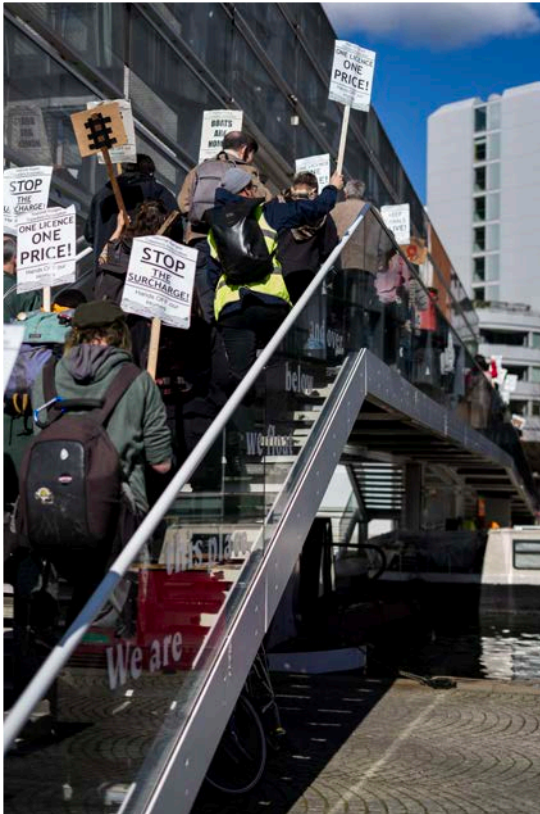




BOATERS COME TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY AT THE EASTER REGATTA



Hundreds of boaters and supporters alike turned out for this demonstration of community, solidarity and resistance to CRT's plans to dispossess us from our homes on the water. Before we arrived, Paddington Basin was empty, but on the day we demonstrated exactly what boaters mean to the waterways by filling it with life, celebration and a sense of community.

We sincerely hope that CRT will sit down with boaters, drop clearly discriminatory policies like this licence surcharge and ensure that our contribution to the waterways is acknowledged, and way of life respected. However, if they do not, boaters will continue to resist their plans fiercely. CRT has wanted us gone for a long time now, but we're still here - our lives may be nomadic, but our community is here to stay.

See pages 4 and 5 for Easter Regatta photo special!

WE MUST CONTINUE TO FIGHT THE **SURCHARGE**

Last April Fool's Day was the beginning of the Canal & River Trust (CRT) charging boats for not having a home mooring. However, this is no April Fool's joke!

If this goes unchallenged, it will just be the beginning of CRT using the price of a licence to get rid of boats without home moorings. Each year, the price for boats without home moorings will go up more than for boats with a home mooring. In 2002 British Waterways (the predecessor to CRT) proposed to charge boats without home moorings 250% more than boats with moorings. If we let CRT get away with this, there is nothing to stop it from pricing us off the waterways. CRT has always wanted to get rid of our way of life and this could be the way it achieves its goal. We must not let CRT price us off the waterways.

Most boaters are against this differential licence pricing. CRT's own survey showed that over 97% of boat owners without home moorings were against the charge and 60% of all boaters preferred options that didn't charge people for not having a home mooring.

The NBTA, IWA, NABO and others have made efforts to explain to CRT that charging for not having a home mooring is discriminatory, unjustified and unwanted. This has not changed CRT's mind. CRT will simply not be persuaded by words. Each time, CRT's arguments are shown to have no substance, just more cut and paste nonsense. We must use the leverage we have at our disposal to show CRT that its best option is to stop this so-called 'surcharge' on boats without home moorings.

So what leverage do we have?

Fundamentally, we need to make it more desirable for CRT to stop the 'surcharge' than to continue with it. To make it less desirable, we need to hit CRT where it hurts; by undermining its public image and its income.

