# Residents protest GoBoat UK’s alcohol licence amid fears of rising antisocial boat parties in Little Venice



Residents living along London’s picturesque Little Venice canal are voicing anger over a surge in antisocial behaviour linked to boat party revellers. Incidents of public indecency, including sex acts, urination, and defecation in private gardens, have raised concerns about the area’s safety and tranquillity. The issue has escalated as local boat hire company GoBoat UK seeks to secure an alcohol licence, a move locals fear could exacerbate the problematic behaviour.

Previously, GoBoat operated with an alcohol licence, which the company claims was integral to enhancing customer experience. However, this led to reports of unruly behaviour from passengers, including public intoxication and aggressive conduct. One resident, who spoke to the media, lamented that previous experiences with boisterous boaters had forced them to endure significant disturbances, stating, “We residents on the canal have quite enough to deal with… without rowdy, antisocial behaviour by GoBoat punters.” This sentiment was echoed by several neighbours who recounted harrowing accounts of drunken boat drivers crashing into their moored vessels and the general chaos caused by the parties.

In response to the complaints, GoBoat has proposed a new plan aimed at providing a controlled environment for those wishing to drink while cruising. The company's revamped offering includes the hiring of ‘qualified skippers’ to oversee operations, purportedly ensuring that alcohol consumption is managed responsibly. GoBoat asserts that this is a “controlled, high-quality alternative” to their previous model. Despite these assurances, numerous objections have been submitted against their licence application, including one from the Environmental Health Service, which warned that the granting of the licence could increase public nuisance and jeopardise safety.

Concerns aren’t merely anecdotal; reports have surfaced of similar issues at boat parties across London. For instance, during the COVID-19 lockdown, police had to disperse several illegal gatherings on canal boats, which resulted in heavy fines for organisers. These incidents highlight the difficulties authorities face in managing social behaviour on the waterways. The Canal & River Trust has also previously cautioned against drinking while boating, emphasising the associated safety risks and the likelihood of aggressive behaviour stemming from excessive alcohol consumption.

While the overwhelming sentiment among locals is one of anger and refusal to allow further disturbances, a few have expressed support for GoBoat’s new strategy. They argue that responsible drinking could enhance the vibrant atmosphere of the canals and enable a diverse range of visitors. However, this argument has not gained significant traction among residents already worn down by prior experiences.

In light of these developments, GoBoat's quest to secure an alcohol licence remains uncertain. Many residents are calling for stricter enforcement measures to safeguard the community’s well-being rather than permitting what they perceive as a recipe for disaster. In the meantime, GoBoat insists that they are committed to a professional approach, promising rigorous safety checks and patrols to address community concerns.

As the canal continues to serve as a communal space for both residents and visitors alike, the balance between enjoyment and safety remains a contentious issue, one that will require ongoing dialogue and perhaps substantial regulatory oversight to navigate successfully.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776787/Locals-London-canals-boozy-boaters-anti-social-behaviour.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/london-hackney-boat-party-covid-lockdown-breach-b919698.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776787/Locals-London-canals-boozy-boaters-anti-social-behaviour.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-57322815), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/covid-boat-party-acton-canal-fines-b918086.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://londonboaters.org/londonbo/floater-july2017-boating-boozing), [[7]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-68181455.amp)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14776787/Locals-London-canals-boozy-boaters-anti-social-behaviour.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-57322815> - In February 2021, a man in Hackney, east London, was fined nearly £2,000 for hosting an illegal party on his canal boat during strict COVID-19 lockdown measures. The gathering violated regulations prohibiting large gatherings, with reports indicating over 70 attendees. Police seized music equipment and lights from the boat, underscoring the enforcement of public health guidelines during the pandemic.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-22754712> - In 2013, an unlicensed carnival on Regent's Canal in east London led to significant environmental damage. Despite organisers cancelling the event, thousands of revellers filled the canal with inflatable boats, leaving debris such as shattered glass and cans. The Canal and River Trust reported that workers spent over 12 hours cleaning up the aftermath, highlighting the challenges of managing unsanctioned events on waterways.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/london-hackney-boat-party-covid-lockdown-breach-b919698.html> - In February 2021, a man was arrested in Hackney, east London, after more than 30 people gathered for a party on a canal boat, breaching COVID-19 lockdown regulations. Police received reports of loud music and voices on the River Lea, leading to the arrest and the issuance of 26 fixed penalty notices. The incident underscored the ongoing challenges of enforcing public health measures during the pandemic.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/covid-boat-party-acton-canal-fines-b918086.html> - In January 2021, police in North Acton, west London, dispersed a boat party on the Grand Union Canal attended by over 70 people, violating COVID-19 regulations. Attendees received £800 fines, and the organiser faced a £10,000 fine. The incident highlighted the challenges of enforcing public health measures during the pandemic, especially in social settings.
6. <https://londonboaters.org/londonbo/floater-july2017-boating-boozing> - In July 2017, the Canal & River Trust (C&RT) issued a warning against drinking alcohol while boating, citing safety concerns. The Trust highlighted that alcohol impairs balance and judgment, increasing the risk of accidents and falls overboard. They also noted that excessive drinking can lead to aggressive behaviour and accidents, urging boaters to avoid consuming alcohol while operating boats.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-68181455.amp> - In February 2024, the luxury party yacht Oceandiva, intended to host events on the River Thames, left London due to 'regulatory challenges' and 'infrastructural inadequacies'. Residents had expressed concerns about potential antisocial behaviour and environmental impact. The decision was seen as a victory for Thames-side residents who feared the yacht would attract rowdy party-goers and harm the environment.