

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

April 2017

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about inland waterways.

Canals and rivers are an important asset for tourism and recreation, which the Government aims to protect and promote. The Canal and River Trust was given responsibility for managing the majority of waterways in England and Wales in 2012, replacing British Waterways, and that change has been widely welcomed. The Trust has a secure 15-year funding settlement, with one of the key objectives of that funding being to maintain and improve public access.

I do appreciate that you are eager for the waterways currently managed by the Environment Agency to be transferred to the Canal and River Trust. As you say, that process has been deferred until the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs can be confident that it can provide adequate funding. I do think it is right that such a transfer only goes ahead when the financial circumstances allow it, in order to ensure the new system of management is sustainable in the long-term.

I am assured that Ministers in the Department will keep this matter under review and will continue to work with the relevant organisations to find an appropriate long-term solution. In the meantime, the Government will work with the Environment Agency to ensure waterways remain as open and accessible as possible.

Once again, thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**