

Notes of Boating & Corridor Issues Meeting

3 April 2007

BW Offices Hatton

Present:

User Groups

Alan Meegan	Amateur Rowing Association
Nigel Hamilton	APCO Hotel Boat Section
Tony Mason	Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs
Adrian Stott	Observer
Edward Burrell	Barge Association, The
Mike Turpin	Boat Museum Society
Mike Bools	Boating Association
Kevin East	British Canoe Union
Henry Whittaker	British Horse Society
Tony Rymell	Electric Boat Association
Bernard Hales	Heritage Afloat
Phil Prettyman	Historic Narrowboat Owners' Club
Sue Day	Horse Boating Society
Roger Squires	Inland Waterways Association
Colin Palmer	International Mountain Biking Association
Stuart Sampson	National Association of Boat Owners
Paul Bryan	National Community Boats Association
David Kent	National Federation of Anglers
Martin Key	Ramblers Association
Beryl McDowall	Residential Boat Owners' Association
Cedric Rainer	Towpath Action Group

British Waterways

Simon Salem	Marketing & Customer Service Director
Eugene Baston	External Relations Manager
Sally Ash	Head of Boating Development
Vince Moran	Customer Operations Director
Tony Harvey	General Manager West Midlands
Liz Horne	External Relations Administrator

Apologies

Mark Lloyd	Anglers Conservation Association
David Pearce	Association of Waterways' Cruising Club
Andy Soper	Barge Association
David Dunning	Boating Association
Sam Clarke	Canal Boat Builders Association
Andrew Hanson	Central Council for Physical Recreation
Charles Trotman	Country Land & Business Association
Richard George	Cyclist's Touring Club
Barbera Penniall, John Hustwick	Electric Boat Association
Stewart Clarke	English Nature
Cathy Cooke	Inland Waterways Amenity Council (Observer)
John Baylis	Inland Waterways Association
Neil Edwards	Inland Waterways Association
Nicky Crowther	International Mountain Biking Association
John Williams	National Association of Fisheries and Angling Consultatives
Terry Fell	National Federation of Anglers
Ivor Caplan	Residential Boat Owners' Association
Neil Northmore, John Crisp	Royal Yachting Association
Andy Wistrow	Sustrans
Sam Bourne, Sue Lambert	The Yacht Harbour Association

Welcome & Introductions

Simon Salem welcomed the group.

1. BW Funding

Simon explained that the DEFRA spending review process is taking longer than expected and may well not be resolved until autumn/the end of 2007 and that BW's finances will continue to tighten in the next 3 years.

2. Licences

a Licence prices

There was wide-ranging discussion on implications of grant cuts on future licence fees and their potential impact on boaters. BW advised that prospects were of a 30% increase in real terms over three years from 2008.

Beryl McDowall and Tony Mason requested a round table discussion on proposed licence fee increases from April 2008 and it was agreed that this will be a part of October's Boating & Corridor issues meeting. BW will issue a consultation paper for wider individual and group views to be submitted on the proposals during summer 2007. **(Sally Ash & External Relations)**

b Historic Boat Licence Discounts

Simon thanked HnBOC for assistance in developing improved criteria for granting discounts. Agreed that BW would draft terms of reference for an appeals panel to advise on cases where a boater challenges BW's decision to refuse the discount. BW will invite IWA, TWT, HnBOC and the BMS to each nominate a member to the panel. **(Sally Ash)**

c Boat Safety Scheme

User representatives expressed concerns about the recent change to BW support/underwriting of BSS. It was felt that an established corporate body – perhaps BMF – should take responsibility for the continued integrity of the Scheme. These concerns to be communicated to BSS management.

3. Mooring Policies

a Online mooring reduction policy

IWA expressed the view that simple moorings with minimal facilities should not be closed because of very strong demand for low cost moorings. IWA's policy statement had been noted by BW in the development of the policy. BW to consider extending notice period for closures from 12 months to 24 months.

