



**ROBIN EVANS CUSTOMER MEETING
Hatton, Warwick, 22 July 2008**

<p>Relocation of footbridge at Bancroft Basin, Stratford</p>	<p>Questions raised about decision to replace bridge constructed in the 1960s at the time of the restoration of the canal. RE confirmed BW is in favour of keeping canal buildings of heritage importance. However, it is important for wider factors to also be taken into account when assessing how locations might better serve customers.</p>
<p>General moorings questions</p>	<p>Boaters with 40' and 60' boats tendering in new process may be disadvantaged when looking to secure a previous 70' mooring and there appeared to be no opportunity to comment on this in the consultation. RE advised that free text should be inserted as the feedback would be important. SS was asked about details on the consultation and the customer was advised that the trial had raised a number of factors around management of location moorings. SA to talk to local managers to ensure efficiency was being addressed. It was confirmed boaters can bid for any length and this can mean they might be able to pick up a bargain.</p>
<p>Customer Safety Standards</p>	<p>Issues raised about 3 holding points in locks. A questioner felt that heritage was being put at risk by this work. It was felt that if prior consultation had been undertaken with IWA and key partners, the work would have been seen as not an effective use of resources. RE confirmed the work had followed a comprehensive review and included production of a detailed risk assessment. It was understood the work had been contentious but safety remained an utmost consideration for BW. Heritage is of high importance but it does not take priority over safety. Around £2.9m was being spent on safety standards throughout country. SS confirmed the waterways advisory panel, included a range of representatives and consumers had considered this issue.</p>
<p>Lock Ladders – are these a waste of resources?</p>	<p>RE confirmed that for many cases Safety Standards were existing standards which had been adopted fully but not comprehensively. The current works were to target consistency. Whilst the customer had highlighted an incident in which he was involved, BW felt the Minimum Safety Standards would introduce a safer environment for all.</p>
<p>Restoration and risk</p>	<p>If BW is not going to deliver restorations, - who is? RE outlined the key factors in assessing the relative viability of restoration projects and confirmed that it was the partnerships route that all restorations should now be delivered. It is important that partners understand risk and their responsibility. The Cotswolds project decision had been a difficult one for BW but it could now be seen that the project funding partners had reached a more equitable split of contributions.</p>
<p>Local Community at Acocks Green</p>	<p>Customer pointed out the successful relationship between BW and its neighbours at Acocks Green – how could this enthusiasm be encouraged? RE pointed out that partnerships with BW, income from S106 money, bridge premiums, cost of vandalism are all important ingredients in maintain the system. The customer felt that canal side buildings and heritage was not as secure as it used to be. RE pointed out that only 4% of land along waterways was owned by BW. There is therefore a role to influence others but we are not the major</p>

	<p>player.</p> <p>In addition, RE pointed out that for every £1 BW spends, it generates 10 to 15 times that amount of public benefit.</p>
<p>General issues around management of the canal network</p>	<p>Why do certain issues keep happening? BW appears to follow a similar pattern of decision-making which involves changes after policy has been set e.g. closing moorings at 1 in 10 for NMU's. BW should realise that certain decisions won't please everyone and it shouldn't change its mind after pressure.</p> <p>The key aim is to maintain waterways in as good a condition as possible. Where funding decreases, the option to maintain smaller amount in good condition should not be pursued rather than whole in a lower standard condition.</p> <p>Dredging programme – had there been a change in the methodology of how this was to be done e.g. to original profile or as could be afforded? Also, was the veg pledge still underway?</p> <p>RE confirmed that he understood the frustration of customers, but BW did strive to provide the most efficient use of resources and provide an infrastructure that remained functional.</p> <p>SS pointed out BW had a range of customer and specialist groups. Many had – competing interests. Customer comments included the wish for BW to remain “local”.</p>
<p>Basics sanitary facilities</p>	<p>The customer pointed out the lack of facilities on the River Severn. This not only was inconvenient, it also may present a risk. It was felt there should be essential facilities at convenient intervals eg elsan every half day cruising or every day.</p> <p>RE pointed out that it was not only up to BW to provide facilities. It was agreed customer information needed updating.</p>
<p>Angling</p>	<p>An angling club representative felt the standard of boating holidaymaker's behaviour towards anglers was poor.</p> <p>SA confirmed all hire operators should have copies of the Boaters Handbook to give to their customers. Leaflets were also available.</p> <p>The customer pointed out anglers needs: 1) boats should navigate “straight down middle” of canal when passing anglers. 2) keep up a constant speed before/during/after the stretch where anglers are positioned. 3) No revving of engine after passing anglers.</p> <p>RE felt this needed 2-way communication and greater conciliation between the two groups. Anglers/boaters should have their own cross-meetings – not necessary to be done through British Waterways.</p>
<p>Environmental issues</p>	<p>How was BW handling efficiency/green issues? For example, use of bio-diesel. Was the 25% discount for electric boats still relevant? It was felt that BW should do more</p> <p>SA advised that discussions were ongoing within BW on environmental issues.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>A customer felt that BW should let all relevant communities know what is happening on canals. There was some discussion around angling issues and angler representatives were keen to see how angling income was spent?</p> <p>Presence of motorbikes etc on towpath, damage to rods/equipment and anti-social behaviour all seemed to be on the increase.</p> <p>It was clarified that expenditure is undertaken as a total to the overall benefit of the system, rather than according to income stream or user</p>

	<p>group.</p> <p>RE confirmed that current motorcycle barriers designs in use are not user friendly for wheelchairs/pushchairs. If suitable barrier could be produced British Waterways would use. Antisocial behaviour is regrettable but is a police matter.</p>
Volunteers	<p>Could more be done via volunteers? For example, a serving policeman had undertaken a survey of BCNS in his own time and police now use details of the survey to ascertain location when incidents reported. It should be noted this was a system put in place a number of years ago – and would now need upgrading.</p> <p>Warwickshire IWA has done similar work with fire brigade and other groups.</p> <p>Volunteers could be involved in more activities of this type. RE confirmed there were BW inter-departmental working groups looking at how we could build relationships and contact with local communities. Volunteer working was a priority for BW and we always welcome customer assistance.</p>