

New proposals designed to remove many boats from the canals:

Save the boats in your neighbourhood

A BATTLE over the canals is going on right now. You should know about it, and have your say!

DID YOU KNOW that some 15,000 people in the UK live on the water? They live in a variety of canal boats, barges and house boats along the coast, rivers and canals.

BOATS ARE GOOD for the canal because

- Boats create a lively environment for locals and tourists to enjoy. Without boats, the canals would be empty and dull.
- Stretches of towpath that might be isolated and dangerous, especially after dark, become safer when boats moor there. The presence of inhabited boats can lead to a noticeable reduction in crime.
- Boaters act as caretakers for the canals. They often respond to and/or report problems.
- Boat dwellers represent a low-impact lifestyle close to nature. Boaters tend not to have many possessions, and use less energy than people in houses – often less than 1/4.



MOST OF the boats that you see moving all year round (and often moored on the towpath side of the canal) will be known as continuous cruisers – these boats move from place to place without any particular home mooring. Some move all over the canal network, which covers thousands of miles. Others prefer to navigate around a more limited area, due to work or family commitments.

THE RIGHT to take up such a lifestyle was granted by Parliament, on a cross party basis, by the British Waterways Act 1995 (part III section 17). But the tradition goes hundreds of years back.

SADLY, British Waterways (BW) - the body in charge of the canals - have never taken these boats to heart. BW claim that there is widespread opposition from local groups - dog-walkers, anglers, etc (but have shown no evidence for this). Now, in the latest of several attacks, BW have announced a consultation over proposals to bring in a new set of rules designed to remove many boats.

DRACONIAN and heavy-handed are some of the words used to describe these proposals. They will make it much more difficult to live on the canals. Among other consequences, the proposed rules are likely to force families with children to give up their boats. In some cases local councils will be obliged to house former boaters. Established communities will disappear. There are no winners.

PLEASE CONSIDER if you think boats are good for your neighbourhood, and submit your opinion as part of the consultation. See www.londonboaters.org - there you will find details of the proposals and how to respond, as well as videos and articles. Even if you don't agree with us, it is your right to have your views heard. Your support is appreciated.



If you do not have access to the internet, you can put your thoughts in a letter to Damian at British Waterways, 64 Clarendon Rd, Watford, WD17 1DA. London Boaters is a community-based organisation founded in 2008. E-mail: info@londonboaters.org - www.londonboaters.org