



# Industry Priorities 2024 - 2029



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# Foreword

This document sets out the growth ambitions of the UK's leisure, superyacht and small commercial marine industry and the assistance required to help realise those ambitions during the period of the new parliamentary term 2024 – 2029.

It is about an industry that provides vital employment to many coastal and rural communities. Made up of an estimated 6,300 businesses, including many small and micro enterprises, the industry punches above its weight in terms of the contribution it makes to the national economy. In 2022/23 it had a collective revenue of £4.41bn but its total GVA, when combined with the tourism and hospitality spend of its consumers whilst participating in boating and other watersports, exceeded £17bn. Supporting the further growth of this industry will benefit the whole country. This is why it warrants government support and the backing of all UK's major political parties.

For more than two hundred years our nation has benefited from its marine industry. Today the industry is world renowned for its high quality craftsmanship, leading innovation and design. Yet it also faces new challenges that threaten its continued resilience and success. However, with targeted support, those challenges are far from insurmountable.

Informed by British Marine members whose businesses generate 60% of the industry's revenue, this document outlines the type of support and interventions required to address the most pressing challenges currently facing UK marine businesses. It identifies actions to help broaden and deepen its skills base; to speed up the decarbonisation of its products and processes; and to increase its sales and retain its global competitiveness.

British Marine is hugely grateful to its members for identifying these priorities and for their ongoing engagement to ensure this 'live' document remains fresh and timely. We invite aspiring and current parliamentarians, policy makers and decision takers to work with us on these industry priorities.

As the only UK-wide representative body for leisure marine, we want to help facilitate more effective collaboration between industry and government. We trust that this document will guide discussions and assist government in helping this talented British industry steer through its challenges to the opportunities that lie ahead.



**Lesley Robinson OBE**  
Chief Executive, British Marine



**Paul Gullett**  
President, British Marine









## About British Marine and the industry it represents

British Marine is the national membership organisation for the UK's leisure, superyacht, and small commercial marine industry. With a rich heritage that spans over a century, we provide a unifying voice for this sector of maritime, providing industry expertise to our members and to policy makers.

Our mission is to promote the sustainable success of our 1300 plus members who come from a broad range of businesses including boat builders, chandlers, brokers, marinas, passenger and hire boat companies, as well as engine manufacturers. In addition to representing members' views and facilitating connections, we also provide industry insights through our market and economic research.

British Marine's Economic Benefits 2022-23 report, released in April 2024, covers the industry's performance by marine markets and by regions, as well as its contribution to the national economy. As its key statistics below show, the industry demonstrated remarkable resilience against the backdrop of a global slowdown and a period of high inflation. The industry continues to adapt in the face of changing consumer trends and demands for ever greater environmental sustainability.

### MARINE INDUSTRY ECONOMIC IMPACTS, 2022-23

	 TURNOVER	 DIRECT GVA <sup>1</sup>	 TOTAL GVA <sup>2</sup>	 APPRENTICES <sup>3</sup>	 DIRECT JOBS	 TOTAL JOBS <sup>2</sup>
<b>MARINE INDUSTRY</b>	<b>£4.41bn</b>	<b>£1.68bn</b>	<b>£3.76bn</b>	<b>5,080</b>	<b>38,336</b>	<b>81,370</b>
<b>GROWTH (%) VS 2021-22</b>	<b>+12.5%</b>	<b>+6.7%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+23.3%</b>	<b>+6.6%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>WIDER TOURISM <sup>4</sup></b>	<b>£15.54bn</b>	<b>£6.58bn</b>	<b>£13.61bn</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>364,768</b>	<b>672,468</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£19.96bn</b>	<b>£8.26bn</b>	<b>£17.38bn</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>403,104</b>	<b>753,838</b>

Statistics from British Marine's Economic Benefits Report of the Leisure, Superyacht & Small Commercial Marine Industry, 2022-23 - Note 'Wider Tourism' figures relate to spending on hospitality and tourism expenses whilst consumers participate in boating activities.

It is an ambitious industry, largely made up of SMEs with huge talent for design and innovation. However, the scale and speed of its future success largely depends on national policies and securing targeted and timely support from government.

