

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th August 2023

Dear Constance,

RE: CANALS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of canals. I have read your comments with interest.

Canals form an important part of the Government's work in reintroducing biodiversity in nature. In addition to their history and industrial heritage, they also provide the backdrop to the health and wellbeing routines of many. I understand that around 800 million visits are made to our canals every year, demonstrating their importance in the UK.

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

To date, the Canal & River Trust has received £550 million of Government funding. While there is no obligation to fund it beyond 2027, I am aware that, subject to certain conditions, the Government will offer a new long-term funding package of over £400 million.

Since 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. 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 new funding deal for 2027 to 2037 continues that objective.

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

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove'.

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE