

Sharing Towpaths Consultation March to May 2014

Responses via sharingtowpaths@canalrivertrust.org.uk email address

Email Number	Comments
1	<p>I am pleased to hear about this important consultation.</p> <p>It appears that a lot of what is in it is clear, well thought out, and sensible. Towpaths are a wonderful form of recreation, have inherent health benefits, and provide important sustainable transport links that are safe and off-road. They are invaluable for these purposes. The presence of tow paths is, as we know, and as the name suggests, for horses but this use has long since been lost in all but a few cases.</p> <p>I would like to strongly support the use of these again for recreational riding. There are all too few routes for off road access for quiet, hacking riders, and those with children on horseback. As with all 'shared surfaces' and multiuser routes a clear set of guide lines should be in place and the 'tow path code' that you have proposed is excellent. I am particularly pleased that you are keen to address those who wear headphones (horse riders never would!), as I believe their use is very dangerous on all rights of way. I would hope that you could look to opening up as many parts of the towpath network to horse riders as possible. I know that many walkers who are with families love to see the ponies going by on other routes too.</p> <p>Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further help or if you need me to make more comments on this proposal. It could be very exciting for all involved and the greatest change we have seen to access especially for equestrians for many years. Their future is very much in your hands.</p>
2	<p>I am a Waterways Chaplain working predominantly in the Birmingham area and have read your proposals with interest as my work covers all people, not only boaters, although that is the main thrust of my work</p> <p>It seems to me that there are some deficiencies in your proposals. Whilst the speed of cyclists is a concern the fact that they damage the towpath is more of a concern to many. The ruts caused by the constant wheels passing over them means that for many the towpaths are a no go area in wet weather. Tarmacking is not necessary, just the judicious use of gravel would help.</p> <p>Another area of concern in the proposals is that there is no mention of how people should be aware of boaters needs in mooring. In some areas mooring pins are a must, but there is no mention of how people should treat boats that are moored up and how to prevent themselves from accidents involving mooring pins and ropes. Likewise there is very little mention about boaters needs in the report. Yet boaters provide the CRT with a great deal of money in the form of licences etc. and have the need to moor up when needed, thus they require ease of access to the towpath something that is not easy in places owing to vegetation etc.</p> <p>May I suggest you consult with the various boating associations to gauge their feelings on this matter</p> <p>P 2 'Purpose' line 2 'clearly explains' for 'be clear on'.</p> <p>Line 7. Comma after 'Trust'.</p> <p>Line 9 'the towpath' for 'it' for clarity.</p> <p>P 4 para 'We will be clear</p> <p>item 3 'and/or for 'and/or'</p> <p>Para 'Work with partners...</p> <p>Item 4 'against' for 'of' (I trust you do not intend to enforce anti-social behaviour!!!)</p> <p>para 'What visitors can do'</p> <p>Item 1 I think you need to suggest how this should be done - by CRT?</p> <p>A proposed Towpath Code</p>

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	<p>line 1 prefer 'you are' for 'you're'</p> <p>Lines 4 & 5 'Joggers and Cyclists' for 'Jogging and cycling' sound more personal/welcoming.</p> <p>Line 12 'to give way to other users if necessary' for 'where required' - needs to be more specific.</p> <p>Should there be some instruction for boaters, where possible, to moor so that mooring pins and ropes are clear of the walking surface?</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surfaces - Not all surfaces suit all users; while a tarmac top may be preferred for cyclists, this may not be ideal for long distance walkers and may also not be compatible visually with the visual aspect of a rural canal. - Signage - There is perhaps a recognized need for increased signage to restrict speed; at the same time excessive signage is intrusive and again tends to work against the intrinsic nature of many canals. - The funder calls the tune- I have sat in on a meeting (involving the Bridgewater I admit), where the LA funding a cycle trail seemed to bring to the table a lack of real understanding of other users. - Fundamental incompatibilities - The classic one cited is the cyclist 'versus' the angler, where the latter may effectively block the towpath with his perch pole and kit. Environmentally there is a benefit in leaving a natural verge between the path and the water, which can mitigate against a boater wishing to exercise his right to moor up, which is frequently limited by depth of water adjacent to the towpath which may not be appreciated by other users. - Guides and rules - It may be easy to issue a booklet advising cyclists to dismount in bridge holes and use their bells, but harder to get them to read them, or buy a bell. - Preventive measures - There is an argument to erect barriers or speed humps to dissuade fast cycling, and prevent motor bike using the towpath (illegal but it happens), but this mitigates against wheel chairs and buggies. - Horse Boating - Bill has covered this well, it may not be generally common nowadays but it is what the towpaths were built for in the first place and must be accommodated. It is also necessary to allow for bow hauling of boats with an engine problem. <p>Therefore a degree of compromise is needed and some instances where a specific need requires a measure with adverse effects for other users; e.g. barriers where cycle speeding or motor bikes are a problem.</p> <p>The importance of this area is essential as frequently funding is available for towpath rather than channel improvements. This applies on the Montgomery and other restorations.</p> <p>I do agree with Alan and I have to add that we shouldn't fall into the trap of signage to tell people what to do! For start signs cost money to create position & maintain and let's face it will be ignored without education, and who would police them anyway. Talking initially with appropriate clubs/groups/societies to encourage a mutual understanding of different users' needs would I think be a much better approach.</p>
4	<p>As we briefly discussed today I think the code should reflect the fact that there are different balances of shared use in different localities.</p> <p>In dense urban settings there will be increasing pressures to use these linear corridors as commuting cycle routes (particularly with the recent spate of deaths in London and the call for increased segregation), and for which funding will become available!</p> <p>The code needs to reflect both the behavioural issues (slow down, be courteous, etc.) with some of the more physical infrastructure implications.</p> <p>We should signal that there needs to be a match between the communities of use (walkers, cyclists etc.), their density and their purpose with the design and capacity (e.g. Width) of the towpath.</p> <p>The aspirational design of the towpath used significantly by large numbers of cycling</p>

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	<p>commuters should vary vastly from that of a rural towpath used predominantly by leisure ramblers and the odd cycling tourer.</p> <p>Where there is a mismatch we may need to impose restrictions (width gates etc.).</p>
5	<p>The only conflicts I've seen and experienced walking along towpaths, albeit in mainly rural locations, have involved cyclists who expect pedestrians to move out of the way to let them pass and the occasional angler with a lot of kit on the towpath.</p> <p>It makes sense to have a towpath code but, as with any voluntary code/social contract, it will only work if all users respect it (and each other). Promoting the code widely and effectively to users and partners will be one means of securing support - this will be an important role for each waterway partnership. Is it important enough to warrant reference in our strategic plan?</p>
6	<p>It's great to see at long last some clear and coherent advice on this really important issue and it's certainly long overdue – the document reads really well</p> <p>I think we need to include reference to 'cleanliness' in context of the towpath environment. There is no reference to litter and very little reference to dog-mess and yet these are major issues in terms of visitor experience on our towpaths</p> <p>I would add a 10th 'principle' to cover the above</p> <p>To include the dog-mess/litter issue, I would add another statement to 'what the Trust will do' – on the lines of "working with Local Authorities to encourage them to apply relevant bye-laws and controls to reduce litter and dog fouling"</p> <p>Likewise, under "work with partners....." – I would include reference to litter/dog-mess controls here</p> <p>Finally, I would add a line in the proposed Code to say something like "take litter home or dispose of considerately"</p> <p>These are my own views but they are based on experience over many years</p>
7	<p>None powered craft in general do not use locks.</p> <p>Ergo they carry and portage around locks and lock flights.</p> <p>Craft are very bulky (6m x 1.2m) and are often heavy.</p> <p>This means that as they are pulled out and put in the water they can take several minutes and do occasionally obstruct the tow path.</p> <p>Cyclists in particular are not prepared to wait stationary, i.e. push past, and are often abusive and anti-social.</p> <p>In general I like the tone of this document but it needs strengthening.</p> <p>There is no reference at all to none powered craft.</p> <p>There needs to be mention of being tow path users and cyclists in particular need to be prepared to stop particularly for "Temporary mobile obstructions" in the vicinity of locks.</p> <p>And there needs to be a general comment about there being more people and boat related movements around locks than between locks plus a comment about profile and surface height changes that accompany locks, bridges and at blind corners.</p>
8	<p>In reading the document my initial objective was to focus on a towpath cycling code which I thought is the main objective. The document is clearly a much wider subject.</p> <p>Yes shared towpaths are important but this a subject that will rumble on for months/years and we still wouldn't have a clear published cycle code. Right now it's confused - IWA have launched one, British cycling have one county councils have one as well as Sustrans- they are all different and don't reflect the CRT policy in all its details. One now would be useful.</p> <p>With one or two minor detail exceptions the document does seem to address the shared towpath issues. Namely</p>

