

WEST USER FORUM – AUTUMN 2006 HELD AT ROSSETT HALL HOTEL ON OCTOBER 16TH 2006

Sue Lewis (SL) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. SL explained recent changes in the Service Team. Roger Teagle has left BW and Andy Whitehouse has joined the team as Customer Operations manager on a 8 months secondment. Sam Hawkins has also joined the team as Customer Operations Supervisor covering the East region.

Barbara Plunkett (BP) gave an update on the work carried out by the Licence and Patrol Team throughout the Summer and the latest income received from the CCJ procedure which is used for evasion.

Julie Sharman (JS) spoke about the DEFRA cuts and the reasoning behind it and then gave an outline of the news which had been received regarding staff cuts and changes in Waterway boundaries. JS also explained that W & BC will benefit from receiving extra income from the Steady State Review which has been ongoing for some time .

Phil Spencer from the New Marinas Unit gave a presentation on the work the unit is currently involved with. A separate sheet of Q & A's to Phil is attached to the minutes.

Paul Mills from SUCS gave a short slide presentation on the Restoration of Newhouse Lock. A written report of this is attached to the minutes.

SL announced to the meeting that John Brady, Patrol Officer for the West Region will be retiring in late November. Tributes to John thanking him for all his dedication and hard work were paid by Sue Lewis, Barbara Plunkett and Paul Mills. John Brady gave a short speech extending his thanks to all the Voluntary Groups and Users and all the friends he had made .

- Q. Are W & BC going to be carrying out the same procedures as West Midlands with regard to “crushing” mini motorcycles who use the towpath. There is a big problem with these machines from Audlem towards Atherley.
- A. W & BC will ask for information from WM regarding the procedure involving these motorcycles. At the moment it is not a problem on W & BC. Suggestions have been made regarding extra signage especially at the new access point at Nantwich. We will look into the possibility of signage although we feel that signage alone will not stop the offenders.
- Q. You have talked about extending the boundaries but there are going to be less resources. How are the present resources going to be stretched to maintain the extra canal.?
- A. JS has asked Tony Harvey for extra “men in blue” . We would expect the men who currently work on the lengths which we will be maintaining to transfer to W & BC. The new boundaries will be to Alderley Jnct on the SU and Great Heywood on the T & M.
- Q. How will the cuts affect the Saturn project and the Taylors Boat Yard Trust?
- A. It is a bit early to say what the long term outcome will be. The Saturn project has a different theme for the business. There are health & safety aspects regarding the Taylors' project. We also need to ask “Why are we doing it and what are we doing it for” with all projects.
- Q. Will the cuts affect the promotional work?
- A. There has been a new national marketing strategy which has just been agreed. There will be a different type of marketing. Leaflets will be available “on line”.
- Q. We are nervous about the restoration projects? Will they still go ahead?
- A. Everyone is still restoring canals even though the Press have said that canals may close.
- Q. If you are envisaging major growth in visitor numbers in walkers, cyclists etc how will you get extra income from this source?
- A. Growth is looked at in different categories- higher urban density, bigger regeneration areas, waterside properties, leases, property value is higher in heavily populated areas, pub partnerships. All these will help to increase our revenue.
- Q. What is BW's national policy on disposing of glass and plastic.
- A. There is no national policy at the moment. W & BC are looking into. Recycling is still very expensive. We are identifying where the nearest recycling plants are and we will endeavour to sign these at various locations. We are aware that it is socially unacceptable not to offer

recycling containers. It would be difficult to do recycling on a national level as all Councils offer different methods of recycling.

- Q. There is a problem with rubbish skips and batteries and waste oil being disposed in them. Would it not be possible to have a separate waste disposal for these items?
- A. We already have a separate disposal area at Calveley for these items. We have no further sites planned at the moment.
- Q. Has anyone talked to local councils re a bottle bank at Nantwich which the council would empty?
- A. There has been very negative response from councils and it is too expensive to pursue at this present time.

The date and venue of the next meeting will be confirmed at a later date.