



Michael Fabricant MP

House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

Ms Rebecca Pow MP
Minister for Environmental Quality and Resilience
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

24th February 2023

Dear Rebecca,

As MPs with waterways in our constituencies, we are writing to express our support for the work of the Canal & River Trust and affirm our backing for the continuation of the funding necessary to keep our canals and river navigations safe, accessible, and attractive places.

We believe that, since it was established in 2012, with cross-party support, it has been a great success for Government, unlocking the potential of our great inland waterways to grow use and involve local people in volunteering and other healthy activities, delivering substantial public benefits and broadening its reach into more diverse communities.

Our canals and waterways play a key role in levelling-up, running through many areas of greatest need where the access to green-blue space is at a premium, providing vital opportunities for improved health and wellbeing. It has been calculated that the Trust's waterways provide over £4 billion social value annually and are a significant contributor to local economies.

The Trust is facing significant cost pressures – with its grant frozen until 2027 and its expanding programme of infrastructure resilience works, to address the potential threat to public safety from the impact of climate change on such an old and vulnerable network including 71 of the oldest reservoirs in the country and numerous high embankments overlooking densely populated areas. The Trust's network also supports other national infrastructure networks, including electricity, gas, water and telecoms networks and includes liability for hundreds of public road bridges. As a vital corridor for wildlife, it provides vital migration routes and contributes hugely to biodiversity and nature recovery.

from the Member of Parliament for the Constituency of Lichfield
including the City of Lichfield, Abbots Bromley, Alrewas, Armitage, Burntwood, Chase Terrace, Chasetown, Colton,
Fradley, Hammerwich, Handsacre, Kings Bromley, Longdon, the Ridwares, Streethay, Whittington, and Yoxall
website and email form: www.michael.fabricant.mp.co.uk



We are concerned that if sufficient ongoing funding is not provided, our waterways and towpaths will experience a spiral of decline. The network will deteriorate, it will be less safe and less popular, benefits will decline and ultimately waterways would have to close. This is an unthinkable outcome, and we are sure that you would join us in affirming that any future grant commitment will ensure that it is averted. We also believe it is vital that Defra make a decision on continued long-term funding as soon as possible to enable the Trust to take long term strategic decisions about its investment plans.

We all appreciate what a wonderful national treasure our waterways network is and we urge you to do what you can to ensure it enjoys a long-term, sustainable future.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Chair, Waterways All Party Parliamentary Group

along with

Wendy Morton
Maggie Throup
Jo Gideon
Alicia Kearns
Andrew Percy
Jason McCartney
Siobhan Baillie
Andrew Selous
Greg Smith
Heather Wheeler
Mark Garnier
Ben Everitt