

## British Waterways – Central Shires : User Groups – May 2006

**North - Fradley, Staffordshire 16<sup>th</sup> May (10 attendees) & South - Lapworth, Warwickshire 18<sup>th</sup> May (18 attendees)**

Central Shires attendees: Tony Harvey, General Manager; Jon Oakes, Service Manager; Mike Youe, Environment & Heritage Manager;  
Lizey Turner, Heritage Advisor; Dean Davies, Operations Manager (Fradley only)

Issue	Raised by	Forum	Central Shires response
Heritage presentation		Fradley	<i>Is all heritage work funded directly by BW?</i> The majority is, although there are opportunities for third party funding as well, e.g. Stourport works include more than £2m funding
		Fradley	<i>When lock work done, should this include full historic restoration e.g. lock infrastructure?</i> Has to be considered on a project specific basis and with due attention to listed building constraints
		Lapworth	<i>What proportion of GWP and engineering works involves heritage input?</i> Circa 80% of all works are directly referred to the E&H team. Even in emergencies works are commissioned, but revisited as soon as practically possible to given heritage due consideration
		Lapworth	<i>Concern over the protection of the Lock Cottage at Diglis; subsequently need to check the ownership of Dansk Buildings 1 and 2 at Diglis</i> Heritage responsibilities transpose any property transactions – BW has a duty to ensure heritage values are preserved. The Dansk buildings (1 and 2) were transferred to Taylor Woodrow as part of the bigger transfer deal. They are will be transferred back to Central Shires on long leasehold (999 years) for onward letting, on completion of the refurbishment project. Refurbishment is planned for Summer 2006 and will run for approximately 36 weeks, at which time we get the buildings back to let. Estimates of repair /refurbishment costs for the Cottage are likely to exceed £100k. Any work necessary will be undertaken within our statutory responsibilities, as administered by English Heritage. Subject to a full heritage assessment by BW, the future of the building will be assessed. This could include disposal, but only with due consideration for the protection of the heritage values of the property.
Recycling Project	RBOA	Fradley	<i>Request for an update on the recycling initiatives being set-up by Central Shires</i> information required for a RBOA newsletter in July; copy deadline end of May will be sent out separately
Overstaying of a craft at Bridge 32 on the Ashby Canal	Canal Society	Fradley	<i>Status of craft reported to have been at the site for over 2 years</i> Owner within the enforcement procedure
New User Group attendees			<i>Details of people to be added to the distribution list for invites and notes – either new or not receiving previous communications:</i> Ms. Margaret Smith, new member on behalf of AWCC Julia Holmes, on behalf of WWUF Ian Fletcher, on behalf of Warwick IWA
Disposal of working boats	HNBOC	Fradley	<i>Will there be further consultation before the disposal of any heritage boats in the working fleet?</i> A major package of craft has been disposed through auction – any further disposals will be with reference to HNBOC – through Ian White's team in Leeds (contact 0113 281 6801)

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Stoppage Programme	IWA	Fradley	<p><i>Concerns raised over the request from Network Rail (NWR) in the Lichfield/Armitage area on the T&amp;M canal and the relevance of previous hearings/agreements over their rights to introduce a stoppage.</i></p> <p>Central Shires is in discussion with NWR to seek a practical and pragmatic solution to current requests. The priority will be minimising disruption to BW visitors and maximising any compensation that can be secured for re-investment directly back in to the local network.</p> <p>Further user consultation can be expected when it is clearer what NWR propose and what BW considers might be reasonable</p>
			<p><i>Question asked about avoiding the half-term slots where possible, as a national guideline.</i></p> <p>Half term varies across the Central Shires network, so it is not possible to preserve through routes to cover the whole period involved.</p> <p>Also, the scale of certain works means the full Spring period is needed to complete within by the March 18<sup>th</sup> target</p> <p>To clarify the national position, the programme starts in November to avoid the Autumn half term. This is the only period that can be accommodated for similar reasons to the above</p>
New marinas	IWA	Fradley	<p><i>Concern if BW is still being reactive to opportunities since the launch of the new guidelines and not directing potential investors towards preferred location.</i></p> <p>To deliver the target numbers of new off-line berths it is sensible to concentrate on those prospects already on the agenda. However, cooperation and standard procedures now make it more efficient to consider alternative proposals.</p> <p>Increasingly the benefits of this will be seen at a national level, as there are significantly different requirements and opportunities within each business unit.</p> <p>It is not appropriate to favour any specific application because of fair competition. The primary grounds for rejecting a proposal are water supply and navigation. Research is currently underway to assess congestion, which may be a criteria adopted if the research provides a scientific basis to determine this.</p>
Rubbish in the Nuneaton area	IWA	Fradley	<p><i>Concern over the level of rubbish in the Nuneaton area during a recent trip.</i></p> <p>Although the dates referred to were not confirmed, Nuneaton has recently received a lot of attention for removal of debris and general litter. One team targeted the area during the Towpath Tidy exercise. A larger group of volunteers had been set up for this as well, but they withdrew at the last minute. BW is liaising with the local authority to improve social inclusion and solicit additional support for litter removal</p>
Water levels		Fradley and Lapworth	<p>With severe water shortages in the South East is there a danger reserves will be taken from the North and Midlands to create problems locally.</p> <p>There are no plans to transfer water on any scale and reservoir levels in the Central Shires area are near to full – so there is not anticipated to be a significant problem in the 2006 summer season.</p> <p>Through the sophistication of the SCADA system, the situation will be closely monitored throughout the season</p>
Water framework directive		Fradley	<p><i>What views do BW have on latest developments and consultations?</i></p> <p>Possible item for specific presentation at the next User Group sessions. BW are in liaison with the EA, although Central Shires is not a lead area for this because of limited responsibilities for the Severn (South West) and the Trent (East Midlands)</p>

