

Notes to Central Shires Region Trade Meeting.

Date **30th October 2006 at 18.00** Venue BW offices, Fazeley

Attendees from BW

Tony Harvey – General Manager
Sally Ash - Head of Boating Development
Jon Oakes – Business Development Manager
Dean Davies – Customer Operations Manager
Nick Ireland – Leisure Development Manager

Attendees from the Trade

Mr Andrew Walton	Ashby Boat Company
Mr Tim Parker	Black Prince Holidays
Mr & Mrs Howes	Kate Boats & Stockton Marina
Mr Ray Bowen	Streethay Wharf & Kings Bromley Marina
Mr Geoff Taylor	Swan Line Cruisers
Mr Dave Taylor	Swan Line Cruisers
Mr & Mrs Wagstaff	Valley Cruisers
Mr Matt Anderson	Anglo Welsh
Rebecca Strong	Anglo Welsh
Mr Paul Garfield	Clifton Cruisers
Mr James Griffin	The Wyvern Shipping Company
Mr Nigel Smith	The Ashby Canal Centre

1. The meeting was introduced by Andrew Walton and it was agreed he continue to take on the role as Chairman. Tony Harvey gave a short update on the progress of the restructuring.

2. There was a discussion about pricing of wide-beam boats relative to narrow boats with opinions expressed from the trade that wide beams should be charged extra on-line.

3. Sally Ash made a presentation on boating development which stimulated a lively discussion.

3a. Pump-outs: The move by BW to increase pump-out charges closer to market rates was welcomed. It is perceived that the low charges had been damaging to the trade. A view was expressed that BW pump-outs were sometimes badly placed close to trade pump-outs undermining the investment in these facilities by the trade. It was noted that there were very few pump-outs in Birmingham and the price charged was consequently very high.

3b. Water points: It was suggested that existing water points might be moved to more appropriate locations. It was noted that Trinity Marina had recently turned off their water point. It is also not always easy to introduce new water points e.g. Tom O Wood.

3c. Craning points: It was noted that there were few craning points in Birmingham.

3d. Dog fatalities: A number of dogs have been killed going from the towpath on to fast roads, particularly on the A38 near Streethay. The possibility of gates to be investigated.

3e. Reduction in on-line moorings: Clarification was sought on the timing of the 1:10 reduction in on-line moorings for new marina moorings such as those around Napton junction. It was noted that 50 new marina moorings had been commissioned in May this year in this area.

3f. Recycling: It was suggested that sites be identified along the canal where existing facilities could be accessed by boaters. It was noted that businesses can't use domestic recycling facilities.

3g. Validating licences and moorings: There was a discussion on how the list of boats that actually moor in a marina could be checked against those that claim to marina moorings. It was generally agreed that marina operators would be happy to check a list provided by BW on an annual basis, data protection allowing. It was noted that marinas often don't store data on index numbers.

3h. Dry Docks: It was suggested that BW should not operate dry docks and that where leases come up for renewal, the possibility of developing extra facilities at these sites should be explored.

3i. Shared ownership boats: It was suggested that these be charged higher amounts than the standard licence.

4. Stern Rails: It was agreed that representation should be made to the MCA to drop the idea of raising stern rails and BW is doing this.

5. Boater behavior: While there continue to be concerns about the behavior of some hire boats and timeshare, it was noted that investigations of training by certain operators had reported high standards of hand-over.

6. Congestion at Fradley: Trade reports and BW's own survey work confirm that congestion has not been a problem at Fradley Junction this year. Nevertheless, data from Woodend Lock Counter shows that lock movements actually increased 6.5% from 7,862 in the period April to October 2005 to 8,374 in the same period of 2006. It may be that the absence of local boat rallies is a factor in the lack of congestion reports and it was noted that the 2004 IWA Festival at Burton could have been a factor in stimulating congestion concerns. Seasonal workers have been available during 2006 at peak times to identify any congestion issues.

7. Sponsor a Lock: It was reported that Wyvern Shipping Company sponsor a lock local to their operation. West Midlands see this as an idea worth exploring.

8. Date of Next Meeting: March 07.