The best means we have at our disposal to damage CRT's income is to carry out a licence

strike. However, for a licence strike to have an impact, we need relatively large numbers. At the moment, we don't have the numbers. That's why it is so important to express your interest in making it happen by clicking this link and signing up: <http://tinyurl.com/licencestrike>

Other than finances, the other thing CRT holds in high esteem is its public image. The whole premise of CRT's existence is based on its "charity doing charitable work" public image, and of course its donations are linked to how people view it. This is why it spends millions of pounds on PR events and social media etc*. Therefore, as long as CRT continues with its plan to charge boats for not having a home mooring, we will work tirelessly to undermine its public image. Most of us don't want to be undermining CRT but as this is one of the best tactics for leverage we have, we must!

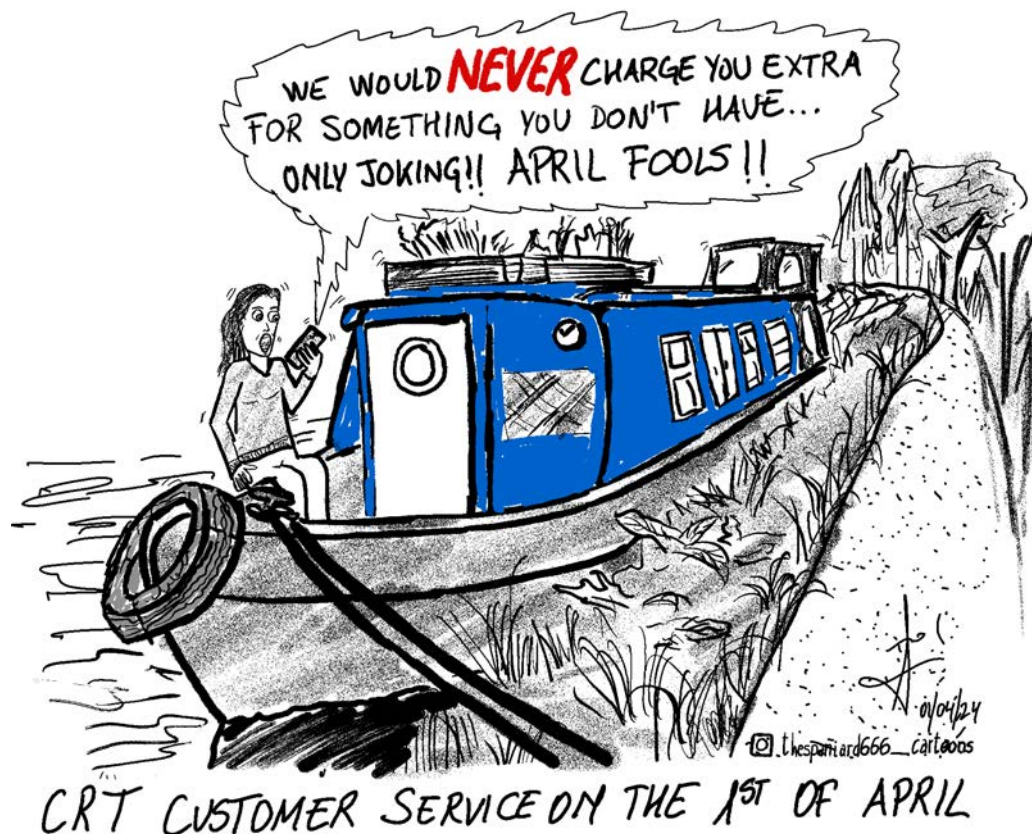
We ask that people who are opposed to this discriminatory licence fee increase, join us in leafleting against CRT at the very events and stalls where CRT are trying to improve its public image. Some of us have already had great success and amazing public support in such actions at CRT events. Until CRT backs down, let's use our leverage, let's attend its events and stalls and let the public know what CRT is really about!

By using these methods of active influence, together we can stop the discriminatory licence fee increase!

To be involved in the campaign, please email:

stopboatlicencediscrimination@gmail.com

*An example of millions spent by CRT on its public image is the £8 million last year on what it calls 'Community engagement and participation'. CRT's last financial report states that this comprises 'engagement and events, strategy and planning, marketing and media.' See pages 57-58 of the Canal & River Trust Annual Report & Accounts 2022/2023.



CRT are increasing licence fees for boats without home moorings

NEW CHARGEABLE MOORINGS ANNOUNCED ACROSS LONDON

The CRT announced in the Boaters Update 22/03/24 that they are introducing around 800 meters of new pre-bookable moorings across 6 sites in London this year.

