

Press Briefing – London Mooring Action Group

What happened?

In April 2018, the Canal and River Trust wrote to 250 boat owners across 17 London moorings to inform them of up to 89% increases in rent.

Who are we?

The London Mooring Action Group has been formed to publicise and fight the excessive rent increase and the aggressive and unreasonable approach taken by CRT toward London moorers.

What affect will the rent increase have?

The rent increases will cause serious hardship to several hundred people. Many of these boats are residential and the only homes we have known for as long as 28 years. Few people can afford 89% increases in rent (even if phased in over three years) and many of those who will be forced out of their homes are amongst the poorest in the capital. Most have nowhere else to go.

Who are the Canal and River Trust?

The Canal and River Trust is a charity with an income of over £200 million which looks after the canals and some rivers in England and Wales. It took over the responsibilities of the British Waterways Board – including the management of over 3,500 moorings.

What have they done wrong?

The rent increases are *excessive*, unfair and probably illegal.

Along with the notification of the increase, CRT published an explanation of how they arrived at this figure. This claims that a) CRT must abide by competition law and not distort the market; and b) lists just 4 CRT mooring sites as the comparisons to conclude that the rest of the moorings are under-priced. The approach to assessing 'market price' used by CRT is indefensible and many of the figures they have provided to justify the increase do not add up.

As a Charity with a broad responsibility to serve the 'Public Good' CRT should not engage in predatory pricing, abuse of market position or forcing large numbers of people from their homes.

What are you doing about this?

We have been appealing the decision and asking for more information from CRT. They are turning down appeals and refusing to supply information we have requested which would show how they arrived at the figures.

Lawyers have now examined the correspondence in detail and are advising us that the approach taken by CRT is not consistent with competition law: CRT has not complied with its own policy to mooring prices in a way that does not 'distort the market'. We intend to report CRT to the Competition and Markets Authority and also the Charities Commission.

What should CRT do?

They should abandon the current rent increase proposals, sit down and agree a fair, independent and transparent approach to setting the price of their moorings across London.

Press Contacts

Email press@mooringaction.org.uk – we can provide additional information and contacts with moorers willing to discuss their situation with the media.