The following pages set out our key asks that align with the industry's current priorities

An aerial photograph of a beach. The water is a deep turquoise color, and white waves are crashing onto the golden sand. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Decarbonise UK's marine industry

The industry depends on a healthy, sustainable marine environment. This is why British Marine is helping its members navigate their transition to Net Zero. Its Decarbonisation Hub provides a 'one-stop-shop' for marine businesses to understand the challenges, assess their carbon footprint and informed by the latest intelligence, devise and implement strategies to lower their carbon output. British Marine also helps identify and address gaps in knowledge and provision through its participation on national and international bodies encouraging standards required to facilitate the swifter uptake of new sustainable technologies.

The course to net zero poses distinct challenges for this sub-sector of maritime. British Marine is well placed to assist government with its industry-led intelligence and help communicate national objectives and government requirements to the trade. In return, we need government to bring forward enabling legislation and provide targeted support to help ensure the industry's transition to net zero is feasible, fair and timely.

**Our specific 'asks' of government to help hasten the decarbonisation of UK's marine industry are set out below.**

## Ensure UK's recreational marine sector has fair access to sustainable drop in fuels by committing to a 'market-based' approach

It is essential that recreational marine craft has access to sustainable drop in fuels, such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) fuel, to significantly reduce carbon emissions amongst the existing fleet within the short to medium term.

Third party verified data released by the International Council of Marine Industry Associations (ICOMIA) shows that, given the comparative long lifespan and low annual usage of recreational craft under 24 meters, the most efficient and effective way for recreational marine craft to reduce their carbon emissions is by switching to sustainable drop in fuels.

Unlike shipping and other sectors, there is currently no feasible alternative solution for this sub-sector of maritime to significantly reduce its carbon emissions in time to meet the 2034 sixth carbon budget target. This is why we are seeking assurance that government will not ring fence supplies to other sectors but commit to a market-based approach.

*“Given the estimated recreational fleet replacement is just 2% a year, it is clear UK boaters need access to alternative low-emission sustainable fuels if the industry is to make the level of carbon reductions the UK Government expects within the next ten years. For most recreational craft with inboard engines that run on diesel, HVO fuel offers a genuine safe drop-in alternative without impacting the range or performance.”* Joe Lynch, CEO International Council of Marine Industry Associations

## Review industry funded incentives for biofuels and the 1979 Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act (HODA) to make it affordable for recreational boaters to switch to using genuine sustainable drop in fuels such as HVO fuel.

We want to encourage boaters to “go green” by switching away from high carbon fuels. For recreational boats powered by inboard diesel engines, the most efficient and effective alternative would be to switch to HVO fuel but that is significantly more expensive. Over the last six months the price premium for HVO fuel has varied between 10% to 50% above the cost of mineral diesel. This price volatility is partly due to fluctuations in commodity markets including feedstocks but is also affected by the UK’s Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation and associated certificates. Given all industries are required to decarbonise, we need government to amend outdated legislation and fiscal rules that currently make HVO fuel largely unaffordable to the majority of the UK’s recreational marine fleet.

## Stimulate and support UK manufacturing of sustainable fuels

The sixth carbon budget legally requires the UK to make a further 38% reduction in its carbon emissions, as compared to 1990 levels, by 2035. However, as yet, there is no domestic production of HVO fuel and little production of other types of sustainable fuels. The government must take action to stimulate and support investment in the manufacturing of clean fuels. This would not only strengthen our nation’s energy security but also hasten its transition to net zero.

## Encourage marinas to invest in e-charging infrastructure by removing regulatory barriers

Ten years ago, the government encouraged private sector investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure by amending the Maximum Resale Price (MRP) regulations so that they no longer applied to the resale of electricity from e-charging points for electric vehicles. That, in turn, helped drive up sales in electric vehicles.

A decade on, the government wants the marine industry to speed up its transition to net zero, conscious that part of the solution rests in the expansion of electric and hybrid marine propulsion systems. Demand for those propulsion systems is suppressed partly due to there being insufficient onshore e-charging infrastructure in place.