The new sites are Kings Cross, Camden, Victoria Park, Broadway Market, Kensal Green and Cowley North. These are in addition to existing sites at Islington, Little Venice and Paddington. These moorings come at a premium of £25-£35 per night and bring the total mooring space to approximately 1,500 meters, which would fit around 95 single moored, 50 ft boats.

This is yet another attempt to displace boats from the capital. We have already seen that these chargeable moorings mostly sit empty, so there is no justification for making more, unless it is indeed an attempt to move boats out of London.

As of the 1st of April, the eco moorings at Kings Cross and Angel are £35 per night.

New sites at Kings Cross and Camden are also now available to book online. The other new sites will be phased in throughout the year.

2024 is looking to be a bad year for boaters at the hands of the CRT. First the surcharge which, if left unchecked, will threaten our whole way of life, and now these chargeable moorings, which will have a direct and very tangible impact on boaters living in and around London in 2024 and beyond.

CRT are saying that it is less than 10% of London's moorings that are now chargeable, but all of the moorings, except for Cowley North, are in a 10 mile stretch of central London (including Little Venice and Paddington), which will make travelling across that stretch without paying increasingly difficult.

Chargeable Visitor Moorings
working group
WhatsApp group





Want to get more involved with NBTA London? We hold monthly meetings on the first Sunday of each month at 4pm.

The meeting can be accessed online via: <https://8x8.vc/nbta/nbta>

Alternatively, you can use the dial in details: Dial-in: +44 330 808 1706 PIN: 45925961#

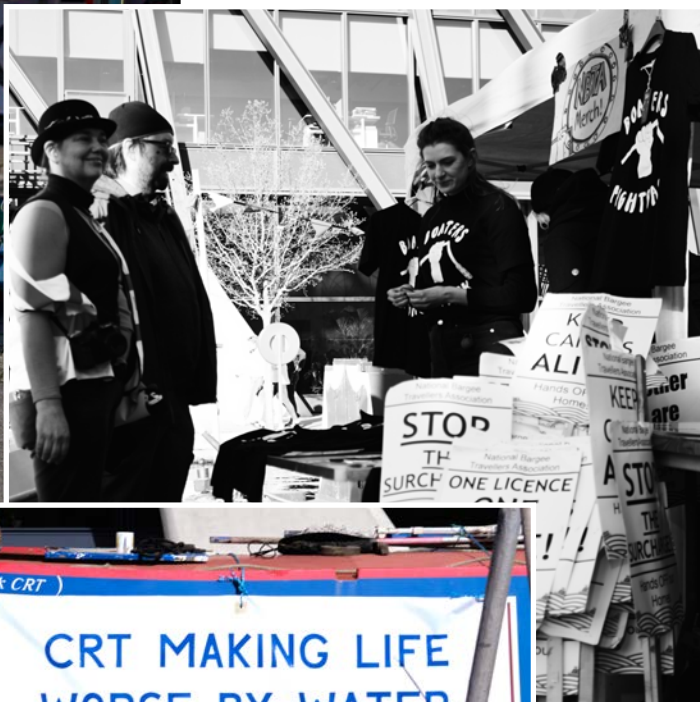
<https://nbtalondon.co.uk/>

nbtalondon@gmail.com

@officialnbtalondon

Scan here to join the
national NBTA
Surcharge Campaign
WhatsApp Group





NBTA
Boats are Homes
National Barge Travellers Association

We are the London branch of the National Barge 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.

LICENCE STRIKE PLANNED FOLLOWING DISCRIMINATORY LICENCE FEE SURCHARGE

Stop The Surcharge Campaign members are organising ahead of a Licence Strike. They are asking anyone interested in striking to sign up to the Licence Strike Group - tinyurl.com/licencestrike. Strikers will refuse to pay CRT's new class of licence fee in protest against an ever-increasing additional charge for boaters who do not want, or cannot afford or find a home mooring.

The strength of this protest action is it has real leverage - a real financial and administrative impact on CRT. The new 'Continuous Cruiser' fee is perceived within the community as an attempt to incrementally price itinerant boaters off the waterways. Once enough people sign up to the Licence Strike, if CRT doesn't back down a strike will be called. A coordinated Licence Strike will have a significant impact on CRT, overloading their enforcement team and costing them dearly.

