



Elmbridge Borough Council

... bridging the communities ...

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Dominic Raab, MP
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House of Commons
Via email

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12 October 2023

Dear Dominic & Ben

As you are both aware, Elmbridge constituents have been facing increasing problems from a growing number of boats moored without consent along the length of the river Thames, for a number of years. This situation has been gradually deteriorating and at the last count there are approximately 116 such boats moored without consent on various landowners' riverbanks. These landowners include Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) Network Rail with the majority of boats moored against Environment Agency (EA) owned land.

Both the EA and EBC have been working collaboratively to seek a resolution to the ongoing issue of unauthorised moorings, and have facilitated a number of local stakeholder meetings with Dominic Raab, Molesey Riverside Action Group, and the EA. There remains a local concern about a lack of positive and demonstrable action. The EA maintain a total commitment to continue to work in partnership with EBC and others to carry out enforcement in line with the EA's Enforcement and Sanctions Policy.

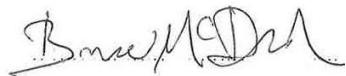
We would however draw your attention to the fact that the EA have publicly acknowledged, in these recent meetings, that their ambition is currently constrained by a lack of resources that they are able to deploy through enforcement teams, communications and engagement officers to make a difference, and to reclaim the river for its rightful use for the wider community to enjoy.

We would welcome your support to lobby for increased resources to support the EA to realise this ambition to resolve the long-standing issues on the riverbanks in Elmbridge. While an enduring solution will require additional revenue investment by the EA, I recognise that it will take at least one budgetary cycle to be in place. However, as I am sure you will agree, our residents' patience has been sorely tested by the length of time this problem has persisted, and as we all know, the EA is indispensable to achieving action.

Therefore, would you join me in urging the EA to allocate £250,000 now for a one-off project to return the navigation, and our riverbanks to a state where they can be enjoyed by our residents free from all the problems associated with unauthorised moorings?

In-year expenditure of this scale, for an organisation with a considerable operating budget should, from my experience, with judicious management, be achievable. If you were to put your weight behind this proposal, it creates the scope for some early action on a significant scale which would restore both our residents' confidence in the body with enforcement powers, and their enjoyment of our riparian environment. The further benefit of a one-off project like this, is it reduces the scale of the longer-term enforcement requirement by virtue of what has already been tackled.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce McDonald', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Bruce McDonald
Leader – Elmbridge Borough Council