

British Waterways – Central Shires

User Groups : Update Notes & written responses

South - Lapworth, Warwickshire 16th November : North – Burton, Staffordshire 18th November

Issue	Central Shires update on issues raised at May 2004 sessions
Stoppages / Closures	<p>The programme of stoppages is now fully operational. Any amendments are being notified, as we receive them – relatively few so far in Central Shires.</p> <p>To increase appreciation of the work involved in stoppages we offer an open invitation for individuals or groups to attend a stoppage site. To be coordinated through the Service Department.</p> <p>Suggestion of visit to Derwent Lock mid February 2005 – but subject sufficient numbers and agreement of contractors, who own responsibility for a 'construction site'.</p>
Sail-away boats and boat builders operating without consideration of moorings capacity	<p>Having set up a monitoring system during the summer, it has been noticed certain businesses have received a higher number of referrals than most.</p> <p>Jon is setting up sessions with selected businesses over the coming months to improve general boat-handling for next</p>
Water tap at Tom o' The Woods	<p>Severn Trent were on site 29th October – BW pipe does not conform to Severn Trent specification, so additional work will be required – further site meeting today (16th November). Update will be provided in the notes from of this User Group session.</p>
Would Tunnel Lane Bridge be re-opened for walkers	<p>The bridge has been fully surveyed – and acknowledged as needing replacement of some sort. This constitutes an item for the Arrears Programme, which means it will be programmed according to priorities. At the same time, negotiations will be pursued with the council to seek a reclassification of the route, to reduce the cost of reinstatement and thus bring forward the possible timing.</p>
Christmas closure to accommodate railway bridge works (GU Leamington Spa)	<p>This stoppage has been programmed in to the schedule and communicated accordingly. However, enabling works mean the towpath needs to be closed for a longer period (29/11/04 to 16/01/05). Birse Rail Limited are responsible for notices and re-routing of pedestrian access over this period.</p>
Licence evasion	<p>September Boat count evasion rate 6.9% (National average was 10.5%)</p> <p>October checks (954 craft) evasion rate 4.1% (current business target is 3.8%, but this is a maximum standard)</p> <p>Boat removals Autumn 2004 – 7 boats so far, 9 more lined up</p>
Funding to regions according to usage	<p>Central Shires leading the way for capital bids, freeing resources for the maintenance programme.</p> <p>Also secured in excess of £300k from third parties to supplement existing budget</p>
Catherine de Barnes alternative use of the towpath (Henwood Tip)	<p>Funds have not been released to assess the level of hazard – risk considered great enough to suggest £15k would be abortive fees.</p> <p>Alternative funds still being sought, urgently as this represents an opportunity to raise BW income as well as provide User Group amenities.</p>

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Dredging programme – it was suggested BW should aim for a cycle of every 5 years for dredging the entire network	<p>The dredging programme for 05/06 has recently been advised.</p> <p>£313k will be spent on the W & B Bridge 12 to Bilford Top Lock No. 8 £80k spent on the Ashby SSSI section</p> <p>04/05 £158k spent on the W & B £261k spent on the T & M 06/07 remaining 'failures' £291k on the W & B £2,781k on the T & M</p> <p>Whilst every request cannot possibly be accommodated, there is also the opportunity to consider spot dredging where possible.</p>
What progress has been made re: Whittington Horse Bridge	This work has duly been completed
What is the status of the Diglis basin development	The project is still at an early stage, but full consultation will be undertaken and it is assured heritage and conservation will be a critical factor, in keeping with BW philosophy
Danger and condition of Rowington cuttings	<p>Rowington continues to be a concern to all – including Central Shires.</p> <p>The condition is such that this stretch is assessed as an Arrears item.</p> <p>A couple of trees have already received much needed immediate attention – and the cuttings used to infill the towpath – a temporary and only partial solution.</p> <p>Additional 'special funds' would be directed to this area as a priority in 05/06, if a bid in current business planning session is successful.</p> <p>A full tree management programme will be complete over next 2-3 years anyway.</p> <p>But, needs tree management in place before comprehensive repairing of towpath – as previously advised. Further modest temporary works will be undertaken in 2005.</p>
Status of the Hopwood Marina development	<p>Highway and environmental issues caused BW to withdraw interest</p> <p>Landowner progressing independently, but no details of a resubmitted planning application received by BW.</p>
Reciprocal access rights at Stratford	No progress to report, although BW still supports the principle of reciprocal deal on access rights between the waterways.
CCTV Camera at Atherstone	<p>Atherstone Town Council has advised that a new camera has been sited on the canal bridge at Coleshill Road, with part funding from British Waterways (£5k of £33k). They have asked that we publicise the camera's presence.</p> <p>Funding was also agreed on the condition that figures for moorer numbers was provided, so we will be forwarding these.</p>

