

Dear Member/Supporter,

Welcome to the October 2026 edition of [Flow](#), the newsletter for [FoMW](#) members and supporters.



[AGM Notices](#) - Our 2026 Annual Meeting has been set for 11th

November, 7.00pm at the Desborough Bowls Club. Notices will be issued shortly and members can expect to receive a short review of the year and presentation of our 2025/26 accounts. Formal resolutions will invite approval of the accounts and renewal of appointments. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the night, but you can also submit a proxy vote.



[Bakedd on Fire...!!](#) - We had a scary 'near miss' in late August, when the empty building (pictured) next to Bakedd caught fire during a refit, just as Cadent's gas works got underway. Fire spread via a roof void to the apartment above Bakedd, but was quickly brought under control by the emergency services. Fortunately, no-one was seriously hurt and, to its credit, Bakedd was back in business the next day, albeit surrounded by scaffolding...!! A quick check of our boating platform and Cadent's works confirmed we were unaffected, but for a day or two the repercussions were unclear.

[Gas works at Chapel Arches](#) - After months of planning, Cadent started work to remove a redundant gas main that runs behind all three arches at Chapel Arches. Scaffolding went up on 24th August in the western arch, with a complex cantilevered platform extending out over the bridge parapet and back inside the arches to access the c200 year old cast iron pipe. The pipe proved stronger than expected and Cadent's contractor failed to cut it at all...!! The scaffolding was quickly removed, but we await a new plan and expect further disruption to our boating operations.



[BLP Update](#) - We responded to RBWM's consultation on a new Borough Local Plan, which has just kicked off with updated government guidance and an [even higher...!!] housing target. The new Plan will refresh policy on matters such as housing, economic development, transport and infrastructure, plus environmental protection and enhancement. Our response focused on the latter, stressing the need to protect and enhance the key role of the 'Green and Blue' waterways corridor as Maidenhead grows.

With local elections due next May, we will be asking all the political parties to support our aim of competing the 'Ring' by also bringing the empty and still derelict Moor Cut channel to life - in stages, over time as funding allows. An enabling S73 Variation to the original planning consent is presently being negotiated with the planners to allow this, avoiding the huge costs involved in a completely new planning application.

[Channel Maintenance](#) - With the summer heat finally behind us, we have assessed the impact on the waterway. Water levels did reduce slightly but we were able to keep the water flowing through York

Stream and into Bray Cut. The heat caused faster growth to the banks, trees and in channel weed. We dosed the channel every fortnight with Byofix, a beneficial bacteria recommended by the Environment Agency to slow weed growth. We also had our usual two visits from Weedcutter with their Truxor boat to remove as much surplus weed as possible from the channel - we deliberately don't remove all weed, as it provides habitat and food for fish and wildfowl. We have an ongoing problem with weed tangles around propellers restricting the use of our boats and the slightly lower water levels also made it precarious to motor over the high beds at Chapel Arches and the A4.



We welcomed back in September the first of our planned autumn visits from the IWA's Waterways Recovery Group (BITM branch) who successfully removed several large fallen trees in lower Bray Cut, casualties of the warm weather. We expect them again in December. Channel maintenance work resumed in the Autumn, addressing all the channels that stretch 9Kms from Cookham to Bray marina. We always need more volunteers to help with this essential work. If you feel the need for some strenuous activity accompanied by good company over

the winter months, please get in touch at contact@maidenheadwaterways.org

Canoe Club - Canoeing has been restricted by Cadent's works since mid-August and by the growth of weed and overhanging branches blocking a section of Bray Cut at Braywick Park. Since September and the end of the bird nesting season, canoe club members have with permission from the riparian owners been targeting blockages, working from canoes and sometimes in waders. We have made good progress and by mid-October Bray Cut should be open for paddling again.

The club continues to grow, with one of our new joiners Craig Sherwood qualifying as a paddle sport instructor, allowing us to expand our training activities and begin Sunday morning paddles over the autumn and winter. Finally, our club is a "wonky boat" winner - we have been donated a Silverbirch Broadland 16 foot canoe (pictured), in a discontinued cherry colour, in recognition of our offering free canoe days for children with special education needs.



Community awards - We were delighted to be Highly Commended in the recent BBC Berkshire Make a Difference awards, for our community engagement and maintenance work on the waterway.



Membership Subs - Subs are overdue for the 2026/27 membership year but have again been held at £20 for **FoMW** membership (single or family). A further £20 per person is applicable for optional Canoe Club membership. With RBWM's finances still stretched, income from member subs is vital to help us maintain and improve the waterway. Please check your payment status with Mark Loader treasurer@maidenheadwaterways.org.

Best regards,

Richard Davenport

Chair of the Trustees

October 2026