

DANIEL KAWCZYNSKI MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10 July 2023

Dear Constituent

UK Canal Network

Thank you for contacting me about canals.

Canals form an important part of the Government's work in reintroducing biodiversity in nature. In addition to their history and industrial heritage, there are significant health and wellbeing benefits to walking along a canal. I understand that around 800 million visits are made to our canals every year, which demonstrates their importance in the UK.

The Government is developing policies to adapt to climate change across the country and I am aware that navigation authorities are exploring ways to adapt the network, such as through installing electric charging points in rivers and canals, which have helped encourage boaters to switch to electric vessels.

The Canal & River Trust is responsible for 2,000 miles of waterways and associated historic industrial infrastructure in England and Wales. It is responsible for maintaining the navigability and safety of its waterways including reservoirs, embankments and other infrastructure. The Government recognises that the organisation has an important role to play in contributing to the Environmental Improvement Plan.

While there is no obligation on Ministers to fund the Canal & River Trust beyond 2027, I am aware that, subject to certain conditions being met, the Government will offer a new long-term funding package of over £400 million. To date, the Canal & River Trust has been supported with £550 million funding from the Government. With this further commitment, the charity will be supported with a further £590 million until 2037.

Since it was first created in 2012 as a private charity independent of the Government, Ministers have been clear that the Canal & River Trust should become progressively more self-sufficient financially. I understand that a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Canal & River Trust signed in June 2012 included the objective to "reduce dependence on Government Grant and to foster increasing self-sufficiency, by providing access to new charitable income streams and stimulating new efficiencies." I am aware that the long-term £400 million funding deal for 2027 to 2037 continues that objective.

Finally, Defra has been discussing this with the charity for some time and has been offering support on how it can increase income from other sources, alongside continued funding from the Government. I know that my ministerial colleagues and I look forward to continued enjoyment of our local waterways.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kaw', followed by a horizontal line.

Daniel Kawczynski MP
Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury & Atcham