Questions received in advance of November 2004 User Group sessions

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Dredging for the GU summit – when?	NABO SG Boats	GU summit has not been included in priority lists for a number of years. However, in response to the many referrals Central Shires and West Midlands have combined resources and are undertaking an up to date hydrographical survey of the 10 mile pound – to clarify need. Results are expected by April 2005, from which a dredging programme can be established.
What water transfer schemes are currently in position	NABO	Central Shires has no proposals for water transfer arrangements at present.
When is promised “balance” going into steel hollow lock beams	Warwick Fly Boats	A contractor has been approached to design a method of inserting material into the hollow beams to act as counter-balance. Additional calculations are required to estimate the actual weight. This will be a priority for the 05/06 works programme.
Rowington Cutting trees	M W Yacht Club	As updated above, essential works have been undertaken to a couple of the most precarious trees – clearly this has only been selective, in advance of more comprehensive works next year, subject to a successful bid for funding
Moorings at Hatton Wharf – on opposite bank	M W Yacht Club	More regular patrols of this area, during the season will be programmed. Additional signage also to be considered, although Central Shires prefers to introduce solutions that minimise the need for a proliferation of signs.
Vegetation – is there a plan and what is the policy on off-side management	Warwick IWA & Lichfield IWA & Ashby Canal Association	There are already tree management plans for a proportion of the waterway – but not all. Priorities have been identified where a comprehensive plan is not available yet e.g. Rowington, Coventry 5 ½ and 10-mile pound on the GU. Certain parts of the Solihull works may require revisiting in 05/06, subject to funding. A separate bid for funds is currently being submitted, to allow completion of the assessment/planning for the entire waterway and to start action. Tree management work will be undertaken on the North Stratford (Dickens Heath) in early 2005, as part of a towpath improvement scheme. Curdworth and Handsacre have been identified as problem areas on a number of occasions, so additional attention will be given to monitoring these for further deterioration over the next 12 months. Growing conditions of 2004 have highlighted the requirement for further attention, if it was needed.
Towpaths – plans for on-going towpath improvements	Warwick IWA & Whittington Parish Council	We use customer comments and complaints to supplement a regular inspection regime. There is a schedule of necessary works as a result, but this is not comprehensive, yet. Towpath improvement schemes have proven to be a lucrative source of third party funding, although these are often closer to urban areas and population density than rural. In addition, towpath improvements are an area for which separate funds are currently being bid for. Previously discussed areas of concern are noted as priorities – Dickens Heath, Rowington Long Itchington is not currently a priority, but will be reassessed and compared to current priorities. The towpath on the Coventry Canal near Lichfield has not been previously identified as a priority. However, recent reports that the condition here is dangerous means the site will be revisited with specific reference to assessing risk and evaluating the need against existing priorities

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Sanitary stations – on-going improvements	Warwick IWA	Just appointed a Customer Services Coordinator, one of whose duties will be to maintain the highest standards at existing facilities. Also part of the remit will be to identify areas of need and opportunity to introduce additional points
Moorings policy – Unauthorised moorings and overstaying	Warwick IWA	This can be a difficult issue to regulate, because of the size of the area – however, recent recruitment of an additional Patrol Officer means a better coverage of the waterway. Initial priority has been given to licence evasion, but mooring control will become important as we seek to enforce compliance with mooring conditions. Part of the idea of having a Patrol Team, with individual areas of responsibility, is to allow blitzing of areas where evasion and mooring offences are a known problem – so the eastern limits of the GU can be considered as this happens. Marina developments have to be considered on their own merit. Whilst Central Shires welcomes the opportunity to increase capacity on the waterway, it must give due consideration to the impact on navigation and water management, as primary concerns. There are also a number of historic anomalies with certain businesses and proposals for these to expand will provide the opportunity to remove either unfair and advantageous trading conditions for some operators.
Congestion around the Hanbury Wharf area	W B C S	Concerns over the level of congestion at Hanbury are shared by Central Shires. The operators of the New Boat Company were reminded of the need not to impede navigation at the beginning of November 2004 Photographs provided since then show things are OK, but that we will need to monitor the situation closely, especially at peak season. There is also a temporary agreement allowing additional use of off-side linear moorings beyond the ‘wharf’ area. This generates much welcome funds for the waterway, but it is still a provisional arrangement and will be rescinded if problems persist in the area.
Accommodation Bridges on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal, especially the Oddingley bridge	W B C S	The bridges at Oddingley are inspected monthly by trained and competent length inspectors, who are following guidance given by our engineers. Following the recent incident where rubble fell from one of the bridges, they have been re-inspected by an operations engineer, as an intermediate inspection. Though the bridges are undoubtedly in poor condition, it was decided that further significant deterioration was unlikely, and it is acceptable to proceed with the plan to undertake repairs as part of the 05/06 Arrears programme. Condition of the bridges will now be more closely monitored and the repair will be brought forward if there is further deterioration before the planned work
River flood warnings at Derwent Mouth and Alrewas	IWA	Derwent Mouth is a traffic light system operated by East midlands waterway, but without further details we are not aware of any issue, or possible solutions. Alrewas operates under a sign system that has proved effective for the last few years. It would be preferable to upgrade to a traffic light system here as well, but the cost would be significant. As such it is felt other demands on limited resources take priority. Some additional signs to advise boats about turning have been provided.