

Motion to Council: Canal and River Trust

Proposer; Cllr Martin Klute

Seconder: Cllr Rupert Perry

This council notes:

Under Government reforms, British Waterways became the Canal and River Trust (CaRT) – a charity that owns and operates England's inland waterways and infrastructure. The Regents Canal and towpath run through the borough of Islington, passing through St Peters and Caledonian wards, and in these urban areas the towpath passes very close to people's homes near the canal. Access to the canal and towpath is controlled by CaRT and is not a public right of way.

Since the Trust took over the running of the canal, there has been a sharp increase in problems with speeding cyclists on the towpath, failure to keep the bins emptied, from noise and air pollution coming from Canal boats moored on the banks of the canal, and congestion from double and triple mooring in built-up areas. The CaRT has been very slow to respond to these problems, and when they have, they have largely failed to make any difference, or they allow different standards to operate on different parts of the canal for no obvious reason.

We call on the Council:

- To work with CaRT, TFL and London Borough of Hackney highways officers to achieve safe alternative cycle routes for cyclists in a hurry, and to introduce cycle calming measures on the towpath that force cyclists in a hurry to slow down.
- To bring legal pressure to bear on the Trust to ensure that the Towpath is kept clean, the bins emptied 7 days a week, and an acceptable standard of public hygiene maintained.
- To bring legal and moral pressure on the Trust to enforce higher environmental standards on the owners of canal boats, to reduce noise and air pollution from noisy generators, and to require boaters to burn only smokeless fuels, and to set up mechanisms to enforce these standards.
- To lobby for changes to the Clean Air Act to include the waterways.
- To bring pressure to bear on CaRT to enforce their own mooring rules.
- To cooperate with CaRT to erect new joint CaRT/LBI signage on the towpath making clear what are the environmental and mooring rules.
- To commence joint working between the Council and CaRT to establish ways of legally enforcing compliance with these rules.

This council further notes:

- CaRT is the owner of the canals, and needs to take full responsibility for the behaviour and actions of people using the canal and the towpath, and for the environmental impacts of that activity.
- ~~Proposes that the whole operation should be taken over by National Car Parks (NCP)~~