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	<p>The Trust will be clear on behaviors expected.....</p> <p>Visible presence is not just volunteers but any customer facing roles staff or volunteers. Introduce physical measures - is this bouncers on the towpath?</p> <p>The code of practice should be included in any induction and ongoing training programs. what visitors can do</p> <p>The content is a general sales pitch to attract volunteers generally - it should be more specific to shared towpath management which must always be a CRT responsibility ultimately NOT a volunteer group or adoption. I had this type of conversation just recently with Caroline in respect of how we should manage towpaths during tour de France.</p> <p>So if the objective is primarily cycling it should be more focused - the section 'A proposed Towpath Code' is in fact all about cycling so put that in title.</p> <p>Incidentally this code should include consider boaters who are not specifically referenced in the code - watch out for ropes boaters at locks particularly slow down and watch out around mooring points and marinas.....and probably more</p> <p>Now purely presentation I would put the code on page 1 make it quite punchy and say this is our planned cycling code of conduct and encourage responders to comment specifically on that. All of the other stuff, all good and relevant stuff, could then follow on as 'background' and provides evidence of how CRT have thought it through and got to the policy and how it will consult and manage and provide guidelines on an ongoing basis. If you don't do it this way you run the risk of opening up a can of worms. I don't think you are seeking views on all the other things like towpath design +++ as part of this consultation.... or are you? I see that as a taken as read and not really up for debate.</p> <p>Later one and not now I would have several comments on implementing the proposals - apart from my T shirts and launch at Tdf idea - signage - we don't want canal looking like a Xmas tree there are already too many signs in places, how we promote policy, and so on.</p>
9	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation, and hopefully help make things better.</p> <p>I admire the work that has gone into this document, when finalised it should be a useful piece of work.</p> <p>Principles - item 1 quite correctly shows boating as the lead item, it was what they were designed for.</p> <p>However, item 6 pushes boaters back to third, behind pedestrians and cyclists. Boaters should be first.</p> <p>I agree with all other aspects of these principles.</p> <p>Proposed towpath code.</p> <p>This is fine, but I must make one comment - pedestrians come first. No! BOATERS come first - I agree that pedestrians come next and cyclists later on in order.</p> <p>The reason I make this case, is the number of times I have come into, albeit minor, conflict with other users is when I have been trying to manhandle the boat with a rope from the towpath, sometimes in windy conditions, or at some locks with a strong current from a by-wash pushing the boat away from the towpath edge. As a single-handed boater, it is frustrating that many walkers, and most cyclists, do not understand that I may need to be hauling on the rope continuously at those times, and just cannot stand back, put the rope down, and let them pass. Cyclists in particular, just think they are the most important and I should not be there doing what I am. (What they could do, but rarely do, is offer to help!!)</p> <p>Please find some way of building this into the code. A boater mooring, or otherwise handling his boat from the towpath MUST have the top priority over all other users.</p> <p>Following from this, under the heading What the trust will do, I would like to see a commitment that where towpaths are being improved for all users, that boaters themselves should be able to benefit - by having the facilities to moor more easily. This should be by providing or improving visitor time-limited moorings with bollards or rings, or just an</p>

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	<p>improved ability to rough-moor with somewhere to bang pins into, or with edge piling onto which to attach a mooring hook or chain. This is particularly pertinent in the south and London areas, where mooring is an issue (which I shan't get into here!!)</p> <p>There is nothing worse than a newly improved towpath with a gravel or tarmac surface right up to the canal edge and a concrete or stone capped edge with no piling. I'm sure you don't want pins bashed into the tarmac even if one could!</p> <p>Oooh, and whilst I remember, please remind fishermen not to set themselves up on a lock-landing or visitor mooring</p> <p>Good luck with the consultation, I look forward to seeing the end result.</p>
10	<p>I noticed your survey when looking up about canal walking which is one of our hobbies. We live on the City Road Basin in London, Islington, and regularly walk the towpath in both directions from there. Our enjoyment of the canals is being increasingly spoilt by cyclists cycling dangerously quickly and assuming that it is their right to take precedence over walkers. Although there are signs requesting considerate cycling this is never adhered to as people use the towpath to cycle to and from work and are therefore often in a hurry. Perhaps in such a busy area the cyclists should be encouraged to use a different route?</p>
11	<p>I've just read the Towpath Code - I didn't know there was such a thing.</p> <p>I'm a Grantham Canal Society Ranger and Events Coordinator.</p> <p>I'm also a boater and a cyclist.</p> <p>It was interesting to read that pedestrians have the priority - I didn't realise this - and I'm pleased to hear it.</p> <p>Are there leaflets available about the code? Or is it still a consultation document?</p> <p>I think the important word is consideration, and this needs to be hammered home, particularly to cyclists (of which I am one). The wearing of earphones by pedestrians is a problem when trying to warn them of your presence.</p> <p>Speeding cyclists can be a problem when trying to pull boats in etc.....not a huge problem on the Grantham ...yet!</p>
12	<p>My husband and I are continuous cruisers and yes--we do actually cruise a lot. I have no problem with sharing the towpaths as long as those with whom we are sharing bear in mind one thing: We pay for the right to use the towpaths unlike everyone else, except Angler's Clubs. Our boat is our home--not a vacation or pleasure craft. Safe use of the towpath is essential for us. The three groups with whom we do have issues sharing the towpath are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Those people who walk their dogs off the leash (we've had two separate dog incidents where the dogs jumped on our boat. One ate our £15 dessert which was sitting on the stern cooling off before friends were to join us board for dinner, and the other--a huge mastiff--scared the life out of me, barking and growling.) Are inviting a confrontation when their dogs do what it's in their nature to do: follow its nose aboard someone's boat or **** on the ground right next my boat. I've actually had dogs lift their leg and pee on my dinette window as I stood in front of it--watching the owner meander along the towpath, also watching their dog. We've had joggers with dogs off the leash deposit a black bag of dog **** on the end of our plank--as though that is why we put it out! When confronted, the jogger replied, "I just didn't want to carry it with me, I planned to pick it up on my way back." My boat is my home. I don't want their dog in or on my home and I really don't appreciate stepping in their dog's **** and tracking it in my home. Boaters with dogs are just as guilty of this as non-boaters. It should be mandatory that dogs are kept on the leash at all times while on a towpath. 2. Bicyclists who assume the towpath is there just for them and use it like a race course, endangering boaters who are trying to moor up or cast off--but most especially moor up.

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	<p>We've nearly been run over a half dozen times by surly cyclists who demand we get out of their way when we are attempting to pull our boat in and moor it -especially in high winds.</p> <p>3. Anglers who rightfully have permission and a license to fish but who invariably set up on the bollards where we need to moor to get through locks or access water and rubbish. This is commonplace. These same folks often leave a mess behind when they go--discarded chip and sandwich wrappers, empty plastic drink bottles, bait packaging, and broken rods.</p> <p>What all three of these groups forget is this: we pay for the right to use the towpaths. It is included in our annual license fees. The towpaths exist because of boats-period. We are tired of sharing them with lazy, sloppy fishermen, inconsiderate, surly bikers who threaten our physical wellbeing with a collision, and disgusting dog owners who think a leash is ***** fashion statement they carry in hand instead of a tool to control their animal.</p>
13	<p>As horse rider, boater, walker and former cyclist who regularly walk along the canal towpaths, I can see where you are going, BUT this is going to have to be managed very carefully. In spite of the ruling to give way to walkers, I have several times had to leap out of the way of speeding cyclists who seem to think they have the right to exclusive use of the path; they don't seem to know what SLOW means. I have no objection to horses using the towpaths but again, great care must be taken and some towpaths are far too narrow. Horse are very unpredictable animals and are very easily spooked, a bird flying out of the hedge or even the sight of an empty can could cause a horse to move very swiftly, possibly knocking someone over or worse into the canal. Any soft spots would soon become impassable if horses were ridden over them as is the case where cyclists use towpaths with soft surfaces'. There would have to be a restriction on speed as well because a fast moving horse is dangerous in a confined space. I have also had problems with joggers who are very unwilling to walk past a dog on a lead when asked politely to do so. Some horses are spooked by joggers coming up behind them. Certain towpaths are very suitable for riding horses on and it would be lovely to use these, but others are not</p> <p>As a boater, mooring up once I failed to see a cyclist speeding along as I was concentrating on holding onto the boat and as I stepped back to pull the boat in, I knocked the cyclist off his bike, he admitted it was his fault and was concerned that I was not hurt, but imagine if this had been a horse and rider, there could have been a very serious accident.</p>
14	<p>It is bitterly disappointing that nowhere in towpath code is there any reference to angling/anglers and what approach users should use when encountering them.</p> <p>As an angler who learnt to fish on canals I know the problems very well. Inconsiderate cyclists, loud groups of other users dwelling around those fishing. Aggressive and ignorant individuals interfering with fishing tackle that they think is taking up their space on the towpath. This is particularly relevant when it's raining and the angler has his brolly up.</p> <p>I hope now this omission has been pointed out to you that the final and finished code includes a reference to user approaches around those fishing.</p>
15	<p>I support use of towpaths for as wide a range of activities as possible. I would not want to see cycling banned but it does need to be managed more than other activities.</p> <p>Local authorities and the DfT see towpaths as an opportunity for providing cycle ways on the cheap. Towpaths should never be perceived as cycle ways and C&RT should do all it can to prevent local authorities and other agencies from promoting them as such. One bid to the sports council for a grant offered as justification that the improved towpath would be suitable for time trials! IT WOULDN'T!</p> <p>Most towpath cyclists behave considerately but there are a few militants among them who complain of the way motorists treat them on the main highway network but then treat</p>