Government could help reverse this and encourage more private sector investment by further amending the MRP regulations so they would no longer apply to marinas when reselling electricity for marine propulsion from e-charging infrastructure.



*“Our association members, many of whom are small businesses, want to play their part in helping the UK marine industry decarbonise but, like the automotive sector, the industry needs support. Put simply, it is time government removed regulatory barriers to encourage more marinas to invest in e-charging infrastructure for electric and hybrid propelled craft.”*

Steve Arber, Director Tingdene Marinas and Chairman of The Yacht Harbour Association.

## Stimulate the e-propulsion market through targeted financial incentives

Financial incentives targeted at supporting the installation of electric or hybrid propulsion systems in small commercial marine craft, for example in high-usage craft servicing offshore wind farms, would help stimulate the e-propulsion market across the wider maritime sector.

*“At ePropulsion UK we've seen firsthand the transformative impact that government-backed initiatives can have on innovation and market growth. Enhanced financial incentives are imperative to propel the development and deployment of cutting-edge, sustainable technologies across the maritime sector”.*

Steve Bruce, Managing Director (UK) OEM Director (Global) E Propulsion

## Up-scale the production of sustainable technologies through more targeted research and development funding

Timely delivery of the Clean Maritime Plan's objectives will require an up-scaling in the production of new sustainable technologies that can be applied in the marine environment, such as electric battery density and hydrogen research.



*“From my experience of trying to install solar panels in our marina it seems that neither the policies nor understaffed local planning authorities are structured in a way that supports business growth and the transition to clean green energy.*

*I fear that the considerable upfront costs and time it takes to prepare a planning application, plus knowing an application might be delayed for months or potentially refused, deters many businesses from modernising their facilities in line with the government's net zero agenda”.* Robert Parton, Managing Director of Aqueduct Marina and President Elect of British Marine.





## Encourage marine facilities to install local sustainable energy infrastructure by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system

With the transition away from a carbon-based transport network and a national energy transmission system ill-prepared for future requirements, there will be an increasing need for more local and on-site renewable energy production.

This is why we need a planning system that prioritises decarbonisation and enables the transition to alternative clean energy solutions, including tidal, wind, solar and electric infrastructure.

All too often businesses wanting to invest in sustainable energy solutions are hamstrung by local bureaucracy that is encouraged by failings in the current planning system.



## Bring forward a national plan to assist the decarbonisation of manufacturing companies including those in the marine sector

To date national industrial strategies have focused on helping high energy use industries such as steel to reduce their carbon emissions. British Marine believes a national plan is now required to aid the decarbonisation of other manufacturing companies in a way that will both lower their carbon footprints but also help retain their global competitiveness.

This is especially important for the UK's leisure, superyacht and commercial marine industry, the success of which is largely driven by its manufacturing of recreational boats and other watersports craft. This ranges from manufacturing of rowing boats and kayaks to high powered rigid inflatables and luxury sail and motor yachts. The industry also manufactures small commercial craft (under 24m) which are used for a range of professional services including border security, port operations and as support vessels for the offshore energy sector. A national plan that would help these marine manufacturers successfully decarbonise is important not least because around half of leisure marine's carbon is emitted during the manufacturing stage.



*“UK leisure marine manufacturers are working hard to lower their carbon footprint and improve the sustainability of their products. Here at Oyster Yachts we are proud to provide the lowest carbon footprint way of safely circumnavigating the globe - and we would love to work ever closer with industry and government to do more around R&D support to help create ever more sustainable manufacturing processes for the yachts themselves, especially hulls and teak deck substitutes”.*

Ashley Highfield, CEO Oyster Yachts and British Marine Board Member



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue hard hat and safety glasses, is focused on operating a lathe. She is wearing a light-colored, textured long-sleeved shirt and blue work gloves. Two men are looking on; one on the left is wearing safety glasses and a blue hard hat, and one on the right is wearing a white hard hat. The background is a blurred industrial setting.

