

8<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Ms Susan Sinclair  
Administrative Officer  
Planning & Transport  
South Dublin County Council

**Re: Item 90563 – March 2026 Lucan, Palmerstown and North Clondalkin Area  
Committee Meeting**

Dear Ms Sinclair,

Waterways Ireland thanks the elected Councillors of the Lucan, Palmerstown and North Clondalkin Area Committee for their correspondence regarding vessels on the Grand Canal and the provision of Ringbuoys/Lifebuoys. These are important matters, and we hope the following response provides clarity and assurance that they are being actively managed.

Waterways Ireland is the statutory body responsible for the management of vessels on the Grand Canal, with powers provided under S.I. No. 247/1988 – Canals Act, 1986 (Bye-Laws), 1988. In exercising this role, Waterways Ireland applies a structured and proactive approach to ensure that all vessels using the canal system are appropriately permitted, and that issues relating to abandoned or non-compliant vessels are addressed in a timely and proportionate manner.

Waterways Ireland staff routinely monitor the canals network. Where a vessel is identified as potentially abandoned, a hazard to navigation (including sunken or partially sunken vessels), or a potential source of pollution, the initial approach is to engage with the registered owner and request that appropriate corrective action is taken. Where an owner does not, or cannot, fulfil this responsibility, Waterways Ireland is empowered under the Canal Bye-Laws to take the necessary enforcement action, including removal and disposal of vessels where appropriate.

By way of context, over the period 2023–2025, approximately €110,000 was expended by Waterways Ireland on the recovery and management of approximately 50 vessels found to be in breach of the Bye-Laws, many of which were deemed abandoned.

While some vessels along the stretch between the 12th Lock and Hazelhatch may appear abandoned, the majority are in fact appropriately permitted. Waterways Ireland is, however, aware of two partially sunken vessels in this area. We are actively engaging with the registered owners of these vessels and are seeking to have them take responsibility for their property. As this is an ongoing process, it would not be appropriate to comment further on specific cases at this time. Notwithstanding this, where owners do not act, Waterways Ireland

will take the necessary steps in accordance with its statutory powers, which may include the removal of vessels from the canal.

In relation to Ringbuoys/Lifebuoys, responsibility for their provision and maintenance along the canals (Royal and Grand) rests with the relevant local authority adjacent to the canal. This function is generally overseen by the respective local authority Water Safety Officer, in collaboration with Water Safety Ireland.

Members of the public are also encouraged to report missing or damaged lifebuoys via Water Safety Ireland's website here: [Water Safety Ireland – Public awareness and education on water safety.](#)

Waterways Ireland remains committed to the active management of the canal network, ensuring both navigational safety and the protection of its amenity value. We trust this response provides clarity on the matters raised and the actions being taken.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Harty', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Peter Harty**  
**Inspector of Navigation**  
**Waterways Ireland**

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