

NBTA LONDON

NEWSLETTER

For the community and rights of boat dwellers

NATIONAL DEMO IN BIRMINGHAM A HUGE SUCCESS!



On a crisp winter's day in November, over one hundred boaters from across UK waterways descended on the Canal and River Trust's Birmingham office. Boaters from all over, from Macclesfield canal, Birmingham canals, to Kennet and Avon canal, Monmouth and Brecon canal to River Lea and many more waterways unified to protest against CRT's discriminatory licence fee surcharge. A few boats with banners joined us outside the office, which was really fantastic to see, and we were able to get the story into several press outlets too.

The demo was a great success and showed CRT that we will not stand by and allow them to threaten our way of life. Thank you to everyone who came or supported from afar!



FINANCIAL EXCLUSION

The process of privatisation can be witnessed in various stages on London's waterways. As visitor moorings become pre-bookable and chargeable moorings become private, the absence of boats on significant lengths of towpath in Central London is testament to the financial exclusion of boaters from these areas.

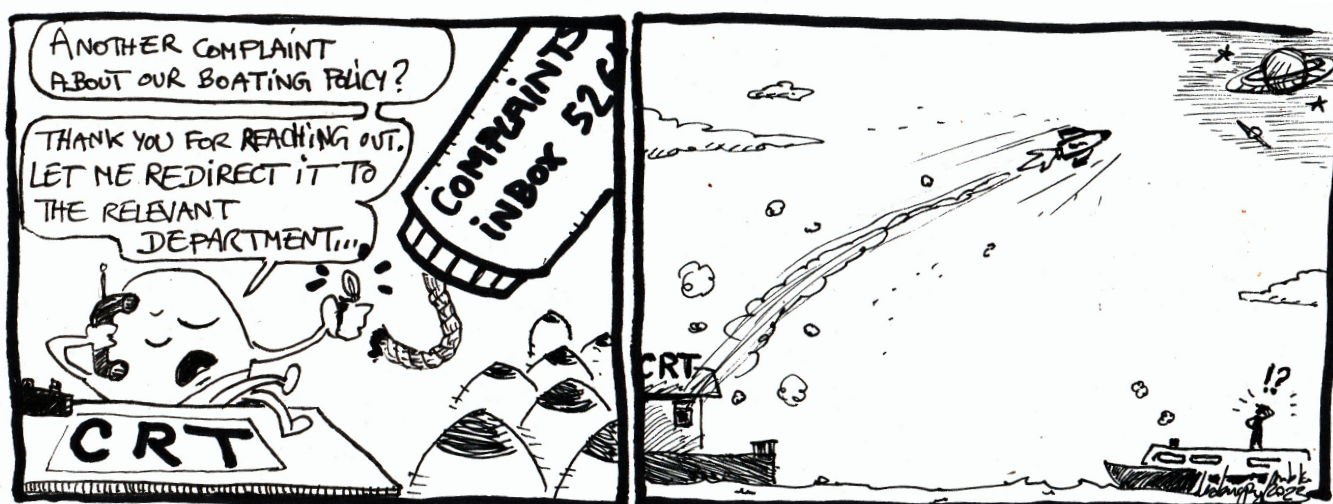
In 2016 NBTA made it explicitly clear in talks with CRT that public moorings should not be converted to private use. In August 2023, chargeable moorings at Rembrandt Gardens and Paddington Basin doubled in price overnight from £12 to £25. 80m of previous visitor moorings in Paddington Basin and 160m in Little Venice were converted to chargeable also at £25 a night, effectively £50 for two nights with a midday turnaround. Beyond the financial means of most boaters.

A Freedom of Information Request reveals pontoons in Paddington are used at half-capacity 49% of the time, bookings made across 1,200 days generated £16,000 in income. At Rembrandt Gardens 584 days generated £6,350.

While there has been high uptake of free pre-bookable mooring in Kings Cross and Angel; new chargeable moorings in Little Venice and Paddington are running at 24% capacity and have since August been underused with a total of only 218 bookings and £5,425 in revenue. These moorings are sighted by three rangers (among other duties) at a cost of £100,000.

CRT claim financial exclusion makes the system 'fair' for all boaters, giving everyone an equal opportunity. Significant lengths of pre-bookable space; 200m at Colebrook Row in Angel and 220m at Treaty St in Kings Cross may well be more democratic for the time being, but how long will they remain free? As mooring opportunities are reduced to make chargeable space, overcrowding is experienced on other parts of the network. Travelling boaters, already threatened with surcharges for lack of ownership and place are being further marginalised by the introduction of these zones.

CRT's vision for London seems to be waterways without boats.



CRT's policy is not to accept complaints about their policy.

NBTA
Boats are Homes
National Bargee Travellers Association

We are the London branch of the **National Bargee Travellers Association (NBTA)**. The NBTA is an organisation open to all and run by boaters without a home mooring. We campaign for the rights of boat dwellers.

CRT MAKES INTENTIONS FOR TRAVELLING BOATERS CLEAR WITH NEW SURCHARGE

The latest power move from the CRT is the introduction of a 25% surcharge for boats without a home mooring, a devastating decision which unfairly targets our community of travelling boaters. As some of us may remember, this is not the first time the CRT -or British Waterways before them- have attempted to implement what is essentially a punishment for our way of life, each time giving a different reason for doing so. This time around, CRT stated that the reason for this surcharge is that they need more income and we use the waterways and the facilities more than those with home moorings, a bogus statement for which they have no evidence; it could even be argued that some holiday boaters travel a further distance than most itinerant boaters. It seems somewhat hypocritical for the CRT to insist some of us to move more, then say it's our use of the waterways that means we need to pay more. At the NBTAs we believe the most honest reason behind these decisions was given in the 2000s by British Waterways, they said that there were too many boats without home moorings and this proposition of a surcharge would encourage people into moorings- which seems to us is what the CRT is attempting to do here too.

Their increased 'no mooring' zones, new chargeable moorings and now a surcharge points toward their deeply concerning intentions for our waterways. They claim they need the income from this surcharge, but it would generate less income per year than their two top earners take in a year. They claim this is about money yet they spend hundreds of thousands enforcing 'safety zones'.

Before now, no waterways authority has ever claimed that we should be charged more to generate income, we assume because it would generate an inconsequential amount, it is no different this time. The CRT is chronically mismanaged, they could generate other much more profitable streams of income if they wanted to. This is not about the money they might make from a surcharge, this is about the gentrification of our waterways, they want to physically restrict our moorings and eventually charge us out of our homes, we are undesirable and not profitable to them. This decision fundamentally discriminates against our already marginal community.

Similarly to the 'safety' zones, if we fight we can be a force to be reckoned with. This battle is larger than the 'safety' zones, please get involved.



It's been over two years since CRT decided to enforce 'no mooring' in areas of the 'safety' zones; their aim is to clear boats away from parts of the River Lea, yet boaters are continuing to resist. Boaters on mass are ignoring CRT's ridiculous 'no mooring' sites. The 'safety' zones have clearly failed.

Not for fly posting

BOATERS'

EASTER REGATTA

Join us to
 protest the Canal & River
 Trust's unfair and
 discriminatory licence fee
 surcharge with a unity
 march and community fair

March starts at
 Paddington
 Station canalside

Community fair by
 Paddington visitor
 moorings

COME BY BOOT OR BRING YOUR BOAT

12
 NOON



[bargee-traveller.org.uk/
 boaters-easter-regatta](http://bargee-traveller.org.uk/boaters-easter-regatta)

SATURDAY
 30
 MARCH

stopboatlicencediscrimination@gmail.com