**Address the skills  
gap and develop  
marine industry**

The UK's marine industry continues to grow with its number of direct full time equivalent jobs surpassing 38,000 and a 23% increase in apprenticeship starts in 2022-23. Yet marine businesses still struggle to recruit and retain a sufficiently skilled workforce. Having access to a deeper and wider skills base is essential for our marine businesses to succeed in what is an increasingly competitive global industry, where consumer trends and new technologies require ever greater adaptability and expertise.

The need to address the 'people and skills' challenges is repeatedly cited as a top priority for our members. This is why British Marine works hard to showcase the range of exciting careers the marine industry has to offer; why it works with employers to develop and improve marine Apprenticeship Standards; and why it delivers first class training to upskill those already in the industry so that they stay enthused and up to speed on the latest technologies and regulatory requirements.

Yet given the ongoing skills shortages reported by our members and the increased competition from other sectors such as the construction industry, we are seeking more targeted support from government to bolster initiatives underway and help future proof the success of the industry.

**Our specific 'asks' of government to help address the skills gap and develop careers in the industry are set out below.**

## Fund a one-year pilot of the British Marine Training Academy

The skills shortage is especially acute amongst UK's smaller boat building companies that struggle to expand as they often lack the resources needed to take on and train new recruits. This is a widely acknowledged problem which, as the UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce recommended in September 2023 could be addressed by the British Marine Training Academy. This is 16-week training programme devised for 18 to 24 year olds that would enable them to acquire strong foundation skills in boatbuilding and provide companies with 'work ready' recruits to help future proof UK's boat building sector.

*“As an island nation we have all the facilities we could ask for to sustain a prosperous marine industry, but to thrive, we need skilled people. These young women and men do not need to live by the water, they simply need an invitation and an opportunity to engage with the maritime world, and that is what our training academy sets out to achieve.*

*Offering real world experience and a CV of relevant qualifications will be a huge step in supporting the UK Marine Industry”.*

Ian Cook, C-quip Ltd and Lead advocate for the British Marine Training Academy Programme.





## Establish a transparent, fair and effective system for distributing ‘expired’ apprenticeship funds to increase employer confidence and benefit those sectors with a high demand for apprentices and which are critical to local growth strategies

The apprenticeship levy was introduced so that businesses could take on more apprentices yet there are many small businesses, including those in the marine sector, that have insufficient resources to take on apprentices. Large businesses with an annual pay bill of over £3m are required to pay 0.5% of their annual pay bill into the apprenticeship levy pot. They have up to two years to use that money after which the monies expire and the government then decides how to spend those ‘expired’ funds.

The Department for Education has stated that “behind the scenes” the money is used to pay for apprenticeship training in smaller businesses and to support training providers and employers. Yet that process lacks transparency which undermines confidence and engagement in the system.

The system should be improved by clearly targeting ‘expired’ funds at sectors, such as leisure marine, that are largely made up of small non-levy paying businesses but which are eager to expand and have potential to aid regional prosperity. As an example, there are many small marine companies based around Portsmouth City. It is an area that has long struggled due to relatively high levels of deprivation and a comparatively low skills base. However, it is also part of the wider Solent Region which includes one of the UK’s most important maritime clusters. By targeting ‘expired’ funds towards small businesses in that marine cluster, it would then have the capacity to power the region’s growth strategy.

*“The Government must do more to help the marine industry address its skills shortages and meet its demand for more apprentices. Introducing this type of flexibility would be a positive start”.*

Keith Longman, Berthon Boat Company and member of the UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce (UKSST)

## Grant flexibility to those apprenticeship levy paying businesses that maximise use of their levies on apprentices within the two-year period, so they can use remaining monies to upskill their workforce in whatever way they consider to be most effective

British Marine welcomes the proposal to significantly increase flexibility for employers by allowing them to spend up to half of their levy on non-apprenticeship training. However, care should be taken not to undermine the principle of the Apprenticeship Levy.

We think flexibility should be limited to those businesses that can demonstrate the majority of monies have already been used for apprentices, either within their own business or via a transfer to a small non-levy paying business. Providing such flexibility would encourage more levy paying employers to engage in the system and would also help maximise the transfer of funds to smaller non-levy paying companies before funds become expired and centrally redistributed. The latter would be particularly helpful in the marine industry where there is a high proportion on non-levy paying businesses.