BW to provide an analysis of its directly managed mooring sites by scale of facilities provided. **(Sally Ash)**

b Trial of allocation of vacancies at BW sites by auction

RBOA expressed strong opposition to the auction concept. IWA, NABO and AWCC expressed similar reservations. This opposition was noted by BW. Discussion then focused on the need to develop a postal option that boaters without internet access could take part in the trial. Preference was also expressed for a tendering system rather than E-Bay style auction. BW agreed to consider these points further and convene a further meeting if necessary. (NB, this took place on 1 May 2007 and was attended by IWA, RBOA & AWCC representatives). BW confirmed that the price resulting from the auctions would inform but not determine the price for mooring permit renewals.

4. Maintenance of Waterways

Representatives voiced a series of concerns on the aspects listed below. As part of these discussions, BW's Customer Operations Director and General Manager, West Midlands explained new organisational arrangements for maintenance operations (three functional teams – construction, rapid response and vegetation management). BW's aim is to optimise use of fixed budgets to deliver to minimum safety standards and improve service to customers. It was agreed that the October meeting would include a discussion on feedback

and experiences on how the new arrangements were contributing to the aims of the new organisational structure.

BW will publish minimum safety standards before the year end

a *Lock paddle winding gear*

BW should publish risk assessments for different types of paddle gear. Post project appraisal of K&A gearing changes to be published.

b *"BW Aware" stickers*

These should show the date when they are applied to a structure.

c *Stiff lock gates*

Standards are under development & BW to report back at the next meeting. (**Vince Moran/Jim Stirling**)

d *Removal of pinch points*

BW will report on progress in identifying and publicising these. (**Jim Stirling**)

e *Conversion of manned structures for user operation*

Representatives were asked to advise which structures they felt could be user operated. (**All**)

f *Dredging*

Users acknowledged a recently constructive meeting with the Technical Director but asked for a written update and statement on BW's policies and priorities. (**Jim Stirling**)

Beryl McDowall was concerned that a build up of silt in the River Soar is not being dredged properly. Vince Moran said he would ask Caroline Killeavy (General Manager East Midlands) to respond to Beryl. (**Caroline Killeavy/Vince Moran**)

g *Vegetation*

Concern was expressed about the spread of invasive species arising from the practice of leaving plants on river margins to spread downstream. BW was requested to provide copies of instruction sent to local teams with respect to invasive plant management. (**External Relations**)

5. Services and Facilities

a *BW pre-payment cards*

Sally briefed the meeting as per the statement at the following link:
[Boating Issues Meeting Prepayment Card Proposals March 2006](#)

6. Freight Traffic

In response to concerns expressed about the closure of the central freight marketing unit, BW explained the way in which the local 'freight champion' concept worked and referred to the success of the Prescott Lock/Bow Back River project in London.

BW planned to hold pre-publication discussions of the draft OXERA study of freight costs/opportunities. These would begin later in the summer. (**Simon Salem**)

7 Heritage

There was a discussion of how BW's performance on heritage would be appraised. It was noted that this subject would be taken forward by the sub-group of BWAf which was to meet soon to consider heritage matters.

(This meeting was subsequently arranged for 28 September 2007)

8 Cycling

Noted that progress had yet to be made on bringing together a joint group to discuss the way forward on issues raised by cycling.

Agreed to hold this meeting and include a practical visit to the London waterway unit cycling project.

(This meeting was subsequently arranged for 25 September 2007.)

9. Anti-Social Behaviour

General concern was raised at the continuation and probable growth of this issue on and around the waterways.

There was discussion about youths swimming in waterways and BW agreed to circulate its guidance notes once complete. **(External Relations)**

10. Any Other Business

a *Communications about user group meetings*

There was criticism of the timing of the sending out of papers and the timeliness of information on the website.

BW confirmed that it would check the situation and take necessary action. **(External Relations)**

b *Network enhancement strategy*

There was to be a meeting about this on 23 April 2007.

c *Towpath diversion around proposed marina*

Concern was raised about this unusual proposal at a marina site in the North West waterway unit.

BW confirmed that if this unusual situation arose again it would be flagged up for consideration through the New Marinas Unit process.

d *Future meetings*

After discussion it was agreed that it would be better to continue to combine boating and corridor issues.

e *Follow-up on actions*

BW said it would 'stock-take' outstanding actions and evaluate follow-up.

Date of next meeting:

24 October 2007 at Hatton.