



AGENDA PAPERS FOR NATIONAL BOATING ISSUES GROUP, 3 APRIL 07

In response to feedback at the last meeting, we are endeavouring to provide briefing papers in advance of the meeting. Agenda time will then be concentrated on discussing issues arising, rather than on presenting content.

We will provide written briefings or position summaries ahead of the meeting on the subjects listed below. We are trying to balance the need for people to have time to digest subjects with the objective of making the briefings as up to date as possible:

1. BW directly managed moorings: Items for discussion, paper attached

There are two parts to this paper which follows the deliberations of the AWCC-IWA-NABO-RBOA-BW working group

- a) Pricing of vacant moorings and proposal to trial an auction process
- b) BW's standard mooring agreement – proposed changes to increase security of tenure and other improvements

2. Offline and online moorings - Item for discussion, Paper to follow

3. Boating facilities strategy Item to note

The demand study we undertook in the summer is informing the specification of standards to be incorporated in a possible future contract with Government. We are grateful to representatives of APCO, AWCC, IWA, NABO & RBOA for reviewing the detailed specification and giving us feedback at the meeting on 30th January.

In addition to this, we still intend to prepare a national strategy statement covering cruising and essential boatyard facilities that reflect boaters' aspirations. This will form the basis of discussions with the marine trade and regional development agencies about long term delivery. It will include a policy guideline relating to determination of maximum stay time at BW designated visitor moorings reflecting NABO proposals tabled last year.

In the meantime, we are seeking help from the trade to extend and update the facilities data held on Waterscape.com.

4. BW service prepayment cards Item for discussion, paper attached

5. Licence fees 2008 – 2010 Item for discussion, paper to follow

6. Historic Boat Licence Discount Item for discussion, paper attached

BW has been encouraging representatives of groups concerned with historic boats (HNBOC, TWT, Boats Museum Society, Horse Boat Society) to propose a simple scoring scheme that would enable the BW craft processing team to assess eligibility of applications for the historic boat discount. David Daines has taken the lead on this and his report is attached for comment.

David Daines is preparing update on the new scoring system that he and interested user groups have developed in discussion with BW

7. Boat licensing operations and communications Items to note

- (a) Our central craft processing team will transfer to Leeds in September.
- (b) We are working on an update of our licensing guide (fees and conditions booklets) with the aim of making it easier for customers to understand and access. We will circulate a draft to user groups for comment, hopefully before the end of March. We will then publish in hard copy and as a web document on Waterscape.com

- (c) We have reviewed our twice yearly publication, Waterfront, and have decided to reduce costs by using electronic media to distribute regular news to our boating customers. Since we started Waterfront's predecessor some ten years ago, our customers' use of the internet and email has soared. We therefore intend to replace Waterfront with a free monthly e-newsletter covering BW's involvement in the inland boating market.

The new online Boaters Updates published by Waterscape.com will launch in May and carry similar content to that included in our current monthly waterways press briefing, and topics covered in the 'news in brief' pages of Waterfront. There will be no Spring Waterfront this year. The great majority of our licence holders (54% using the internet daily and 72% accessing it once a week or more) will thus have the benefit of much more topical news. The established monthly waterways press provides a comprehensive news, feature, editorial and information service including excellent coverage of developments in BW. Interested boaters who do not use email or the internet have a good choice of alternative print media, and we will of course continue to use conventional direct mail to distribute essential licensing and safety information.

8. **Issues discussed at last meeting** Items to note

a) **Licence enforcement**

We are continuing to improve our enforcement systems and on-the-ground effectiveness and are generally encouraged by the results of the 2006 national boat check. We recognise however that we still have some way to go. We tabled at the last meeting a proposal to introduce a temporary consent permit (TCP) to 'legalise' for a short period customers who for reasons beyond their control are unable to provide correct paperwork to support their licence application or renewal. A briefing paper on this was circulated to members of the boating issues group and all but one respondent supported the concept. We have decided in principle to go ahead with this, but not until after we have introduced 4 month advance reminders of the expiry date of the boat's BSS certification. We hope that this will reduce significantly the incidence of people failing to obtain a boat licence because their BSS has expired. Priced at a monthly pro rata rate significantly higher than the licence, we intend the TCP to be a deterrent to ignoring the BSS reminder and a more effective alternative to the immediate threat of S8 action.

- b) National principles for **low season structure manning** – nothing to report

c) **Stoppage communications**

Following our recent restructure, stoppage planning is now the responsibility of the Customer Operations Manager in each unit. They have begun the process of planning next winter's maintenance programme and will attend the Customer meeting in May to be able to answer questions and hear customer feedback on proposals.

Following publication of the winter 2007 programme last summer, we undertook a review of our performance and there are a number of issues on which we aim to improve this year. These include:

- establishing the underlying principle that we should aim to keep the navigation open as long as possible, and maintain a long distance north-south route at all times.
- stoppages should not be planned before 1st November or after 10 March
- aim to make available occasional weekend opening where feasible
- ensure stoppages end on a Friday evening rather than Sunday
- make better use of Waterscape.com for maintaining programme changes
- greater consistency in stoppage communications

The provisional date for the summer meeting to review the 07-8 winter maintenance programme is 31st May.