## Improve the efficiency of the Ofqual application process so that UK training providers can compete successfully to capture the new and expanding market in the provision of sustainability and net zero-focused accredited training.

The current application process for securing Ofqual status is hugely time consuming. Unless guidance is improved and applications from organisations such as British Marine are expedited more quickly the UK risks losing out on the current opportunity to lead the world in providing high quality, accredited training on the safe handling of sustainable marine technologies.

British Marine is well placed to help the UK capture this new market in the training of modern e-propulsion systems, including e-high voltage systems, and would be more encouraged to do so if the efficiency of the Ofqual application process was improved.



## Allow UK businesses to employ specialist workers from abroad on a temporary basis, up to twelve months at any one time.

This is important to the marine industry and especially to UK's superyacht sector where companies compete globally to secure large multi-million-pound refit contracts. Tender specifications often stipulate the use of world leading specialists based outside of the UK for certain aspects of a re-fit project.

It is important the Immigration and Visa system allows provision for this because unless British companies can assure potential clients of their ability to bring in specialist sub-contractors from abroad for aspects of a project they risk losing large contracts to their European competitors.

*“As the UK industry develops and stays at the cutting edge of design, build and support to our fantastic industry, it also needs to be able to bring in the best talent for short periods of time to work on specific aspects of a project, even if that talent is from outside of the UK. It is essential that companies can do this smoothly, efficiently, and effectively so that we stay competitive with the global market”.* Ben Geary, Chief Operating Officer Dohle Yachts and Chairman of Superyacht UK



A photograph of a boat show. In the foreground, a large yacht is docked. A prominent Union Jack flag is flying from a pole on the yacht. To the right, a blue banner with the Sunseeker logo is visible. Several people are standing on the deck of the yacht, looking towards the camera. The background shows other boats and a clear sky.

**Boost UK marine sales  
and international trade**



Despite the varied economic challenges in recent years the marine industry saw its exports grow by 33% in the year 2022/23 to £937 million. This was largely due to foreign demand for UK-made boats, including sailing yachts, rigid inflatables, and luxury motor yachts, and indicates the current standing UK marine manufacturing and innovation has on the global stage. International events, such as the Southampton International Boat Show are crucial for showcasing the very best that UK's marine industry has to offer.

**Our specific 'asks' of government to help the industry maintain its global position and maximise trade opportunities are set out below:**

## Invest in Southampton International Boat Show to retain its position as a world premier boat show

Although there are several bespoke marine shows in the UK today, Southampton International Boat Show is the nation's only truly international boat show which competes with the likes of Cannes in Europe and Fort Lauderdale in the United States.

Southampton International Boat Show (SIBS) attracts around 100,000 visitors every year and it is estimated that customer spend last year generated £1.6bn for the industry. It also provides a significant annual boost to the Solent Region's economy through its associated hospitality spend.

Maintaining this level of success and the global standing of SIBS is increasingly difficult as other competing international shows, including Dubai, Monaco, Metstrade and Boot Dusseldorf, nowadays benefit from either direct government funding or other regional public subsidies.



## Reinstate trade access type grant funding for small businesses to help them promote their products at international trade shows

*“As an SME manufacturer and previous beneficiary of the previous Trade Access Programme I can vouch for the value that such grant support returns. Exhibiting at shows are expensive, more so when you travel abroad. This is a real barrier for many smaller companies.*

*So, if UK PLC wants to increase exporting in the short and medium term, I can't think of simpler quick hit than providing this type of limited support that will help showcase more of British manufacturing on the global stage”.*

Alastair Clayton, Managing Director of Seaglaze Marine Windows



## Support ‘Meet the Buyer’ events that introduce major overseas boat builders to UK’s extensive marine supply chain businesses for the leisure, superyacht and small commercial sectors

*“Since SME grant funding was removed it has become increasingly difficult for our industry to develop new trade opportunities. Post Brexit there has been virtually no assistance to help the UK marine supply chain businesses break into new markets.*

*It is time the Department for Business and Trade helped facilitate introductions to potential buyers, be that at events here or abroad”.*

Paul Martin, Associate Director First Peninsula Marine and Chairman of British Marine’s Marine Trade Association

A young boy is seen from behind, standing on a white stand-up paddleboard (SUP) on a body of water. He is wearing a bright green life vest over a light-colored t-shirt and patterned shorts. He is holding a black paddle with both hands, and the blade is partially submerged in the water. The water is dark with many small, shimmering reflections of light. In the background, there is a dense line of green trees. The overall scene is peaceful and recreational.

