



PRESS RELEASE

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CANAL & RIVER TRUST INTRODUCES NEW LICENCE FOR BOAT RENTING

The Canal & River Trust is introducing a new letting licence to ensure the safety of the increasing number of people living on rented boats.

The charity is responding to the numbers of boats for rent in London and further afield as people try to find alternatives to rising housing costs. A second market has sprung up with the advent of website letting sites which regularly feature listings of boats for rent, while anecdotal evidence from boaters shows that it's becoming more common.

Matthew Symonds, boating strategy and engagement manager at Canal & River Trust, explains: "Living afloat can be a great lifestyle choice but too often there are frightening accidents, from carbon monoxide poisoning to fires and boats sinking. Boat owners may not be aware that they have greater responsibilities to renters than they would if they were using the boat themselves, and it's vital that those renting boats are protected by more rigorous standards to ensure they are safe."

From 12 June 2017 boat owners will be able to apply for a Static Letting Licence for static boats which will cover all types of boat rental, including long-term renting, Airbnb-style short breaks, and overnight stays. The boat owner will need to have a permanent mooring and should talk to their local planning authority to see if planning permission is needed. The price will be the same as for the current Self-Drive Holiday Hire licence.

The Static Letting Licence has more rigorous requirements to make sure that both the boat is safe and that potential renters are fully briefed before spending a night on board. Boat owners will be required to have: proof of adequate insurance; a Non-Private Boat Safety Scheme Certificate; a detailed handover document including emergency procedures and contact numbers; a Landlord Gas Safety Certificate; and written permission from their mooring provider.

Alongside this the charity will be introducing a new process for dealing with boat owners who may be breaching the terms of their licence by renting out their boat. If a boat is suspected of being rented out illicitly the Trust will contact the registered licence holder, as well as hand posting letters

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onto the boat itself to alert renters. The licence holder will be given 28 days to clarify the situation, cease trading if appropriate, or apply for a Static Letting Licence. After this period their licence will be revoked if they continue to rent out their boat.

Matthew continues: “Sadly we’ve heard reports of people running into trouble and this needs to stop. Any boat being rented out needs a Static Letting Licence that ensures that all the proper requirements have been met and the renters will be kept safe. We want to spread the word amongst existing and potential landlords and will be getting in touch with those who we think are renting their boat unofficially, asking them to work with us to do it above board.”

Sarah Dhanda, Chief Officer of Membership & Services at British Marine, commented: “We support the Canal & River Trust’s decision to introduce this new Licence. This new approach provides reassurance for all customers, by raising safety standards in line with those that our members already abide by.”

You can find out more about renting boats on the Trust’s website:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/boating/a-boat-of-your-own/renting-a-boat-to-live-on-or-hiring-out-your-own-boat> (details of the Static Letting Licence will be available from 12 June 2017).

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