

Boating Issues Meeting – 7 April 2005

This document provides a brief synopsis of April's Boating Issues meeting and action arising from the meeting. A full set of notes will be produced shortly. This summary is being sent to those who attended yesterday's meeting and to British Waterways' Service Managers.

1. Report on issues since last meeting

Simon referred the group to an update paper produced ahead of the meeting. The following issues were discussed further.

'Veg Pledge'

- General discussions took place. Users acknowledged that a significant improvement had been achieved.
- Users were encouraged to provide specific examples of poor vegetation management to Amanda Strang (with images and locations) also where it has been managed well, to compare best practice.
- Discussion took place on vegetation management to wash walls. BW to ask Peter Beckwith to recirculate the guidance note.
- The Users suggested that BW could leave suitable waste from vegetation management for boaters to take away for use as fuel.

Pump-out Cards Electricity

- BW to ensure Boaters Directory includes the different types of electricity bollard and their location.
- BW to investigate if value of pump-out cards can be printed on them.
- BW reported that the Boaters Directory will include list of where pump-out cards can be purchased.

BW Work Boats

- Discussion took place on people using BW work boats as rubbish tip.
- BW to consider using signs to deter rubbish placement on work boats.
- Comments were made that BW staff should clear BW Boats after use to deter people dumping rubbish

Red Diesel

- Users discussed the current derogation on and grading of red diesel.
- Scott Deverell (TYHA) to raise with BMF and fellow council members the possibilities for encouraging BMF members to clearly display type and price of diesel available.

BW Chairman

- Simon informed the group that a new BW Chairman has been appointed (Tony Hales) who will start on 10 July 2005. Tony has enthusiasm and interest in the canals.

British Waterways Advisory Forum (BWAFF)

- Simon informed the group that the first meeting will take place 11 May 2005 and invites for this meeting would go out very soon.

2. Licence Evasion / Overstaying on Moorings

- Discussions took place on new boats on the network registering as continuous cruiser as a result of lack of mooring availability.
- Simon specifically informed the group that BW is currently implementing a process for SAP to automatically identify boats where licences are not being renewed. This process should be in place by the autumn, allowing patrol staff to concentrate on persistent evaders.
- Sam Clarke (APCO) commented that marinas used to receive reports from BW on boats recorded as having a marina home mooring, for checking against the actual situation. This no longer happens. BW to report back to APCO on this matter.
- BW to advise the percentage of boats who have taken a temporary mooring on the Kennet & Avon.
- Overall discussions took place on the methodology for monitoring overstay and implementing overstay charges.
- Eugene advised that all new licence holders now have to declare their home mooring. If they don't have one then they are sent guidance on continuous cruising, thereby giving the message that BW is not responsible for finding boaters moorings.
- Simon informed the group of the marina prospectus and explained how it may encourage action to help to alleviate the problem of moorings and overstay.
- A number of users believed that boat builders should have greater responsibility for making new users aware of the need to seek a mooring and guidance on continuously cruising.

3. Visitor Moorings

3.1 Historic Boat Harbours

- A handout was provided on a review of 'Historic Boat Discount' a discussion then followed.
- It was suggested that BW should consider separating Historic Boat discount from the licence fees. Adrian Stott was asked to provide his views to Sally Ash.
- A discussion took place on historic boat harbours (areas where historic boats can moor in interim periods whilst travelling round the network and will provide a point of interest to visitors).
- BW to ensure that mooring sites and their status are updated regularly in the Boaters Directory.
- Eugene informed the group that Historic Boats travelling to Preston Brook canal festival can use Icknield Loop free of charge whilst they on the way to the festival.

3.2 Time Limited Moorings Proposal

- General discussion took place over when and how time limited moorings should be implemented.
- Debbie Lumb provided an overview on how North West tackle overstay discrepancies.
- BW to encourage customers where they cannot meet the 14day rule to contact the local waterway unit to agree an extended stay. BW would be sympathetic to genuine difficulties.
- It was generally felt that where moorings are to be charged, the first 24hrs should be free.