Protect the environment and  
support marine tourism

UK's leisure marine industry depends on having a healthy, sustainable marine environment that remains a place where people want to spend their leisure time. This is why the relationship between the industry, government and its environmental agencies is so important.

The products and services which our members provide has helped drive up participation in boating and other watersports on UK's inland and coastal waters to an estimated 13 million people a year. This not only supports the health and wellbeing of the nation but also makes a significant economic contribution, both in terms of local employment to many coastal and rural communities, and in terms of total GVA which, combined with hospitality and tourism spend, exceeded £17bn in 2022- 2023. This is even more impressive when you consider the majority of boating tourism businesses are small family run companies. However, their future success is increasingly at risk from environmental degradation, failing infrastructure and restrictive regulations.

There are mounting calls from within the marine industry for the government to take swifter action to safeguard our waterways and the marine environment. These calls are backed by British Marine members who operate leisure marinas, passenger boats and run charter and hire boat businesses. All want to see stronger interventions by government to improve water quality; provide more adequate funding to mitigate against the impact climate change is having on our coastal and inland waterways; and to bring forward a more effective regulatory regime to support responsible marine tourism.

**Our specific 'asks' of government to help improve the marine environment, safeguard Britain's waterways and boost marine tourism are set out below.**

## Improve the quality of UK's inland and coastal waters by:

- prohibiting the discharge of untreated sewage into UK waters known to be popular with bathers, boaters and watersports enthusiasts;
- enforcing existing regulations designed to minimise water pollution;
- requiring full public transparency of sewage pollution across the UK.



In May 2024 the Office of Environmental Protection reported that the government had failed to put in place sufficiently robust measures to improve the condition of our rivers, lakes and oceans. At the same time the government acknowledged the levels of sewage being discharged to UK waters was "unacceptable". Whilst British Marine welcomes the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan it is concerned that the targets, such as eliminating ecological harm from all storm overflows by 2050, are not sufficiently ambitious. Similarly, we welcome the recent increase in designated bathing waters but would like to see further investment in monitoring and enforcing water quality in both our inland and coastal waters.



## Allow marriage ceremonies to be conducted onboard boats afloat in UK coastal waters and on our inland waterways.

It has long been recognised that marriage law of 1836 has failed to keep pace with modern life. In 2014 the government asked the Law Commission to review the law on how and where people can get married. That led to a full-scale review and consultation, culminating in the Law Commission's report 'Celebrating Marriage - a new weddings law' (July, 2022).

The report included recommendations to abolish restrictions on where a wedding can take place and to permit weddings in any location or venue subject to an officiant's approval. If agreed this would not only allow weddings to be conducted afloat on inland waterways but also in the territorial sea, bays and other coastal waters adjacent to England and Wales. The government promised to carefully consider the recommendations, stating in September 2022 that it would publish a response "in due course". This is now long overdue.

British Marine urges the government to accept the Law Commission's key recommendations and bring forward the required legislation. This would provide people with greater choice and help businesses, such as those within the marine sector where there is a high demand for weddings onboard domestic passenger vessels.



*“The events market is hugely important to Britain’s inland and coastal passenger boat trade which, like other tourism businesses, has struggled in recent years due to the squeeze on household incomes.*

*Giving couples more choice over how and where their wedding takes place, including permitting weddings afloat, would not only be welcome by the many people searching for that unique experience but would also give a much-needed boost to Britain’s passenger boat fleet and the wider hospitality sector which is especially important to our coastal communities.”* John Peacock, St Agnes Boating and Chairman of British Marine’s Passenger Boat Association.



