

BRITISH WATERWAYS ADVISORY FORUM

Consultation Processes – a paper for the BWAF, October 2005

➤ Background

For about ten years BW has operated consultative mechanisms which at a national level included:

1. An annual meeting between BW's chair and national representatives;
2. User Group meetings for Corridor and Boating issues.

➤ Current Situation

During 2004 these existing mechanisms were strengthened as a result of the 2003 consultation *Improving Openness & Accountability*. Three key developments arose from the consultation:

1. The annual meeting with the BW chair was replaced with two annual meetings under the auspices of the BWAF, with a further two (smaller) meetings for discussion of forthcoming agenda items;
2. Local consultation practices between individual Business Units and local representatives were formalised – a set of minimum standards for local consultation was agreed with User Groups and implemented. (Attached);
3. BW pledged to abide by the Cabinet Office's Code of Practice on Written Consultations when conducting written consultations of a national relevance.

With these measures in place, BW believes there is a robust framework in which matters of interest and concern to its stakeholders can be aired and considered. A diagram showing the relationship of these various meetings to each other is attached.

➤ When to consult?

BW's Board decides the policy and strategy of the organisation within a framework set by Ministers and on the basis of recommendations made by its Executive Directors. The consultative framework described above is there to make sure the views of waterway stakeholders are taken into account.

Statutorily, BW has only a few obligations to consult. For example there is an obligation to consult IWAAC over proposed reclassification of waterways. This is set out in the 1968 Transport Act.

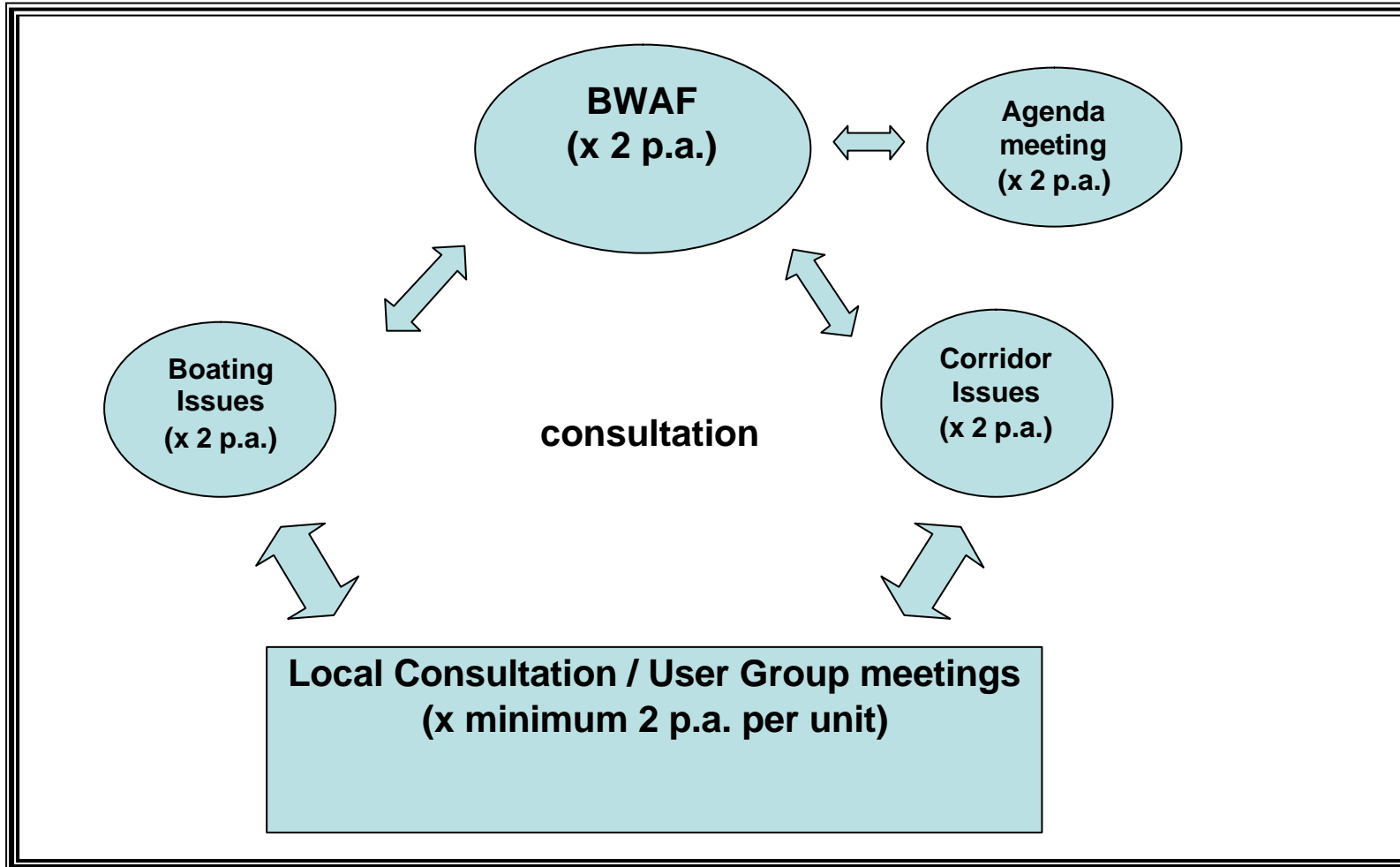
However, BW recognises the benefits that consultation can bring and regularly consults on issues of wide significance. BW is committed to consulting:

- **Nationally** on major changes to policy that affect a wide range of users;
- **Locally** on changes that affect local users significantly.

BW recognises that the current licence fee and structure consultation has caused concern amongst user groups and welcomes the opportunity to debate issues to do with consultation process with the BWAF so that improvements can be made in the future.



BW's Consultative Mechanism 2005





Invitees to BWAf & National Boating / Corridor Issues Meetings

Amateur Rowing Association
Anglers' Conservation Association
Association of Pleasure Craft Operators
APCO Hotel Boat Section
Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs
Boat Museum
British Canoe Union
British Hire Cruiser Federation
British Horse Society
British Marine Federation
Canal Boat Builders' Association
Commercial Boat Operators' Association
Country Land & Business Association
Electric Boat Association
Historic Narrow Boat Owners' Club
Horse Boating Society
International Mountain Bike Association (UK)
Inland Waterways Association
National Association of Boat Owners
National Association of Fisheries & Angling Consultatives
National Community Boat Association
National Federation of Anglers
Ramblers' Association
Residential Boat Owners' Association
Royal Yachting Association
Steam Boat Association of Great Britain
Sustrans
The Yacht Harbour Association
The Boating Association
The Barge Association
Towpath Action Group
Wooden Boat Association

Central Council for Physical Recreation (observer)
Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (observer)