

LOWLAND CANALS USER GROUP MEETING

30 October 2004

Dundas Suite

Scribe – Sandra Purves

Leader – Jaki Stevenson

Community Development Forum

General

The meeting didn't have enough time to develop a vision of the canal in 2014; however, some interesting points and concerns were raised.

Main Points Arising from Discussion

Everyone wanted to see published guidelines for community groups giving a clear definition of what was commercial activity and what were defined as community boats – suggestion was that this debate could be settled through identified target market sectors.

There was strength of feeling that there should be a level playing field with everyone paying the same level of licence fee.

Clearly outlined areas where community boats could operate.

Concerns

Lack of money for supporting community organisations

Lack of feed-back from previous discussions

Canal Societies want to know what BW's policy is on funding boats

LUCS want to know if it is worthwhile renewing their lease for the tearoom

Concerns that community groups are being sidelined.

Role of Community Organisations

Environmental awareness

Rolling out the arts strategy

Providing seating on canal side

Ambassadors in the community to encourage local involvement

Questions raised were – do the voluntary sector have a role in encouraging tourism?

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Community Development

British Waterways to publish Guidelines for Community Groups

Concern that Community Groups are sidelined.

There has been purchase of canoes for use at areas further away from existing areas:- e.g. Clydebank – no interest as yet

BW lack of money for support

Community boats –v- Commercial use.

Seats to be provided at ½ mile stones – ideal for old folk walking along towpath

Canal Societies need to know BW's view of Canal Societies' policy on funding boats – do they support all community groups?

What is result of last time's discussion – last year 25 community boats

Definition of commercial and community boats

Canal Societies are start-up groups/kick start groups

Do BW want people at Edinburgh Quay?

What should community Groups be involved in? – development – they see areas where work is needed. Get people on canal. Environmental awareness.

Need for clear policy

BW – Every boat should be licensed and pay for a mooring

Trying to encourage growth

What are roles?

Need to cover costs.

Different target markets

Bottom rung costs - £3 per person/per hour.

Focus on clearing banks and local community involvement.

Voluntary Sector – encourage local communities to become involved – speaking to local people.

To raise profile of the canals

Grow from small boats to big boats – become businesses

Commercial investors scared

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LUCS – under current uncertainty is it worth their while renewing the lease for tearoom etc.

- Need for community development
- Need to see activity and boat movement
- In Falkirk no need for Canal Society because of The Wheel
- Amalgamation with the Waterways Trust
- Seagull Trust – biggest Community operation – finding difficulty with future finance
- Guidelines – What is/is not acceptable
- Clear Policy
- Nodal Strategy for Community Development Boundaries

Sandra Purves

3 November 2004