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	<p>walkers and anglers in a similarly aggressive way.</p> <p>C&RT have introduced the 'two tings' convention in some places but for some cyclists it seems counter to their machismo to have a bell on their bike and they are also reluctant to shout a warning. I don't know how you could educate them to behave responsibly but C&RT should seek ways of doing so.</p> <p>Until cyclists were accepted the maximum speed for moving on either waterway or towpath was 4mph. Now, especially with 'improved' surfaces, that can be 30mph or more. I accept that enforcement would be difficult but it would not be impossible. A speed limit of, say, 15mph should be applied and C&RT should seek a bye law to effect it.</p>
16	<p>I am a boater, towpath walker and tow path cyclist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In my view the provision of wide tarmacadam towpaths as installed on some of the Yorkshire canals is highly undesirable as the speeds cycles travel at are horrendous from the perspective of moorers and walkers. ▪ In the Proposed Towpath Code, the paragraph '<i>Pedestrians have priority - towpaths are shared spaces where pedestrians have priority and vehicles, except bicycles and mobility aids, are generally excluded</i>', it should be made clear that boaters in the process of mooring also have priority. ▪ Surely there should also be some reference to the need for cyclists and pedestrians to take extreme care near moored boats because of the danger of mooring lines and pins.
17	<p>After reading your proposals on sharing tow paths. We would like to point out that you make very little mention that boater occasionally need to use the tow path to navigate. No other user/visitors pay for this privilege? (Please do not mention angler's licences very few ever pay)</p> <p>As I am sure you are aware (As the majority of your staff will be fully conversant with navigating the waterways?). Boaters need to disembark at locks, Lift bridges etc. During this brief encounter with the towpath we will need to operate a lock or a swing bridge. In very busy location CRT supply lock keepers such as Foxton. These lock keepers are in the main very professional and assist the boater through the crowds of gawkers. No mean feat. I agree we need to promote canals as we cannot afford to maintain the system just for boaters. But if we are going to allow free access? And not charge any other group? We need to consider the primary use of the canals, especially the small bit of the towpath that boater need to use to navigate.</p> <p>Can we request that you mention to all users that boaters have the right to navigate and we pay for that privilege? That they should not obstruct the lock or swing bridge and should vacate the immediate area to allow the boater to proceed.</p> <p>Examples witnessed first-hand-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having a picnic on a swing bridge 2. speeding cyclists almost causing a crew member to fall into a lock (It's so common in certain urban sites that we take it turns to keep watch) 3. standing in the way of a balance beam (that's the bit that opens the gate) or sitting on the balance beam 4. Using a swing bridge and not leaving it in the open to navigate position. (Of cause this does not apply to where CRT have installed self-locking catches) 5. Anglers closing gates to walk across as a short cut (We witnessed one of the most serious near accident a few years ago where an angler closed the gate on an oncoming 70 foot single hander. The gate sustained a little damage but this was nothing compared to the damage to the internal contents of the boat) Not to worry I

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	<p>am sure the anglers fee would help pay for the damage? It's hard to believe but a few decades ago it was illegal to tamper with the waterways. Even harder to believe that they used to be like the railways a no go area.</p> <p>6. Anglers fishing by a lock or bridge (I know it's not permitted) but when we enjoy our 15 day Easter cruise around the Leicester ring we will encounter this and the majority of the above.</p> <p>Alternatively you could scrap the mooring and licence fee and we will accept all of the planned changes.</p> <p>Any chance?</p>
18	<p>There are fewer water habitats for children to explore than ever before. Thankfully, they at least have our canals or enjoy - two big challenges though: Angling clubs have historic monopoly on certain canals that prevent young people from taking part (few children can visit tackle shops in advance to buy day tickets). Most that I work with admit to poaching and being chased of by bailiffs. The second barrier, particularly when it comes to children using the canals, is dog litter. It may be mentioned in your proposal but it is a far bigger issue than you might think. I have actually been forced to stop taking school groups onto the canal because of dog mess. I have reported it on a number of occasions and even sent pictures of the offending dog owners; vehicles and dogs, but nothing has been done. Not even an acknowledgement to say that something might be done in the future.</p>
19	<p>The code should give boaters priority at lock landings, water points and restricted stay moorings.</p>
20	<p>Even whilst writing this I know it's a waste of time as in this country the views of the unruly inconsiderate minority always seem to prevail BUT I am so incensed by this window dressing exercise that I have to at least make one point which I don't see being put forward strongly enough.</p> <p>Boaters and Anglers are the ONLY groups who pay twice to use the waterways (and incidentally your exorbitant salaries).</p> <p>We all pay through our taxes at the same rate as cyclists and walkers but we pay a second time through our licences.</p> <p>Either give us greater influence or remove this disparity and then it's a free for all but you can't have it both ways.</p> <p>Introduce and maintain a 10mph max speed limit for all and everyone who really cares will benefit and the thugs can go and reek their special brand of havoc elsewhere after all they aren't interested in where they cycle just the ability to do so on maintained level ground so it isn't too hard for them.</p>
21	<p>Proposed code.</p> <p>I have just had a quick look, and this looks like leading to a blockage!</p> <p>"Give way to oncoming people beneath bridges whether they are on foot or bike and be extra careful at bends and entrances where visibility is limited."</p> <p>If both parties in opposite directions give way, they both stop, and no progress.</p>
22	<p>I am responding to your consultation on towpaths.</p> <p>I am fully in agreement with your proposed Towpath Code. Speaking as a walker, there is a particular need to educate cyclists about the need for consideration for others, as I have frequently been "ambushed" by cyclists on towpaths who creep up behind you without ringing their bells (they often don't have one to ring), giving you a heart attack as they</p>

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	<p>whoosh past! How do you propose to disseminate the code, and what penalties will there be, if any, for those who ignore it?</p> <p>I am not aware whether the Trust has a standard policy re the minimum width of towpaths, but there certainly needs to be one. I would suggest that the minimum width should be 2 metres, providing there are strips of grass on either side at least one metre wide, otherwise the minimum width should be 3 metres. If these minimum widths cannot be achieved, I think that cyclists should be banned from using that towpath. I did not realise that horses are already banned from using them unless the route has been designated as a bridleway or specific permission is obtained, but am very happy to hear this!</p>
23	<p>The Disabled Ramblers is a National charity working to improve access to the countryside for disabled people. We run a programme of 30 or more rambles a year across England and Wales, sometimes incorporating canals and rivers. In addition, many of our members make uses of towpaths for their own rambles. We use a variety of electrically powered chairs and scooters.</p> <p>The Disabled Ramblers helped to produce the widely-used guide to access to the countryside "By All Reasonable Means" http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/inclusivetcm2-27716_tcm6-4032.pdf</p> <p>If access along towpaths conforms to this document, then most of our concerns will be met. In brief, this means that access is possible for the largest of scooters, there are no steps or stiles and cross-slopes which might tip a chair into the water are eliminated. If a gate MUST be used, we recommend the Centrewire Woodstock Large Mobility. This is a kissing gate which can be opened with a RADAR key to allow full access. See http://www.centrewire.com/woodstock.htm</p> <p>Towpaths could be ideal for our rambles. The snag is that they are, of course, linear. While this is OK, and some of our rambles are out-and-back, it would be much better if circular routes of 5 to 8 miles could be identified. If you have any ideas for such a route which avoids using roads, please let me know.</p> <p>While access along towpaths is generally good, the same cannot be said of rivers. I do hope you are able to open up paths along our rivers to all users.</p>
24	<p>I have seen the proposed Towpath Code and detect a bias in it. The focus appears to be on pedestrians and issues with cyclists and I wholeheartedly agree with the priority of pedestrians over cyclists. However, there is no mention of boaters.</p> <p>The biggest problem boaters face is with cyclists and then, at a much lower level, with pedestrians.</p> <p>The major problem with cyclists is at water points where they ride over hosepipes or abuse boaters when they have hosepipes over the towpath. The second problem is during mooring when crew are working with ropes to hold and then moor the boat and cyclists demanding that crew get out of the way.</p> <p>For boaters, there are usually few problems with pedestrians but, in my experience, these usually occur at locks and land landings where they get in the way.</p> <p>I believe that the Towpath Code must acknowledge that boaters access towpaths as well and that there are times when boaters must have priority (for example at water points and when mooring).</p>
25	<p>I write about West Yorkshire towpaths.</p> <p>I agree with the main features of your code for towpath usage.</p> <p>My only problems have been with some cyclists-not all. Where there is a problem it is cyclists going fast, sometimes shouting at you to get out their way, sometimes two abreast and no warning they are coming up behind . I know of one couple who say they will no longer walk</p>


