



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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26 May 2017

### **BOAT OWNERS' SURVEY SHOWS INCREASE IN SATISFACTION**

The Canal & River Trust's latest Boat Owners' Views survey shows that boaters satisfaction with its waterways has increased in the past year together with the proportion of boaters who would recommend the charity's waterways to others and the number who think that the upkeep of the waterways has continued to improve.

In 2017's survey 76% of the 1,160 respondents said they were happy with their cruising experience, up from 68% in 2016. The improving trend was also reflected in the numbers of boaters who would recommend the Trust's waterways to others, which leapt from 69% in 2016 to 78% in this year's survey.

There was some regional variation with boaters most satisfied in Wales & Borders and least satisfied in London, perhaps reflecting the influx of boats putting pressure on the Capital's waterways. London was also the waterway where the fewest number of boaters would recommend the waterway to others – just 39%.

In general boaters feel they know the charity better (2017: 57%; 2016: 48%) and feel more favourable to the Trust (2017: 59%; 2016: 54%), while there has been a slight increase in the number of boaters who trust the charity to look after the waterways, up from 63% to 65% this year. Opinions about the overall upkeep of the waterways continue to improve, with 77% of boaters rating them OK to excellent (2016: 75%).

Jon Horsfall, interim head of boating at Canal & River Trust, said: "The Boat Owners' Views survey gets right to the heart of how boaters are feeling about us. This year it's great to see that boaters are happier with how things are, and that they would recommend our waterways to others.

"That's not to say that there isn't still work to do. The Boat Owners' Views survey helps us identify where things aren't going quite so well – for example in London where the growth in boating has put pressure of moorings and facilities. The work underway to create a mooring strategy for London will help to address many of the concerns that boaters have there.

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“We’ve been listening to the feedback we’ve got from boaters and are involving licence holders in many of our planning decisions. What boaters say really does make a difference and helps us immensely in the work we do – boaters often act as the eyes and ears of the waterways and help us respond quickly to problems so I’d urge anyone with suggestions to get in touch.

“The survey findings help us focus on the issues that matter most to boaters, for example this year we’re planning on spending £26.9m on dredging and repairs to bridges and embankments. Dredging is planned across the network, at sites including the Macclesfield, Chesterfield, Lancaster and Grand Union amongst others, with a fund set aside for spot dredging. We’re also going to be spending £17.4m on other works including replacing 180 lock gates with a focus on the West Midlands, South East and Manchester & Pennine regions. Your feedback has played an important part in determining this work.”

We’ll be taking an in-depth look at the results to see what needs to be improved upon and what is working well so that we can continue to focus on improving the experience of boaters.

The survey, which was sent to a third of the Trust’s boat licence holders, was carried out by the independent research consultancy BDRC Continental in March and April 2017. It will be repeated each year with the aim of having contacted the majority of boaters on the Trust’s waters in each three-year cycle.

The Boat Owners’ Views survey report will be published on the Trust’s website in due course.

Boaters can get in touch with the Trust by [filling out a webform](#), calling 0303 040 4040, tweeting [@CRTcontactus](#) or getting involved in a local user forum.

**ENDS**

**For further media requests please contact:**

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