "passionate" supporter of the canals; I'll accept that.

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Sue O'Hare, IWA Trustee and Chair of Navigation Committee

My love of waterways started by reading Arthur Ransome books and watching ships on the River Ribble. Various hire boats on the Norfolk Broads and then the canals led to a shared ownership narrowboat and eventually a boat of our own just before the Covid-19 pandemic. I've been a member of IWA's Navigation Committee since 2016 and an IWA Trustee since 2020, and in 2022 I was appointed Navigation Committee Chair.

As a teenager I heard about a section of the Rochdale Canal outside Manchester being filled in to create a shallow water park, and was horrified by the lack of forward thinking and sheer waste of potential. Ever since then I have been strongly motivated to make sure our waterways are properly valued as the enormous asset they are and never wasted again.

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Andrew Phasey, RYA

Andrew Phasey represents the Royal Yachting Association on the FBW steering group. Andrew is an enthusiastic river and canal boater in the UK and Europe. He has a strong belief in waterways being available for all, and is committed to supporting the campaign in every way for as long as it may take.

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Mike Wills, IWA National Chair

I became chair of IWA in February 2024 but have been fascinated by the inland waterways since my teens. Early experiences included digging out a disused lock and helping to raise a sunken wooden narrowboat which was subsequently converted into a houseboat. I have had dozens of narrowboat holidays, am a regular towpath walker and in 2019 I purchased part of a worsted mill and wharf on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal which I have restored to create a four-storey house. I am a Chartered Accountant with a wide range of experience including the senior civil service, private practice and non-executive directorship and consultancy. My commercial experience and my passion for the waterways has encouraged me to try to raise their public profile, encourage restoration, and seek to influence those who can support the wonderful national asset which is our inland waterways.

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