## Safeguard the future of Britain’s inland waterways through more adequate levels of funding to navigation authorities.

Few would dispute the fact that Britain’s inland waterways are a valuable national asset admired across the world. It is evidenced by the millions of people who regularly visit our network of canals and rivers, be that for activities on the water or simply spending time alongside the water observing nature and enjoying other recreational activities.

Britain’s industrialisation was first enabled by English and Welsh canals which, before the railways, provided the most efficient way of transporting raw materials and goods going in and out of new factories.

Today, Britain’s 5000-mile network of navigable rivers and canals play a different but equally important role in the nation’s security, wellbeing and prosperity. From mitigating the effects of severe weather, including flood protection and water transfers, to generating green energy and regulating urban temperatures – today’s network provides many critical strategic functions. That is in addition to the social and economic benefits they provide, and which is largely driven by the inland marine sector.



This inland marine sector includes businesses ranging from inland marinas and brokerage services to passenger and hire boat companies, and provides just over 41,000 jobs (direct, indirect and induced). Its success, together with that of the wider tourism generated by those participating in inland boating and watersports, and which involves 290,000 employees, is all dependant on Britain's waterways remaining safe, navigable and accessible to all.

British Marine is committed to working with government and the navigation authorities, including the Canal and River Trust, the Environment Agency, the Broads Authority, and Scottish Canals, to ensure the network remains safe and navigable so that people can continue to enjoy the services and products the inland marine sector provides.

Whilst holding navigation authorities to account on the management of their waterways and investment decisions, we are mindful of the increased investment that is now needed to combat the adverse impact increasingly frequent severe weather is having on network and its ageing infrastructure. It poses a serious risk to what is a highly valued national asset and why the government should intervene before a tipping point is reached. Without more adequate public funding in the future, there is a real risk that navigation channels will be forced to close. This is why British Marine is calling on the government to review its approach to funding and commit to intervening when necessary to safeguard the future of the Britain's inland waterways.



*“The vibrancy of Britain’s waterways is largely enabled by UK’s inland marine sector that not only provides essential local employment for communities up and down the country but also generates huge wider economic benefits. For example, the inland marine sector together with the tourism associated with inland boating and watersports, generated an estimated £7.5bn in GVA in 2022-23.*

*Government must not allow our inland waterways to deteriorate as otherwise all its benefits, including the economic contribution that our businesses make, could be lost forever.”* Russell Chase, Farncombe Boat House and Chairman of British Marine Inland Boating Association.

## Ensure inland navigation authorities have the resources to provide decent service levels to license paying boaters and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their enforcement procedures.

Inland marine businesses pay significant tolls, business license and access fees to operate on Britain's inland waterways. However, those businesses are increasingly disrupted by poor maintenance of the network. British Marine members are especially concerned about the lack of timely dredging and lock maintenance; reduced staffing of locks during the high season; the failure to regularly inspect the waterways and remove debris and sunken boats; and the failure to retain facilities that are valued by boaters and the trade such as the Environment Agency's dry dock at Sunbury.

There are also increasing concerns about the lack of enforcement to move continuous cruisers on from moorings when they have stayed beyond their permitted time. More efficient enforcement could help raise income for navigation authorities, but all too often insufficient resources is cited as the reason for the lack of enforcement and more timely maintenance of the network. British Marine asks that government reviews the management of navigation authorities to ensure they have the resources and powers to maintain the waterways in more effective manner.

*“The success of all inland marine businesses who operate on the waterways is dependent on the ability of navigation authorities to properly manage the navigation channels. Unlike land-based businesses, such as a retailer or storage firm, which can choose to relocate if discontent with their landlord or environment, inland leisure boat businesses don't have that luxury – all we can do is influence through user forums etc.*

*The challenges we are now facing operating on the waterways are so numerous we really need the attention of central government.”* Ian Lindsay, Owner/ Director Lechlade Marina Ltd and Co Chairman of British Marine London and Thames Valley Association.





For further information please contact:

Joanna Richardson  
Senior Public Affairs Advisor  
Telephone: 07860 848834 Email: [publicaffairs@britishmarine.co.uk](mailto:publicaffairs@britishmarine.co.uk)

[www.britishmarine.co.uk](http://www.britishmarine.co.uk)