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	on The Leeds and Liverpool Canal towpath because of fear they will be injured by cyclists
26	<p>Hi I am a horse rider who currently shares our bridleway with cyclist dog walkers' hikers etc... As canals as you clearly state in your information were originally intended for use by horses (to tow long boats) it seems reasonable and practical to allow access to local horse riders working in conjunction with local bridleways who could help organise volunteers to keep in good condition etc. The amounts of usable bridleways are dwindling and under threat and it would be lovely if the canal tow paths could be used for their original purpose. Many horse riders are courteous and polite and would love the opportunity to use these lovely towpaths and enjoy safe off road hacking out.</p> <p>Please consider allowing access to horses again.</p>
27	<p>I recently took your towpath/river path survey and the tone of the survey is extremely anti-public use. In particular there seems to be a premise that people who cycle/jog/run/walk with dogs are ruining the peaceful nature of the waterways.</p> <p>The waterways were the transport highways of the 18th and 19th century and they have evolved into 'leisure' facilities in the late 20th century.</p> <p>In the 21st century they are evolving again as people begin to realise these are some of the best and safest vehicle free routes that can be used to for commuting and exercise while enjoying the countryside.</p> <p>However your survey harked back to an era when the paths were for horse drawn boats and how best to control the public.</p> <p>The reality is that many of the paths have become popular as our roads have become choked with cars.</p> <p>You need to look at what the Two Tunnels has done recently. You need to start designing conflict out of your towpaths and river paths. 3-4m wide tarmac'd paths with signs stating that the paths should be shared would solve many many many of your issues. You are forcing people into conflict by only providing these 1 metre wide rough gravel tracks.</p> <p>For example the route between Bath and Bradford on Avon, could easily be 4m wide for most of the route. The path under the bridges could be widened (at the sacrifice of the river width). There are 1000s of users on a daily basis and yet the issue to you is the type of user, not the fact that the path is very very narrow in parts.</p> <p>You need to design conflict out of the paths. It really is the only way.</p>
28	<p>I am very interested and encouraged to see your document and I would like to add that I ride on my pony very carefully and quietly on our local towpath. I am never sure that this is officially allowed but as towpaths were originally designed for horses it seems fair enough.</p> <p>I would encourage you to give horse riders the opportunity to ride on towpaths as it would make a huge difference to us and keep us off the busy roads where we daily risk life and limb. It would be possible surely to keep the grassy strip next to the towpath for horse riders.</p>
29	<p>I use tow paths exclusively as a pedestrian. I'm a keen cyclist.</p> <p>I avoid tow paths due to walkers with dogs either A) mostly not on a lead at all, or B) on a "long reach lead".</p> <p>Even cycling slowly, these dogs present a significant hazard to cyclists - indeed on my route to work, which is a shared pedestrian/cycle way, I have more incidents with dogs off leads running into my path than any other.</p> <p>Due to vegetation, long grass, and the distance the walker may be in front of, or behind of the dog it is impossible to even know there is a dog about to run in front of you on many occasions. If the dog walker has the lead in their pocket, and expect the dog to 'follow' at some arbitrary distance, cyclists aren't even aware the dog is a potential hazard - that person looks like any other pedestrian using a tow path.</p> <p>To encourage cyclists, you need to encourage dog walkers to take responsibility for their dogs,</p>


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	<p>in terms of the hazard they present to cyclists. If they have 'let the dog run' whilst taking it out for a tow path walk for many years, I'd hazard a guess they simply won't be willing to put the dog onto a lead. Even on dedicated cycle paths, dog walkers seem happy to use them regardless, and let the dogs roam about.</p> <p>I think you could be surprised about what a "non-issue" the cyclist/pedestrian conflict is (I see none at all on my route to work on a shared route), compared to the number of 'near-misses' that occur due to dogs running freely.</p>
30	<p>You asked for feedback on the sharing of tow paths and I would like to agree that one needs to slow down the pace and accept that it is about "sharing".</p> <p>I am planning to walk with a small pack horse from the South of England to the West Coast of Scotland in a couple of years' time and would like to be able to use tow paths. If horses are being discouraged could it be that this is for ridden horses rather than those that are led.</p>
31	<p>Please find attached the response on behalf of Essex Bridleways Association to the consultation on towpath use currently being undertaken at the present.</p> <p>If you have any queries regarding the attached, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing the results of the feedback you have received when they are available, and I would appreciate it if you would put my email address on any mailing list to receive further updates.</p> <p></p> <p>Canals and Rivers Trust consultation res</p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>
32	<p>I find it disappointing how the document titled 'sharing towpaths' makes no provision for horse-riders? The tow paths were created for horses yet they are largely banned nowadays from using them.</p> <p>This is a shame and a great loss for horse-riders. Yet cyclists who take up equivalent space on a path are invited to use them?</p> <p>It would be nice to see a section including furthering access for horse-riders in this consultation exercise. It would be great to see horse-riders included in this.</p>
33	<p>Having read some of the info on the proposed strategy for canal towpath use, I think it sounds really promising! One thing was missing from the info though and that was anything relating to horse riders. We have a towpath near us which was once part of a bridleway but now obviously is not as it has 'no horses' signs either end. This amazes me really when horses were once a very necessary part of canals and their towpaths. I completely understand that pedestrians should have the biggest right of way on the towpaths but so often have I had to, while on foot, move out of the way of cyclists whizzing along. Why should bikes be allowed but not horses - it really boils down to people having a bit of common sense and decency and general respect for others. I have walked a short piece of the canal on a horse but am very aware of pedestrians and always stay right out of their way as I understand not all people like horses! Most people are very kind but I have had a confrontation with one gentleman a few years back so now if I use the towpath I am always worried about whom I might meet but as I said the majority will always smile and say hello. It would be great if we could all use the towpath as it is such a beautiful part of our countryside and keeps us off the horrid busy roads.</p>
34	<p>I have just read your consultation on tow paths. I live on a farm track off the A3400 in</p>

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	<p>Pathlow, near Stratford Upon Avon. I have horses but although we are in open countryside the riding is limited due to the speed and volume of traffic on the A3400. If we were able to ride on towpaths, it would make a massive difference to our enjoyment of the countryside by horseback. Although we live on a public footpath, we have permission from the landowner to ride down it, and it meets up with the Wilmcote canal. Some surfacing work is required on the stretch between Wilmcote and the Edstone Aqueduct, as it is very muddy and slippery in places (for pedestrians!). Being able to ride on towpaths would revolutionise our hacking opportunities.</p> <p>Please would you take this into consideration for your consultation?</p>
35	<div style="text-align: center;">  Towpath Consultation.docx </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Bishop's Cannings Parish Council (BCPC) Response to the "Sharing Towpaths" Consultation</u></p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>
36	<p>I believe you are consulting on tow path use and I would ask that more access is given horse riders. Some sections are only suitable for leading horses as they are narrow, busy or have low bridges, but the majority can be ridden easily and obviously was originally built for horse use.</p>
37	<p>This seems to be a very good document.</p> <p>I have just returned from a boating trip from Burton in Trent to London and have had a good chance to view current towpath behaviour.</p> <p>When the idea of cycling on the towpath was first mooted by British Waterways. I suggested that cyclists should be requested to cycle no faster than the average man can run. In the London area, I have witnessed several very close accidents where cyclists have been travelling at about 20mph with their heads down, helmets on and in some cases ear-pieces in place. In one case, a dog from a boat jumped off the boat onto the towpath into the path of a speeding cyclist who had to skid to a halt, narrowly missing the dog. In times gone by, children (in life jackets), dogs and other pets were perfectly safe to be left unrestrained on a boat moored to the towpath. These days, fast moving cyclists cause an un-necessary hazard. In another case, an elderly person walking under a bridge was taken by surprise when a cyclist arrived fast from behind him. I have been attempting to moor a boat when a fast travelling cyclist arrived and seemed oblivious to the fact that a heavy boat with an offshore wind has to be held from behind the towpath by someone whilst the mooring stakes are being driven home.</p> <p>I urge CRT to take control of the speeding cyclist problem. With the improvement of surfaces of towpaths (especially somewhere like the Paddington Arm of the Grand Union Canal) cyclists are going to be able to cycle even faster and I am sure that it will not be too long before there is a serious accident. Where would the responsibility lie if a speeding cyclist is killed when they fall from their bike onto sharp piling or collide with a deaf pedestrian or a dog?</p> <p>Junk on the towpath around moored boats. Most of us have decided to wash the roof of our boat whilst out on a cruise. Spring gets us that way! To do so we have to remove the mooring plank, boat pole and boat hook and maybe a couple of flower tubs. These may remain on the towpath for a couple of hours whilst the roof dries. This practice is normal and acceptable. What is not acceptable are heaps of wooden spars, large plastic sacks, broken bikes, wheelbarrows, a variety of broken chairs, old cookers and fridges, dog kennels and all sorts of other junk strewn across the towpath and even worse where hedges have been broken down</p>


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	<p>and little shelters made under the trees beyond. I have been travelling down to London in March or April every year for the last 12 years. Each year, I see more and more extremely dirty, tatty boats with heaps of junk on the rooves and in the front cockpit (blocking any exit through the front doors). These boats, also occupy (in large numbers) many of the attractive overnight mooring spots. I do however congratulate CRT on clearing some of the visitor moorings at places like Berhamsted to allow those of us passing through to be able to moor in order to shop for provisions.</p> <p>Fishermen fishing too close to the lock. It is noticeable too that more fishermen are now fishing from lock landings or actually in the lock entrance itself. They get rather irritated when a boat arrives and disturbs them. They seem unaware of the byelaws.</p>
38	<p>I often ride my horse along our local tow paths which are tame valley canal and Rushall canal I have not encountered any problems in the 25 years I have been riding along them the parts I ride along are not in a tourist area and I usually only meet fishermen I feel I help keep these tow paths in use whilst also keeping an eye out for any problems I only ride along the tow paths in walk , I would never go any faster as there is no need for speed on a tow path</p>
39	<p>Dear Sirs,</p> <p>I cannot locate the above on your website and would like to offer my views on the subject. Loving the waterways and frequently walking my dog on the local canal, I find it unbelievable that horse-riding is not allowed on the towpaths. It's supposed to be a shared path and after all, they were developed for the horse originally.</p> <p>Mountain bikes, which I find in the majority very ignorant to walkers, are allowed on these paths but horses are not. Bikes which go very fast and I have had to avoid numerous times from being run over, through pure ignorance of not sounding their bell or warning you of their approach. All horse riders I have ever met on bridleways are courteous and slow to a walk when people pass, not the mountain bike, even here on the "horses" path they zoom past you without a care.</p> <p>I feel in the consultations that are in progress that horses should be allowed on the towpaths, be it only at walk and trot, as I can understand if some people were allowed to canter, they could abuse the privilege (not that it stops bikers from going at full speed).</p>
40	<p>I just wanted to say how great it would be to be allowed to ride on towpaths. There are a large number of towpaths where I live but no bridleways so hacking is limited to a road only which is very dangerous.</p> <p>I appreciate many towpaths are not very wide and some walkers and cyclists may find sharing towpaths with horses frightening or intimidating but riders are used to getting off the highway\path on a wider bit to allow people to pass.</p> <p>I assume that although tow paths were originally created for horses that horses are not currently permitted on towpaths but if would be amazing if they were allowed</p>
41	<p>I hope that you consider ridden horses being allowed to ride alongside canals which could then link up with the local bridleway network. We have so many busy roads around Hertfordshire and drivers of cars are not always on the ball about what to do when confronted by a horse or two!</p> <p>Cyclists can also be a pain and dog walkers walking in public places with dogs off the lead. We have so many confrontations nowadays so to be able to ride safely elsewhere would be a great advantage and would keep us off main and secondary roads which can also have alarming levels and road surfaces that are extremely slippery.</p> <p>Just remembered how lovely it would be to ride along the Grand Union Canal near Watford as it so near me</p>


