

River Thames weir and lockkeepers in strike vote



River Thames weir and lockkeepers have begun voting on strike action over safety concerns, GMB has said.

Workers will decide whether to take industrial action over 'budget-driven decisions' that are 'putting people and property at risk'.

There are only 52 permanent staff on the river, plus 10 temporary posts which expire at the end of this year and have yet to be filled.

According to a 2008 EA assessment, more than 90 staff were needed during peak season.



The ballot opened on Friday [2 May] and closes on 23 May.

Kevin Brandstatter, GMB National Officer said:

"GMB members working on the river Thames are expected to keep people safe with half the numbers needed.

"There are only 52 staff doing the work of more than 90 – it's just not safe with planned time off, holiday commitments and sick absence.

"On any one day there might only be 32 trained staff to operate 45 locks and weirs

"All they want is to do their jobs safely and well and keep the public safe – and they may be ready to go on strike to achieve that."

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