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Antisocial behaviour in the Hatton area	Mid-Warwick Yacht Club	Lapworth	<i>Concern over the use of pee-wee bikes on the towpath and the risk they represent to general visitors.</i> BW is not aware of a particular problem in this area; during a recent Duty Manager tour over the weekend, there was no evidence of this abuse. Any such incidents must be reported to the police, because they have the powers to act but can/will only do so if the number of incidents justifies their resources.
Signage Bridge 57	Mid-Warwick Yacht Club	Lapworth	<i>A request for a sign to advise boaters to slow down approaching moorings is outstanding for over a year now.</i> BW will investigate and advise of the possible installation – or confirm this will not happen, to remove any confusion or false expectation.
Gallows Bridge, No. 57	Mid-Warwick Yacht Club and Ramblers Association	Lapworth	<i>Concern over the closure of Bridge 57 on safety grounds, but a railing has now been removed by vandals increasing the risk of an incident; and the rumours on proposed redirecting the path are of concern as well – going via a busy road to the next bridge are considered not suitable.</i> The safety of the current situation will be reassessed as part of the monthly inspection regime. Proposals for re-routing will be considered and advised if an acceptable solution has been identified. The replacement of the deck is also being considered
Towpath repair and upgrade programme			<i>General concern over the condition of certain sections and the need for upgrade of towpaths across the Central Shires network.</i> Previous issues of funding and costs for upgrade are still valid. However, there is now a clear order of priority identified and BW is actively approaching local authorities and other funders to try and secure contributions to bring forward essential works. Suggestions and nominations for priority by users and visitors are welcome as they help to promote our arguments to all funders.
Earlswood Lakes towpath	Ramblers Association	Lapworth	<i>Concern that there have been reports that part of the path around Terry's Pool is impassable.</i> BW is working with the local Probation Services to provide project work labour that will utilise BW materials to address any problems here.
Hatton Walks	Ramblers Association	Lapworth	<i>Report that the church is located in the wrong position in the new leaflet on walks around Hatton.</i> The map is intended to be illustrative rather than detailed, but the anomaly is noted and a reprint will be commissioned at the earliest practical opportunity
Communication by Central Shires	"The Depot" Charity Boat Project	Lapworth	<i>Complaint that communication by Central Shires is not good, especially with regard to problems over boating issues in Bancroft Basin.</i> <i>However, other inputs from user group attendees complimented Central Shires for being one of the more open and accessible sections of BW.</i> The local issues referred to can be addressed outside of the user group forum, in a local consultation process and an invitation was made for the individual concerned to contact Central Shires on the matter.
Boater facilities at Diglis	WWUF and IWA	Lapworth	<i>Concern that with the extended disruption caused by works to Diglis Basin(s), pressure and access to the boaters facilities will be put under undue pressure again.</i> As boats embark on their summer cruising, the opportunity will be taken to consider minor movements of moorings to ensure sufficient access is protected. We will also consider the possibility of a floating unit on the river as a temporary addition to ease demand on the linear unit.

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Accommodation bridges on the Worcester Birmingham		Lapworth	<p><i>General appreciation of what was achieved and the communication involved on the work to bridge 29, but what next for the others.</i></p> <p>Scaffolding with protective netting is currently being specified for bridges 26 and 28 as a short term resolution of hazards from falling materials, this should be in place within 2 months</p>
Metal tags on tress	WFBCO	Lapworth	<p><i>What are these?</i></p> <p>This is part of the vegetation management work. A survey will shortly be complete of all trees on the Central Shires network. From this a schedule of works will be produced and a catalogue off all issues will be kept for future planning</p>
Weight balance beams	WFBCO	Lapworth	<p><i>Concern that there has still been no remedial action on weight balances on the Grand Union locks.</i></p> <p>A temporary solution using sand bags is being trialled at Bascote in May/June. If this is successful it will be applied elsewhere, whilst a long term solution is programmed in.</p>
Offside vegetation management at Calcutt	WFBCO	Lapworth	<p><i>Concern that there has been no work to vegetation at Calcutt.</i></p> <p>A plan of works has recently been agreed, but it is now out of the cutting season because of nesting birds. It is planned for this work to take place in Autumn 2007, between the full boating season and the stoppages programme</p>
Rowington cutting - towpath		Lapworth	<p><i>An update provided by BW – not a specific question tabled</i></p> <p>The use of bark will provide a temporary solution and this should be installed over the next three months. A fuller engineering solution is being assessed over the next three weeks, so a project can be scheduled into the general programme. It is hoped this can happen within the next 18 months – but a definitive commitment cannot be given on timing at this stage.</p>
Swing Bridge, Kings Norton		Lapworth	<p><i>An update provided by BW – not a specific question tabled</i></p> <p>Agreement in principal has been given by the Council for a downgrade in the status of the bridge – for pedestrian access and not major vehicular traffic. Alternative designs have been produced and costs are being gathered for a decision on the preferred scheme.</p> <p>Subject to funding and formal consents from the council on the status of the bridge, it is hoped the necessary works involving in excess of £300,000, can be started in 2007/8. This will be confirmed as soon as possible.</p>
Next meeting			<p>Provisional dates for the Autumn round of meetings (to be confirmed – check website):</p> <p>Fradley – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006</p> <p>Lapworth – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006</p>