



PRESS RELEASE

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BOAT OWNERS' VIEWS SURVEY: YOU SAID, WE DID

The Canal & River Trust is launching its 2017 national Boat Owners' Views Survey, which is sent out to a third of its boat licence holders, and is calling on boaters to make their voices heard.

The survey helps shape the charity's actions and, following last year's survey, the Trust has used the feedback it received from boaters to inform decisions about things that matter most to boaters:

- The number one priority for boaters is more investment in general waterways upkeep, and this has increased to £128 million in 2015/16, up 8% on 2014/15.
- The Trust will be publishing winter works plans earlier to give boaters more chance to comment and plan ahead.
- The Trust is carrying out a review of its vegetation management programme including boater feedback.
- The charity recognises it needs to meet the needs of both London-based boaters and visitors and is in discussions with local partners and stakeholders to make the best use of the water, as well as installing moorings rings, water points and other facilities.
- There have been improvements in London to create more moorable space for different types of boater, including a trial of pre-bookable moorings.
- The Trust is investigating ways to improve the reach of its popular Boaters' Update, which is currently read by 30,500 people.
- To improve links with the boating community the Trust is aiming to increase the amount of staff on Boating Buddy trips plus carrying out a survey of staff and boaters to see how the programme can be more effective.
- The boat licensing process has been simplified and can be carried out online, with 28,000 boaters registered.
- The boating pages on the Trust's website will be relaunched in the spring.
- In the summer a set of updated online Boaters Guides with up-to-date information in downloadable and printable journey guides will be launched to help boaters plan.
- New methods of direct communications with boaters are being trialled.

Mike Grimes, head of boating at the Canal & River Trust, said: "Boaters' feedback is incredibly important to us, and the Boat Owners' Views Survey provides an invaluable source of information

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straight from the horse's mouth. Your views really do make a difference and the responses we had last year informed where we focused on making changes. I hope that you're able to see the positive effect some of them are already having. There's always room for improvement and I'm confident that, by listening to you and working together, we can make things better for both boaters and the Trust."

In March the Trust will be asking around a third of boaters for their opinions on a range of topics including: how boaters use Trust's waterways and what their experience of them is like; the services provided for boaters such as moorings, facilities and the licence renewal process; the ways they would like to receive information; and their views on how well they feel the Trust is caring for the waterways. Using the feedback from boaters the charity will identify what is working well and what needs to be improved upon so improvements can be prioritised.

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