

23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

**For the Attention of:**

Mr Jamie Cook  
Chief Executive  
Angling Trust

**By email to:** [jamie.cook@anglingtrust.net](mailto:jamie.cook@anglingtrust.net)

Dear Jamie,

As you are aware from recent correspondence with our Yorkshire Director, Sean McGinley, the Trust is actively investigating the cause of the fish deaths on the Aire & Calder Navigation. Given our close partnership, I am very disappointed at the adversarial stance that the Angling Trust has adopted. Some of the critical comments you have made - such as: *"Their relaxed attitude and lack of concern around the devastation this barge is causing is astounding and extremely disappointing."* - are unhelpful and misleading. They do not accurately reflect the Trust's attitude to this incident or our commitment to the fish stocks in our care. You should be aware that the freight barge concerned is not currently operating so the alarmist tone in your notice is uncalled for. The Trust has considerable environmental responsibilities and takes these matters extremely seriously.

The recent reports of fish mortality have been identified as being predominantly in the Ferrybridge/ Knottingley area. The freight barges to which these very concerning incidents have been attributed cover the full length of the Aire & Calder Navigation, and there are other similar vessels on other Commercial waterways we manage that do not experience these issues. We have reassured you that we are undertaking a full investigation of the contributory causes and that we are working with the commercial barge operator to identify the cause and put the correct mitigation measures in place to prevent any more harm to fish in the area.

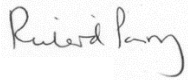
Once it resumes, we will carefully monitor the passage of the freight vessel(s); our fisheries specialists will closely observe the barge in its future passage along the waterway to monitor any impact on fish. We have already imposed depth (ie loading) and speed restrictions on the barge to mitigate against any further impact on fish, as we suspect that it may be mobilisation of the silt which is a specific contributing factor to the incidence of fish mortality in the area. We will continue to consider further restrictions if necessary and are insisting that the barge operator ensures these restrictions are observed. Analysis of operating procedures is being undertaken, and detailed silt analysis under differing conditions will be undertaken in the New Year, to identify what further remedial actions are required. We have responded urgently and responsibly and will continue to take swift and firm action when/where the evidence we gather demands it.

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I can assure you that we are doing what we can to resolve this matter without any further harm to fish stocks. As we have stated previously, this is a Commercial waterway constructed for, and still designated as being for the purpose of, freight movement. The Trust has an obligation to support water-borne freight and strives to balance that statutory role with our duty of care for the Navigation's ecosystem. In the wider context it should be noted that a loaded barge has the potential to carry the equivalent of up to 20 lorry loads of cargo per journey, so the environmental benefits of waterborne freight are clear and hence it receives considerable political support. However, we are committed to finding a way forward that addresses both objectives and minimises any impact on the Canal's fish stocks.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Parry".

**Richard Parry**  
Chief Executive