



August 2011

Proposed mooring plan for Lee & Stort Navigations: update following consultation

British Waterways is today publishing an update following the public consultation on proposals to introduce a new moorings management plan for the River Lee, River Stort and the Hertford Union Canal. The plan was initiated by the need to manage the 40% increase in boat mooring in the area over the past four years.

Having reviewed all the consultation responses British Waterways has decided to shelve its previous proposals in order to explore the potential of a new model for managing demand on the rivers. Following feedback from waterway users and local authorities, the organisation wants to explore the potential for establishing a new facilitating body, such as a social enterprise, to help achieve a more sustainable model for residential boating on the Lee & Stort Navigations.

British Waterways would invest in the necessary manpower to make this happen, and is keen to work with partners in the Lee Valley, local councils and representatives of waterway users, to develop the detail of a plan which would include:

1. Setting up a social enterprise encouraging a much greater element of local management through, for example, adoption of a code of conduct and opportunities for contributions to planning and operation of boater facilities;
2. Working with local councils to create much-needed new residential moorings, as has been given a welcome boost by the Housing Minister Grant Shapps;
3. Introducing a new type of roving mooring permit to increase security for live-aboard boaters currently resident on the rivers without a home mooring;
4. Investing income earned from roving mooring permits in improved facilities along the waterway;
5. Provisions for ensuring space at visitor moorings and hotspots is kept available for leisure boaters;
6. Keeping any future growth in boat numbers at a sustainable level.

British Waterways will now hold discussions with stakeholder representatives to gauge support for this direction of travel and to develop the outline of an action plan. It is hoped that early progress will be made on the development of a code of conduct for boaters without a home mooring. This winter, British Waterways will be offering winter mooring permits at five locations between Stonebridge and Hertford. Details will be published shortly at www.bwmooringsvacancies.co.uk.

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During the Olympic summer next year, British Waterways believes visiting boats and existing London boaters can be accommodated on the waterways without major disruption. Discussion of detail on this can be included within the forthcoming dialogue with stakeholders.

Sally Ash, head of boating at British Waterways, said: "We believe that unlimited and unmanaged growth in boating numbers on the rivers will be detrimental to everyone, and that it is essential to protect this fragile and finite resource for the benefit of the general public. However we also recognise that the residential boating communities that have grown up along the towpath have a particular vested interest in their continued availability as a place to live. We hope very much that stakeholder representatives will support the concept of a new body to accelerate the development of better arrangements for boaters, and will help us to make this happen."

Ends

Notes to editors

British Waterways has written to all consultation respondents and to other local stakeholders to update them following the consultation.

The consultation closed on 31 May 2011. The documents constituting British Waterways' formal response to the consultation can be found at: <http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/listening-to-you/consultations-and-reviews/completed-consultation-reports>.

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