4. Provision of Slipways, turning areas and trailer parking

- Discussion took place on slipways and users expressed concern that they were on the decrease. IWA to provide BW on their guidance on design of slipways.
- Simon commented that the Marina Prospectus could help to alleviate the problem with potential new marina incorporating new slipways.
- Peter Wade is writing a safety guidance document on slipways. He will take account of guidance already drawn up by IWA.

5. Marina Locations

- General discussions took place on marina locations and congestion on the canal system. Simon explained how the marina prospectus would encourage marinas to be developed in the most suitable locations.
- Debbie Lumb confirmed David Pearce's assumption that local authorities prefer expansion of current marinas rather than new builds.
- There was concern at the lack of training for crews of Canaltime Boats and Simon agreed to talk to BWML about user concern for Canaltime at Sawley and asked if Sam (APCO) could take this matter up with BMF.
- Users suggested that BW considers talking to property developers to encourage moorings to be provided at canalside developments.
- A discussion took place that old, and now disused, canal arms (particularly in London) can be brought back into use for new moorings.

6. Anti-Social Behaviour

- Discussions took place on troubled areas around the North West in which Debbie Lumb was able to provide information on what BW is doing to address these issues.
- A 'Waterway Awareness' meeting is due to take place on 8 April 2005.

7. Dimensions

- Users asked that for an update on the 'dimensions' project.
- The first stage of the project was to provide maximum dimensions of length 'v' beam and a consultation of this took place and details, based on Richard Booth's original work is published on BW's website. This document will also be in the Boaters Directory.
- Richard Booth explained to the group the second stage of the project and the identification of pinch-points. Simon responded, and at this stage there is no further commitment to produce further work.
- BW assured the group that where restoration or repair takes place it will be done to the original dimension.
- Further discussion took place on the reduction of 'gauge' and was suggest that this could be considered as an item for BWAf.

8. Boaters Directory Update

- Eugene updated the group on the Boaters Directory current position which will go out to the User Groups for comment on accuracy.
- Simon apologised for the project running late but stressed the importance of the information in the guide being correct.
- Users requested that paper versions are dated and when amendments to the online directory take place, these are made clear on an update page.

9. Creation of Access Road for Stoppages

- Richard Booth (HNBOC) raised concern that BW was creating expensive access roads for stoppages instead of accessing the site by canal.
- Simon assured the group that the engineering teams make a balanced decision on access by road or by water.

10. Dredging

The following areas were discussed about dredging:

- Confirmation of BW's ongoing commitment to dredge to 'original profile' in all projects.
- Report on progress towards 'steady state' budgeting with respect to maintenance. BW responded that Jim Stirling is taking the lead on 'steady state' and this will evolve over the next 18months.
- Discussion of separation of BW's budget of backlog from maintenance dredging and of BW's plans for the eliminating the remaining backlog. Simon confirmed that the plans were that by 2012 the whole canal would be dredged to original profile.

- Discussion of the methodology for setting priorities for lengths to be dredged, within the list of lengths on which depths have degraded past the dredging 'trigger' points. BW to circulate breakdown on dredging spend per waterway.
- Users were concerned that dredging and dimensions were not being included in the new waterway standards. BW to provide clarification.

11. Local Consultation Procedures – updating societies

- Tony Hirst (IWAAC) felt that actions from these meetings were not being fed back to the waterways and to waterway societies. BW will circulate notes of meetings to interested waterway societies.

12. BW Market Research Presentation

- Simon presented to the group the results of BW's customer research.
- Simon to provide definition of a 'visit' to the group.

13. Peter Wade Presentations

AINA Signs Presentation

- Peter Wade presented to the group AINA proposed signs documentation.
- Overall there were mixed feelings of the AINA signage and the appropriateness of CEVNI.
- Simon asked Peter Wade if AINA would consider extra time for its consultation to allow BW's Boating User Groups to respond.
- Further discussions took place on the proliferation of signs and quality of data in notice boards. BW to discuss issues such as these at an upcoming General Manager's meeting.

Visitor Incident Report Form Presentation

- Peter Wade presented to the group results of the number of 'visitor incident report forms' returned to BW.
- Users suggested encouraging use of forms in their respective magazines.

14. Any other business

- Discussion on positively upgrading waterway classifications.
- Discussion on frequency of Boating & Corridor Issues meeting. BW to continue with the current system.
- Amanda Strang provided dates for 2006 meetings.