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42	<p>Thank you for consulting on towpath use.</p> <p>In the early 2000s, I helped a developer create some bridleways on his land and we ended up with them meeting the towpath, but British Waterways at the time wouldn't allow riders to use the towpath to join up to anything.</p> <p>I think that horse riders should normally be allowed on towpaths (except if there are special site specific reasons why not) as the paths were designed for horse use in the first place. But even if you don't go as far as having a presumption in favour of equestrian access, please could you consider letting riders use part of the towpath of the Grand Union Canal in Watford/Sarratt so we can join up the paths I helped put in place 15 years ago? I attach a copy of the dedication plan. At Point H, there is a horse bridge over the canal, and we seek to be able to ride over the bridge and along to the next road. If you could do this for us I would be very grateful indeed! The other benefit would be if we could go north from Point B to the next road.</p> <p> ed058 020818 dedication plan.pdf</p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>
43	<p>I have just spent a happy day on a narrow boat in the Watford area. I would have loved to see horses on the towpath, so please consider towpaths becoming bridleways particularly if they can link pre-existing bridleways as in Watford and Sarratt.</p>
44	<p>Without making too much of an issue out of it, may I make a suggestion that may satisfy a host of other canal towpath users.</p> <p>As a regular user of the canals in my area (usually for angling) it is the cyclist who is mostly considered to be the worst culprit in causing upset and confrontation to other users. On your website it does request that cyclists adhere to the code and give way to others and announce their presence by ringing a bell. In all my years on the canal I may have heard a bell rung about six times!</p> <p>My suggestion therefore is this. Could it not be made a stipulation by the Canal Trust that in order to cycle along a towpath a bicycle must be fitted with or carry a warning instrument to be used appropriately? Also, if possible, could notices be posted at certain access points to this effect?</p> <p>p.s. Keep up the good work!</p>
45	<p>I would like to see equestrian horse riding allowed on towpaths generally. Especially in my area Hertfordshire.</p>
46	<p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>Access to horse riders on towpaths would potentially increase off road riding and link bridleways providing safer routes. As tow paths were originally for the horses that towed barges this seems particularly appropriate.</p>
47	<p>Horse riders seem to have been omitted from this consultation document. The benefit to this large group, who most nearly represent the original use of the towpaths, would be safe off road routes, in some instances linking existing bridleways and so further developing this much needed resource. It would be reasonable to expect that riders be restricted to slow paces and be required to walk when passing pedestrians, as well-mannered riders will always do in any situation. Horse riders all over the country co-exist successfully with pedestrians and cyclists on bridleways and byways and this should be equally possible on towpaths. Adequate width to allow safe passing or overtaking by the various users would of course be necessary.</p>

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48	<p>I am writing to you to ask that horse riders be allowed to use towpaths. With the ever increasing amount of traffic on the roads it is imperative that horse riders have access to safer riding areas.</p> <p>As a local resident of Kings Langley & Watford this particularly impacts me and many of my friends with regard to those on the Grand Union Canal near Watford and in Sarratt. There are a large number of horse riders in this area who would benefit from more off road riding facilities.</p> <p>As the towpaths were originally built for horses to pull the barges, surely they can be returned to a similar use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * there's plenty of room to pass other users without anyone being worried * it would be a real benefit to the equestrian circuits in the areas * and walkers and cyclists would then be encouraged to use other routes, adding value to them to the towpaths * towpaths were designed for horse use <p>If you don't have a blanket policy please would you consider them on a case by case basis, in this case Sarratt and Watford.</p>
49	<p>I am always slightly surprised that there is any discussion about horses being able to access towpaths.</p> <p>With the best will in the world, how can anyone suggest that they shouldn't?</p> <p>The towpath should be available to both the ridden & the driven horse. This is how the word TOW got into TOWpath!</p>
50	<p>As you say in your description, tow paths were made for horses.</p> <p>It would be hugely helpful to have them open for riders, even if riders were asked to lead their horses if the tow path was narrow. I do long distance riding, ranging from 100 to 1000 mile rides. Often the use of a river or tow paths would be hugely helpful in getting me off the busy and dangerous roads and on to quiet and beautiful long distance paths next to canals and rivers. Horses tend to go at about the same pace as a walker and are very compatible with them. They are certainly a lot slower at a walk than many cyclists using paths.</p> <p>I sincerely request that you open up some of these paths to horse riders in the future.</p>
51	<p>I am attaching a response to the consultation paper <i>Sharing Towpaths</i> on behalf of the Ramblers West Riding Area.</p> <p>As I have been the Area's representative at the British Waterways and latterly Canal & River Trust user meetings for some years now, I was particularly interested in the paper and the opportunity it gave to play a part in the future development of the canal towpaths. I also played a small part representing the Ramblers at the end of the process which led to the appearance of the BW/CRT Towpath Guidance document concerning towpath repairs, improvements etc.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>CRT_Towpath_response_apr14.pdf</p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>
52	<p>I would like to comment on the above consultation. I am a horse rider and also have</p>

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	<p>considerable knowledge of our canal network, having cruised extensively on the system. For a number of years my parents kept a small cabin cruiser on the Grand Union at Wolverton.</p> <p>I feel very strongly that horse riders should be entitled to use towpaths throughout the system. Horse riding is one of the most popular participant sports in the United Kingdom, and is especially popular amongst under 21's, over 50's and women, all groups which the government is particularly keen to engage in sporting activity. Horse riders are, next to pedestrians, the most vulnerable group of road users, yet we have access to a very small percentage of the rights of way network. To have access to all canal towpaths would make a considerable contribution to our off-road riding and safety.</p> <p>Towpaths were created solely for the horses used by working boats. They, and all associated structures, bridges, etc. were designed for use by horses and were engineered with this in mind. The path itself was intended to be suitable for horses travelling at moderate speed, and turnover bridges, ramps, etc., were built to be safely used by horses. In the pre-railway age many canals were used by packet boats, carrying passengers or general merchandise, pulled by two horses one or both of which would be ridden by postilions, so it was certainly accepted that towpaths were for the use of both ridden and draught horses. Bridge holes are wide and high enough to accommodate most ridden horses since working boat horses were usually shire or heavy draught animals. I can see no valid reason why horse riders should not be allowed access to towpaths.</p>
53	<p>Hi</p> <p>Just wanted to share my experience of riding along the towpath of the Grand Union Canal near Weedon, Northants. It was a fabulous ride which meant I could keep off the main roads and join rides up enjoying the countryside at its best which is very important to all including horse riders.</p> <p>In response to your request regarding Canal Tow Paths that are ridden, one that is used greatly in our local area is that of the Wey and Arun Junction Canal.</p> <p>The particular stretch that I and my friends use is in the Loxwood, West Sussex area, but it does stretch from Dunsfold all the way to Wisborough Green (I believe) and beyond.</p> <p>This Canal has been undergoing considerable renovation works over the last few decades, so from time to time some stretches are impassable due to the works, but when it is accessible it is a very popular and enjoyable ride and we would all be devastated if we were to lose it.</p>
54	<p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>I agree with all aims of the towpath code but would specifically like it to include use by considerate horse riders. The tow paths are usually ridden at a quiet walk especially at times when they are likely to be busy with other users. My daughter and I have had the good fortune to ride along a number of lovely tow-paths in Scotland without any incident or problems. Indeed, adult walkers and their children have often asked if they can pat the horses (yes, of course!) and this has led to pleasant conversations that have enhanced the experience for all concerned.</p> <p>I am in favour of including any clauses relating to horse riders that improve safety aspects and general consideration. These could include moving horses aside when joggers, cyclists and walkers approach from either direction, always removing dung from paths, and remembering that these locations are only suitable for horses with quiet temperaments in view of close proximity to the public and occurrences that might alarm horses such as sudden movements.</p>

