

PRESS RELEASE

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CANAL & RIVER TRUST HIGHLIGHTS BOATERS' NEEDS TO GOVERNMENT

At a presentation to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Waterways (8 June 2021), the Canal & River Trust set out its role in meeting the needs of liveaboard boaters and highlighted areas where more support from Government and other public bodies would be beneficial.

Matthew Symonds, national boating manager at Canal & River Trust, explained the history of people working and living on boats, the reasons why people chose to live afloat today and how this has evolved, and the growing number of people now living on boats, particularly in London. Over the past ten years the Trust has seen the proportion of people living aboard boats increase from 15% in 2011 to 27% in 2020 in its annual boater survey, with overall boat numbers also rising.

The APPWG asked speakers to identify areas where the Government could provide more support for those living on the waterways. The Trust highlighted the need for accurate capturing of boaters' data as the Census does not currently separate out boaters from other travellers; to ensure public services are available to liveaboard boaters, and that service providers understand their needs; and to provide support for navigation authorities and boaters to adapt to reduce emissions from boat use to support Government net zero carbon targets.

There was a call to examine why the planning system made it difficult to create permanent residential moorings, and it was suggested that the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities could help coordinate better information to help planning authorities consider residential moorings in a more positive light. Additional support to establish more boater self-managed moorings was also requested.

Matthew Symonds, said: "Liveaboard boaters are an integral part of the boating community and have been on the water in various guises for hundreds of years. While many boaters report benefits from living on the water, close to nature and in an often tight-knit community, the lifestyle presents some unique challenges. Whilst the Trust is doing what we can to respond to

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the growth in the numbers of people living afloat, it is also important that local and national government understands their needs and act to meet them.”

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Notes to Editors

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people’s lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day www.canalrivertrust.org.uk.