"Boaters can see how divisive and unfair the Surcharge is and they want to strike - some are striking already. The intent is already there in the community - all we've had to do is facilitate it as a viable protest action. Our job is to make the strike effective and safe for boaters. There are legal protections we can incorporate. There is protection in numbers. Already more than 200 hundred boaters have signed up, and there's an entire community behind them."

Early signs are strong. Leafleting and promotion has only begun and already more than 200 boaters have signed up to the Licence Strike Group. Strike organisers have indicated that the number of strikers are growing of their own accord.

"Boaters are being charged unfairly every time they renew a licence. CRT almost certainly aim to increase the surcharge beyond what they have stated so far and destroy our community, and boaters know this. The number of strikers will only grow. Once we have enough interest we will call a ballot and strike. CRT have left us with little choice - take action or they will end our community. We must take collective action to stop the 'surcharge.'"

Stop the 'surcharge' by signing up to the License Strike Group - go to tinyurl.com/licencestrike and complete the signup form. There will be a full description of the strike action and a full ballot to members and boaters before any strike action is taken.

If you plan on joining us in the licence strike, please cut out the back page of this newsletter and stick it in your window to encourage others!

CRT IS LOSING THE 'SAFETY ZONES'



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. Thanks to collective boater action, the 'safety zones' have clearly failed.

For more information about the safety zones:
<http://nbtalondon.co.uk/3049-2/>

Photo: Boats moored in the so-called 'safety zone' on the S-Bend, Clapton, River Lea

STRIKE BACK: A HISTORY OF THE COLLECTIVE FIGHT FOR OUR HOMES

The fight to defend our homes is far from new. For as long as land and water have been privatised and our right to live on those lands and waters has been restricted by private, often for-profit landlordism, people have always fought for our right to live.

In UK's modern history, we saw this over a century ago when in 1915 the women of Glasgow resisted increases in rent prices. They formed a women's housing association and in May 1915 some 25,000 Glaswegians joined a rent strike that eventually pressured the government to pass the Rent Restriction Act.

Unfortunately, the rent controls were reversed and another major wave of rent strikes came in the 1930s, when the working classes of London, Birmingham, Huddersfield, Liverpool, Aberdeen, Sunderland, Oxford and Sheffield seized power into their own hands and took strike action, demanding rent reductions as well as overdue repairs. Some tenants fought against intimidation, evictions and violence from bailiffs and police for months. Rent controls were reintroduced with the outbreak of the Second World War, followed by the Rent Act of 1957.

But as the government began inflicting vicious austerity programmes and privatised public housing over the past few decades, the UK has

further plunged into increasingly acute housing crises.

This may not be surprising to us, as many boaters may have chosen to live aboard because living on land simply became too expensive. But with much of our waterways remaining under the control of the Canal and River Trust who have unilateral power to set licence fees, we are again seeing what happens when the cost to literally live in our homes become unbearable.

But if history tells us anything, it is that we the people have power. More recently, in 2022 we saw this in action with the #DontPay campaign where families across the country pledged to withhold paying unjustly high costs for energy, which contributed to the government's decision to offer some – if still inadequate – controls and support for households.