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55	<p>Dear Canal and River Trust</p> <p>I am writing in response to your request for comments on your consultation. I am a 66 year old horse rider who is also a cyclist and a walker. I think you have lots of experience of walkers and cyclists so I write as a horse rider.</p> <p>I have extensive knowledge of shared use. In addition to my normal hacking activity, I have made a number of long rides, including last year a continuous journey of 2,700 miles round England between 10 May and 8 December, including going through towns in order to visit 30 cathedrals.</p> <p>There is a lot of evidence that shared use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc. can be very successful and that fear of conflict or problems far outweighs actual experience. If you have not seen it there was a very detailed study of shared use done for Devon County Council about 10 years ago on their railway paths. Users are generally sensible and sensitive about when and how they travel on the paths and a well-publicised and supported Code of Conduct reinforces that good sense.</p> <p>Durham County Council has made particularly good use of its railway paths and has a well-publicised Code of Conduct.</p> <p>A few years ago The Trails Trust (a charity that promotes and creates multiuser routes in the countryside - bridleways) asked NFU insurance, which has insured horses and riders for decades, if they had any figures for claims involving horses and cyclists on bridleways and they had no knowledge of any such claim. Bridleways may be any width from just over a metre to 20 or more metres wide depending on their historic width; may have any sort of surface and vary from flat to very steep. The NFU information suggests that significant incidents are rare.</p> <p>The off-road network for horse riders is less a network than a scattering of bits of route connected by roads. Traffic volumes and speeds have increased steadily over decades and make many roads significantly less safe than previously. Relatively short 'new' off-road paths can connect up existing bits in ways that create much longer safe routes; circular routes are particularly desirable. In my route planning for last year I found 'good' routes for many miles that then failed unless I went onto perhaps a mile of dual carriageway or other busy road. Even if for some reason only short sections of towpath are deemed appropriate for horse riders, please do open them for use by riders, they will link up to other routes for someone in the area.</p> <p>On my ride last year I and my horse could have got safely off-road for more than half the distances from Lichfield to Chester if we had been allowed to use the canal towpath and could have been safer over many short stretches elsewhere, including in towns. We did follow rivers for some stretches using bridleways (including in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire, Cornwall and Oxfordshire) and had no problems.</p> <p>While some riders would use towpaths on long rides and be very grateful for what they could offer, most horse riders are like dog walkers and are making a regular ride for exercise of both rider and horse. This means that they are well able to judge the suitability of the route AT THE TIME THEY USE IT, and FOR THE HORSE THEY RIDE. Day and time are very often significant in decisions about where to ride and knowledge of one's horse is always part of that. Riders do not set out to be unsafe, so the route and time that is fine for a laid back pony or small horse will not be used by the owner of a very big and highly strung thoroughbred. Riders will make that judgement.</p> <p>On matters of the Code and Signage, may I urge you NOT to follow what appears to me to be the Sustrans practice of only using a Walker and a Cyclist on their signs, even when the route is on a bridleway or has some permissive use for horses? This can result in other users not expecting a horse. If horses are allowed along it, please say so. On physical aspects and furniture, barriers etc.: if modifications are needed, I suggest you may well find local riding</p>

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	<p>groups able to help with funding such changes.</p> <p>I hope you will decide to open much of the country's towpaths to riders, and ask that, if you decide to run some pilot projects, you set out in advance the criteria on which they will be judged and get them professionally and independently measured and assessed.</p>
56	<p>Hello Canal River Trust,</p> <p>The canal towpaths are a wonderful environment and I have long used them as a pedestrian either to walk to work or for leisure. I have recently taken up cycling and now have a new perspective of the towpath as a cyclist. Here is my feedback to the towpath code proposals Do you experience problems on your local towpath?</p> <p>As a cyclist:</p> <p>The sheer volume of pedestrians at busy times (Regent's Canal) makes even leisure cycling very difficult. When pedestrians have not moved over enough I have been forced onto uneven, slippery surfaces, causing me to skid very near the edge of the canal which is a very scary. I am newly returned to cycling and am not going fast and slow down even more when approaching pedestrians and always give warning by bell and/or excuse me.</p> <p>Cyclists overtaking other cyclists at fast speeds where the towpath is narrow. (Lee Valley) Cobbles, particularly on steep ramps, make it harder to control the cycle.</p> <p>As a pedestrian:</p> <p>I have not personally experienced any particular problems. In the past the long stretches of the canal with no way to get off could be somewhat unnerving if you were alone as there was no way to escape should you come along someone a bit dodgy seeming and I have known people to be mugged even in broad daylight. The stretch between Camden and Islington has improved with more open spaces around Kings Cross.</p> <p>When I did walk to work in the past the canal around Camden market up to the Pirate's Castle would be a blanket of litter every Monday morning. I expect it still is. It is unfortunate that it needs saying but maybe the code should include something about litter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What additional priorities should we address in our code of conduct? <p>Whilst it is correct that pedestrians have priority, they should also be obligated to share the towpath and move over to make way for runners or cyclists. The current wording "Pedestrians have priority" implies that they can obstruct the towpath with impunity. I prefer the statement in the Devon code of conduct http://www.devon.gov.uk/towpathcodeofconduct.pdf</p> <p>"Pedestrians have priority over cyclists but must not unduly block the towpath when aware a cyclist is approaching."</p> <p>I recall reading that cyclists should ring their bell at the entrance to bridges and bends with little visibility. Perhaps this instruction should be included in the code.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What behaviours should we seek to encourage? <p>Consideration by all users for all other users. Cyclists should show the same consideration to other cyclists as they are required to show to pedestrians. Pedestrians should show consideration to other users and make way when required, understanding that this makes it safer for everyone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How should we encourage better sharing of towpaths? <p>Maybe a convention for what side to move to and what side to pass on. E.g. when moving aside to allow overtaking move away from the canal and overtake on the canal side. And when passing (i.e. from opposite directions) pass on the left (because we drive on the left)</p> <p>The give way statement should not include "especially if you are running or cycling". Groups of pedestrians are just as obstructive and these words underplay the obligation of pedestrians to give way. Maybe "whether walking, running, or cycling" would be better.</p> <p>In addition to the "Pedestrians have priority" statement, add a statement indicating that pedestrians should move to one side to allow other users to pass as mentioned above or as</p>

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	<p>explicitly stated in the Scottish Canals code of conduct http://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/media/2743446/towpath%20code%20of%20conduct.pdf "Walking or Jogging Stay alert for passing cyclists On hearing a bicycle bell or cautionary voice: Move to the side of the towpath Allow cyclists to pass" • Should we adopt the same approach in all areas, urban and rural? Yes. The code should be the same across all canals and then all users will have the same expectations of behaviours wherever they are. On quieter stretches of canals people may have it to themselves and so the sharing codes will not at that moment be of import. • How should we balance the needs of busy communities with capacity of the towpaths in those areas? I wish I had the answer to that. Improving the surface of the towpaths and keeping down overgrowth of vegetation would help.</p>
57	<p>We would like to add our support to the discussion to permit horse riders to use canal towpaths for recreation.</p> <p>In recent years I have noticed far fewer horse riders on the roads because of the fear of accident and injury caused by unthinking drivers. Even narrow country lanes are treacherous - this morning a driver tried to turn his SUV through two riders (myself included) as we were crossing a T junction with right of way.</p> <p>I am nearing 70 and have noted the reluctance of riders to use the local roads. I live in Calderdale, near Halifax, and close to the narrow valley bottom. Half of the area we could ride is cut off by the designated lorry route, the A646, which passes along the valley bottom between Halifax and Todmorden, and the towpath, the only safe means to take a horse along the valley bottom, is no longer available to us, although it is, for the main part a cycle route. In fact, in the section where it is not an official cycle route (though this section of the canal is still used by cyclists) a special track has been made for the cyclists so they have two routes!</p> <p>This is harsh countryside climatically and lower routes are essential for those who wish to ride all year round and this strategically important valley has no safe means of passage without climbing towards the hill tops.</p> <p>I have always maintained that this issue is largely a gender bias. Few cyclists are women and not many people are prepared to tackle trespassing men on bikes so they are given wider benefits. Most horse riders are women and are more law abiding so easily manipulated.</p> <p>The towpaths were made for horses, of course, but renovations to the canals have resulted in bridges being erected or extended which are too low for a horse. In addition, the 'escape ledges' where barge horses could be rescued from the water if they fell in, have been removed.</p> <p>In recent years there has been a reduction in the number of tracks open to us. They are blocked/closed far more frequently than new bridleways are established, by the local council, through the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Our local council is 'sitting' on modification applications which were submitted two decades ago. I submitted a straight forward one over 7 years ago and it remains on the shelf, untouched. Since then, two of my evidence providers have died so their evidence becomes 'hearsay'. I am discouraged from researching and submitting any more applications as it is a waste of my time and money.</p> <p>Enabling riders to use the towpaths and the establishment of safe crossing places on the A646 would double the number of bridleways available to people living on both sides of this valley. I am sure this would be true in many areas where the canals, rivers, roads and railways compete for the valley bottoms.</p> <p>When we are trying to involve minority groups in recreation, i.e. women and young people,</p>

