

# MEDIA RELEASE



## FUND BRITAIN'S WATERWAYS

*For immediate release*

**Date: 16 September 2024**

### **Fund Britain's Waterways representation to the Autumn Budget 2024**

Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW) has responded to an HM Treasury Stakeholder Survey requesting representations to the Autumn Budget 2024 and/or the Spending Review.

FBW's aim in responding is to reinforce the widely acknowledged benefits that our inland waterways provide, to explain the need for increased government funding, and to request an urgent and comprehensive review of inland waterway funding.

FBW recognises the poor state of the country's financial position. Yet to fund our inland waterways properly would cost a small (in government terms) investment measured in millions not billions of pounds. In return the country will continue to obtain billions of pounds of benefits for health, economic and environmental benefits, much of the benefits in less well-off areas.

Government spending needs to be carefully targeted to achieve best value. The return achieved from a small additional investment in waterways makes it money exceedingly well spent.

We are already seeing the waterways deteriorating and businesses suffering. If underinvestment continues this will become worse until a tipping point is reached and waterways have to be closed, wasting the benefits as well as the millions of hours of volunteer time and millions of pounds of public money that have gone into the current network.

FBW has therefore requested that:

1. the importance of our inland waterways as a unique national asset and part of the national infrastructure are recognised
2. the deterioration in condition that is already happening is acknowledged
3. a comprehensive review of government funding for all our inland waterways should be carried out as a matter of urgency, with the aim of defining a sustainable funding solution which will enable the current benefits of our canals and rivers to be maintained and enhanced for future generations.

Les Etheridge, Chair of FBW said “FBW welcomes the opportunity to make a representation to HM Treasury. Without urgent action the inland waterway network will be in serious jeopardy. If the condition of waterways continues to deteriorate, waterways will ultimately have to be closed, businesses will be harmed and communities placed at risk.”

**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 130 member organisations representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways, and has secured over 50,000 signatures on its public petition.

Founding members of the Fund Britain’s Waterways campaign include:

- The Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs
- British Marine
- The Inland Waterways Association
- The National Association of Boat Owners
- The Royal Yachting Association.

For further information about Fund Britain’s Waterways, email [info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk](mailto:info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk)

## **References**

The benefits of Britain’s inland waterways are documented in:

1. The latest [British Marine Economic Benefits report \(April 2024\)](#) which includes:

The combined economic contribution of the inland boating sector and its wider associated tourism generated the UK was £7.6bn in total for the year 2022/23 (the figure includes £1.6bn from the inland marine industry plus £6bn from wider tourism generated by expenditure of those participating in inland boating and other inland watersports on non-boating goods and services such as food and hospitality)

Employment - the inland marine industry provides 41,166 total jobs. In addition, wider tourism associated with inland boating provides 295,886 jobs, so not only does inland boating directly employ over 41,000 people but it also supports almost a further 300,000 jobs through its associated wider tourism.

2. [‘Waterways for Today’ report](#) published by the Inland Waterways Association (November 2022)

3. [‘Valuing Our Waterways’ report](#) published by the Canal & River Trust with social value experts Simetrica-Jacobs, with all methodology aligning with 2022 HM Treasury Green Book valuation techniques (November 2022)
4. [Read the full submission here.](#)