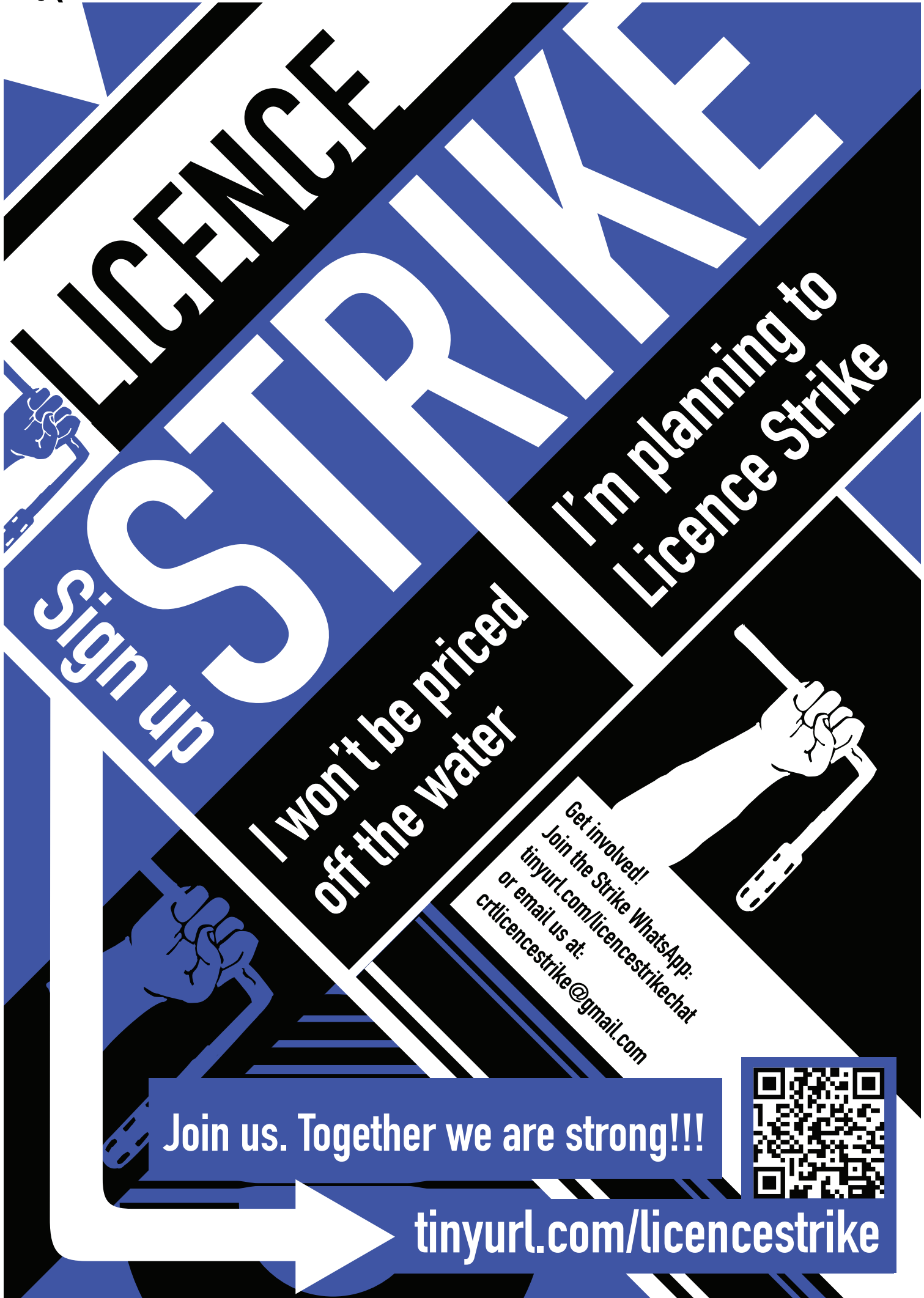
While too many decisions impacting our lives are made by just a handful of individuals, we have the power to resist and push for change. Affordable living should be the bare minimum, and beyond that we must continue fighting towards a commons where we all have the voice and power over our homes, our lives and futures.

MOORING IS NOT ANTI-SOCIAL

Elmbridge Council on the Thames has announced that it has begun a Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) to fine boaters up to £400 for staying for more than 24hrs, and no return to the borough within 72 hours. The council claims that mooring for more than 24hrs is an anti-social behaviour in itself. The council has also stated that if they are successful, they will encourage other councils to follow suit.



An active NBTA members with the help of the Community Law Partnership, has put in a legal challenge to the PSPO. Our way of life isn't an anti-social behaviour and shouldn't be treated as such.



LICENCE STRIKE

I'm planning to Licence Strike

Sign up

I won't be priced off the water

Get involved!
Join the Strike WhatsApp:
tinyurl.com/licencestrikechat
or email us at:
crtlicencestrike@gmail.com

Join us. Together we are strong!!!



tinyurl.com/licencestrike