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	<p>this would make a considerable contribution.</p>
<p>58</p>	<p>I am responding to your call for points re the future of shared use for everyone on towpaths. Everyone should include the riders of horses.</p> <p>90% of riders who hack out are female, many young or elderly and infirm. Many wish to access the countryside to recharge their batteries which they want to do alone. But being female many feel vulnerable and riding a horse gives them confidence and makes them feel safer.</p> <p>Since</p> <p>Some towpaths are already bridleways without upset or conflict; I would like to think that the Trust could have an overarching principle of making all towpaths truly 'for everyone' rather than being discriminatory against those females whose only exercise is taken on a horse. I have ridden the towpaths that run through Milton Keynes on a busy summer weekend, and all the different users were polite to each other and I felt were glad to see horses. Many parents asked whether their children could stroke our horses. What a chance these children had, and how they enjoyed it.</p> <p>There appears to be reluctance on the part of many decision makers to include horses, because of a mistaken fear of conflict. This fear is not backed up by any evidence but appears to be more a reflection of the fact that the decision makers have no knowledge about horses. The majority of riders come from socio- economic groups C and D, much poorer than the average rambler, who has a vast array of safe off road routes. Towpaths would in many cases save children and women's lives, if riders could use them rather than dangerous roads.</p> <p>I am chairman of the Byways and Bridleways Trust and have worked as a volunteer for 30 years to extend the safe off road network for equestrians. I sincerely hope that the trustees will find it in them to extend towpaths to riders of horses. Control can always be delivered through bye-laws such as no cantering or galloping.</p>
<p>59</p>	<p>I am writing to comment on your Sharing Towpaths Document.</p> <p>I note that this is to be the basis of a "National towpath use policy". I question whether a national policy, especially if it is as prescriptive as that contained in the Sharing Towpaths document, is appropriate. I take that view because towpaths vary significantly in width, surfacing, and the extent of use, the likely nature of demand and user mix. There are some towpaths that are so narrow that it is questionable whether any shared use should take place at all. There are others where the width of the tow path is much more generous on those routes you should be promoting a broader mix of non-motorised use. This has happened on the Grantham Canal where BW somewhat reluctantly entered into a creation agreement with the local Highways Authority to create a bridleway on the towing path. On the Grantham canal the towing path is in all places wider than 4 metres and averages around 5 metres in width. A risk assessment completed by BW in 2010 concluded that horse riding presented a "low risk" hence the creation of a public bridleway on ¾ of a mile of towing path. Given that BW and now the Canals and Rivers Trust have a statutory duty to promote public access to towing paths why does the policy bias against horse riding persist on the other 32 miles of the Grantham Canal and other routes where horse riding would present a "low risk"? After all despite being told by BW and IWA that horse riding created too great a risk to other users the Grantham canal has been used frequently by large number of horse riders for 60 years without incident. What further evidence is needed?</p> <p>Having a national policy on who may or may not use towing paths is arbitrary and inherently unjust.</p> <p>Waterways should not be considered in isolation they need to be put in the context of what other routes are available to the users of the towing path. Where parallel and safe routes are not available for cyclists and horse riders then broader public safety issues should be</p>


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	<p>considered before suggesting those groups should be excluded from towing paths.</p> <p>There is in fact published research on multi use paths which concludes that horse riding does not present a significant risk to other users.</p> <p>I find the wording at 8 in your document very clumsy and misleading. The riders of horses are "people" as much as the riders of bikes or pedestrians. Some of those "people" have disabilities and riding a horse can be the only way they can access a towing path without the use of a wheelchair. Horse boating is a separate issue from riding horses on towing paths and they should not be conflated except to note that a horse being lead is generally less in control than one being ridden and that a tow rope attached to a startled horse presents an obvious hazard to pedestrians that would not apply to a ridden horse. I note that the section 8 concludes with the words "or alternative routes may be provided". I have not seen any evidence CART or BW have ever provided any alternative routes for horse riders. What proportion of the Canal and River Trust funding will be allocated to these "alternative routes for horse riders"? If the answer is none then I suggest that policy is not only unfair but is misleading. Perhaps you could let me know how these alternative routes will be funded when the development of towing paths for cycling is crowding out investment for bridleways which are routes for all non-motorised users unlike most routes on towing paths.</p> <p>Finally I note that on your website you claim to be "expert" on multi use paths what expertise do you have in relation to horses on shared paths?</p>
60	<p>Please receive my comments re the sharing towpaths consultation.</p> <p>I am in general agreement with your code but to me this is only an opening introduction. It should be extended with specific points for each of the main user groups as follows.</p> <p>BOATERS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. If using mooring spikes please identify with a suitable marker.2. Do not let mooring lines lie across the towpath.3. Do not block the towpath with general boating items.4. Whilst operating locks warn onlookers (gongoozlers) of the danger but at the same time explain how they work.5. Slow down when passing lines of fishermen keeping to the centre of the channel. <p>FISHERMEN.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do not fish around locks, lock landings, recognised mooring sites/visitor moorings, in restricted places e.g. under bridges, between moored boats.2. Do not block the towpath with rods, poles & other tackle.3. Be aware of people around you when casting.4. Return all fish safely to the water.5. Take home all bait cans & litter. <p>WALKERS/JOGGERS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enjoy the surroundings of the canal but beware of inherent dangers particularly at narrow places e.g. under bridges.2. Do not mass too closely around locks. Boaters need space to operate them so please comply with their instructions.3. Do not let children throw stones.4. Clean up dog mess from the whole of the towpath, that is the grass areas as well as the hard surfaces. <p>CYCLISTS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be aware that you are cycling on a towpath with many & varied users.2. USE YOUR BELL to warn people of your approach & dismount when passing large groups.3. Dismount around locks & other areas (moorings, lift bridges etc.) where boaters may be stepping off their boats with mooring lines.4. Do not race a maximum speed of 10mph is sufficient for a canal towpath.


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	<p>GENERAL NOTES</p> <p>CRT also has responsibilities as a towpath user.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do not leave work boats on lock landings or visitor moorings2. Ensure work in progress is clearly signed. This also applies to volunteer work taking place.3. Enforce CRT Bye-laws & instructions. (Whilst at the Bratch last year a group of 4 cyclists cycled past a sign requesting them to dismount whilst passing through this very busy site. I asked the Lock-keeper why he hadn't asked them to do so. His reply was that he did not have the authority to do this & in any case it was too confrontational).4. Mowing regime. Most users like to walk etc. on a towpath that is mown to the water's edge. This is both for the reasons of safety & the enjoyment of being able to see the water. Your publicity shots show it like this. However many towpaths become completely overgrown so much so that people on the towpath cannot see the water. These tend to become narrow, muddy & unwelcoming places.5. Naming. In my mind the historic use of the canal should be maintained by keeping the word TOWPATH. EG. The route on my local canal should be known as the CALDON CANAL TOWPATH. <p>I hope some of my comments are taken on board so that maximum value in terms of pleasurable use of the towpath can be gained by all.</p>
61	<p>Dear Sirs,</p> <p>I very strongly support the use of towpaths by horse riders especially as towpaths were originally created for horses to pull barges. Areas where horses can be exercised safely away from motorised vehicles have diminished over time as quiet lanes and tracks have been replaced by busy roads and in many places no alternative put in place for the continuing safe passage of horses. Many bridleways reach a dead end because they are cut off by a road or built up area. We are increasingly seeing horse riders on the roads and regularly hear about accidents involving horses.</p> <p>Examples of where towpaths can link up with bridleways are in Sarratt and Watford.</p> <p>The percentage of the population who ride is increasing especially since the London Olympics. Our towpaths mainly take us through beautiful and peaceful countryside, an ideal setting for a safe horse ride.</p> <p>I urge you to treat horse riders with the same priority as pedestrians and cyclists who also all share the bridleway network where it works very well.</p> <p>I would be pleased to receive updates on your policy in future.</p>
62	<p>Dear Sir or Madam</p> <p>Please find attached a response to the consultation on shared use of towpaths.</p> <p></p> <p>NBTA response to CRT consultation on s</p> <p>National Bargee Travellers Association</p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>
63	<p>Dear Canal & River Trust,</p> <p>Thank you for the chance to give our views. This opportunity arose when I was cycling along the canal in the W10 district on Wednesday 30th April and was approached by a group of</p>

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	<p>your volunteers.</p> <p>Firstly, we have used the canal, between Scrubbs Lane and Paddington Basin for educational projects, with children and families. On a personal level, I have found the canal invaluable for cycling safely with my daughter to her school, near Paddington Station. Also cycling along the canal is the best way for me to get to the Park Royal Industrial Estate in order to procure materials.</p> <p>We agree that pedestrians should have priority and that all cyclists should reduce their speed. One of our concerns is that the towpaths are not well configured for cycling but that they should and could be, and without recourse to laying down more asphalt, concrete and brick. Many are too narrow, in which case they need to be kept as clear as possible. In certain circumstances, there may be a way to cantilever the towpath from the edge of the bank. Dumping and littering (into the canal and onto the towpaths) are recurring problems and more signage concerning this problem may help.</p> <p>Signage about life-saving equipment is needed. Otherwise we do not see that there is a problem of too little signage.</p> <p>I have noticed that most users of the canal carry a mobile phone. An app for canal users might be useful, if there is not one already. It could be a useful way to make the canal feel safer for those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>There is a problem with dog owners, although it is clear to us that the towpaths are an attractive place to walk the dog. Could one of 'rules' be that dogs should be kept on a leash? They would still get their exercise.</p> <p>Sowing the verges with more wildflower seeds would be welcome.</p>
64	 <p>Sharing Towpaths response from MCTTC</p> <p>Mid Cotswold Tracks and Trails Group</p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>
64	<p>Dear Sirs</p> <p>British Land acquired Paddington Central in July 2013, the perimeters of which run along the Paddington Arm of the canal.</p> <p>We strongly believe that the management of the tow paths is key to ensure all users have a safe and enjoyable experience. Paddington Central Management Company would welcome the opportunity to work with the CRT and Neighbouring landlords on the management of the Paddington Arm stretch of the towpath.</p> <p>In light of this we would be very interested in the findings of your consultation and look forward to receiving further information on this.</p>
65	<p>I am not happy about you attitude to horse riding. I am the manager of a riding School and Livery yard near to the Grantham Canal. We have always used the towing path of the canal since the business began in 1954. British waterways spent the last 20 years trying to prevent us from using the towpath on dubious safety grounds. In fact we continue to have no choice but to use the towing path. Luckily in 2010 British waterways rather grudgingly agreed to ¾ of a mile of towing path being designated as a bridleway. They did a risk assessment and concluded that horses were "low risk" this is hardly surprising in view of the fact the whole Grantham canal had been used to ride for pleasure for at least sixty years without significant incident. I don't understand why the rest of the canal can't be opened up for horses. It would certainly lead to road safety improvements if that were done. I was hoping that the change to Trust status might introduce some new thinking but it seems you still have the same prejudices.</p>


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	<p>I have difficulty in walking but a horse allows me access to the towing path without difficulty. Two of my livery clients have more profound physical disabilities and they would only be able to access the towpath by wheelchair. Horses allow them the same freedom as the able-bodied or would do if you had a more enlightened attitude to equestrian access. Please change your policy to reflect equestrian needs.</p>
66	<p>Concerning the consultation on towpath usage, I would like to say that I feel horse riders have been discriminated against for many years. I rode along the redundant towpaths of both the river Trent and the Grantham canal as a child in the 50's to late 70's. I lived at Burton Joyce Nott's then moved to Cropwell Butler. I frequently rode along the riverside to Colwick, or the other way as far as Rolleston, as did many others including daily use by 2 riding schools. In the 70's we were barred from the towpath. Parts of the towpath had been registered as footpath on the definitive map, I don't know the date. There was a big protest with village hall meetings and newspaper reports. Unfortunately because of the Hood case it was not possible to change the definitive map status. Some years later another case overturned that, allowing that footpaths may have higher rights. The ferry crossings which replaced the fords were supposed to be maintained for all time. They carried wagons and horses and indeed the Ferryboat Inn at StokeBardolph has a photo in the bar of the hunt crossing on the ferry. These crossing points no longer exist so sometimes the bridleway continuation is on the other side of the river creating dead ended paths. The only road bridges are Trent Bridge and LadyBay bridge in central Nottingham, Gunthorpe Bridge (A6097) then Newark Bridge central Newark. To cross the river therefore the only way is to ride along busy main roads since bridleways are disjointed. The Grantham canal towpath would have been overgrown in many parts but was kept usable by the passing of horse riders and the hunt in winter. When the project to promote the towpath was proposed it was as a multi user path including riders but in the end riders were excluded. Since 1968 cyclists have been given the right to cycle on bridleways but not footpaths. There are several examples of multiuser paths, e.g. the Southwell trail, Attenborough nature reserve and many bridleways are used in the promoted walks and cycle routes and there does not seem to be a problem. So why is it that riders are excluded on these other paths which are largely paid for by the tax payer in the form of grants. How often when driving along the public highway do you see horses hacking out? Not often. Bridleways do not connect village to village. The roads even minor ones are dangerous. The highways authority does not provide an adequate grass verge, pavements often have dual use i.e. walking and cycling, leaving the rider sandwiched between cars and lorries on one side and bikes approaching from the front and behind on the other. If horses are not safely provided for on the roads then every opportunity should be taken to provide new connections so that riders can make safe journeys, short or long as they have through history. The towpaths are also ideal, being traffic free for the disabled rider and child riders. Why shouldn't they be able to enjoy being out and about, to see nature to feel they are going somewhere instead of going round and round in a circle in an indoor or outdoor school? Sorry this is a bit jumbled only received the e mail from the BHS on the 30th and haven't had time to read the consultation or discuss it with my friends who also rode the towpaths. No one seems to know anything about it and the deadline only gave a couple of days.</p>
67	<p>I agree absolutely with the driver for the consultation, i.e. opening up opportunities to access towpaths for exercise, access to green space etc. for health and well-being benefit etc. I think that canal boaters (my father included!) might take exception to the mention of boating as 5th in the list of towpath 'uses' after running and angling. I think that this group may potentially be difficult to convince that wide-scale opening up of towpaths to a wide range of user groups is a good thing; though of course some boaters do have bikes on their boats to better access locks for lock-setting and to access town and village centres off the canal network.</p> <p>Yes <u>respect</u> (bottom of page 1) is key. Each user must consider the needs of others for a policy</p>

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	<p>of shared use to work.</p> <p>I agree with the: Purpose; Towpath Funding Trends sections.</p> <p>Principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I would say that Towpaths also have established uses in supporting cycling. <p>Agree with Principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. I would suggest that some riverside paths also share the character of towpaths, particularly in urban areas/ urban fringe. 8. Might it be useful to give the reference point for the horse boating guidance? 9. If there are specific instances where towpaths cannot accommodate the wider range of user groups, yes, it would be very useful if Canal & River Trust can work with local highway authorities to identify an alternative parallel route. <p>What the Trust will do.</p> <p>Would be useful to have reference to the Towpath Guidance Document mentioned; is this on-line?</p> <p>Would be useful if alongside providing information on the condition of towpaths, the Trust can provide information on the nature of access points, i.e. are there any access controls? Can wheelchair/ mobility scooter/ pushchair users gain access? Can non-standard cycles, e.g. tandems, those with child seats/ trailers can access?</p> <p>Should there be something to say that there are often specific historic features, e.g. stone-setted sections of towpath under bridges, where features have a Listed status and that these may not be able to be redesigned/ re-engineered to better accommodate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, but should not prevent through access.</p> <p>For example I am thinking of bridges on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal where there is steep access through the bridge immediately next to a lock (Milnsbridge, near Huddersfield). There might have to be signage to say dismount and walk with your bike but I wouldn't want this 'pinch-point' to prevent the opening up of the canal to cycle use. I agree with the measures to follow if evidence of conflict arises.</p> <p>I agree with all the information on:</p> <p>Behaviours expected; Working to enhance the environment; What visitors can do, though should there be a more solid statement to say visitors Should follow the Towpath Code? Towpath Code – great!</p> <p>To encourage better sharing of towpaths there might be benefit to link in to British Cycling's Sky Ride Local programme of led leisure bike rides www.goskyride.com . Maybe there could be a joint promotion/ film clip of responsible use. Also British Cycling can link in to cycling celebrities.</p> <p>Maybe urban towpaths should be recognised more as routes to work so they could be busier in the peak travel times.</p>
69	 <p>sharing tow paths-Consultation cc Telford and Wrekin local access forum</p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>
70	<p>'The walkers bible, i.e. the OS Explorer maps, do not record public access rights on towpaths if they are not PROWs and a brief search of the web seems to bring up only maps for promoted walks by individual canals. I would like to suggest that OS should be asked to include towpath rights on their maps, possibly in the form of permissive paths.'</p>
71	<p>I already ride along short distances of the Leeds Liverpool canal which is stunning. I hope that you will consider allowing us horse riders to continue using the tow paths and perhaps provide</p>


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	<p>more stretches that we can access and enjoy,</p>
72	<p>Dear CRT</p> <p>I have just heard about your consultation re towpaths and need to share with you my experience as a boater which needs to inform your decision-making process.</p> <p>I have a permanent towpath mooring just above lock 11 on the Rochdale Canal. No rings or facilities. The towpath is fairly narrow and I put my mooring pins directly behind the large coping/edging stones at the edge of the canal, which is covered with grass. I cannot put the pins any nearer the canal edge.</p> <p>Out of the blue I received a solicitor's letter sent on behalf of someone suing me because he had injured himself whilst cycling. He blamed me because he said the accident was caused by my mooring pins. I have no idea what happened: I wasn't there.</p> <p>To cut a long story short, my insurance company's solicitors tried and failed to fight this claim and paid out to the claimant. So I now have a higher insurance premium and had to pay the excess.</p> <p>I fully support shared usage of the towpath, but not when it is unsuitable, particularly for cycling, when different users are brought into conflict. This is a narrow bit of towpath, yet it is included on a Sustrans cycle route. There are now a lot more cyclists on the towpath, even at night when they cycle really fast with headlights that blind other people using the towpath. I no longer walk on the towpath because cyclists have made it really wide and muddy. Walkers don't ruin the towpath surface.</p> <p>I sometimes think boats and boaters are rather low down on the list/hierarchy of towpath users. People are often surprised when they find out that boats moor up anywhere on the canal towpath, as long as it is not someone else's official mooring or a dangerous place (e.g. near a bridge hole). We do, after all, pay for both a licence and mooring fees. I have seen hard surfacing on the towpath that goes right to the canal edge, leaving no room for mooring pins.</p> <p>Please include this feedback in your consultation and feel free to contact me if you need any further information.</p>
73	<p>Sharing Towpaths – consultation on towpath use. Response from Lynnette Evans – Project Officer (Tour de France Legacy) Kirklees Council. 6 May 2014.</p> <p>I agree absolutely with the driver for the consultation, i.e. opening up opportunities to access towpaths for exercise, access to green space etc. for health and well-being benefit etc.</p> <p>I think that canal boaters (my father included!) might take exception to the mention of boating as 5th in the list of towpath 'uses' after running and angling. I think that this group may potentially be difficult to convince that wide-scale opening up of towpaths to a wide range of user groups is a good thing; though of course some boaters do have bikes on their boats to better access locks for lock-setting and to access town and village centres off the canal network.</p> <p>Yes <u>respect</u> (bottom of page 1) is key. Each user must consider the needs of others for a policy of shared use to work.</p> <p>I agree with the: Purpose; Towpath Funding Trends sections.</p> <p>Principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I would say that Towpaths also have established uses in supporting cycling.

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	<p>Agree with Principles: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8</p> <p>5. I would suggest that some riverside paths also share the character of towpaths, particularly in urban areas/ urban fringe.</p> <p>8. Might it be useful to give the reference point for the horse boating guidance?</p> <p>9. If there are specific instances where towpaths cannot accommodate the wider range of user groups, yes, it would be very useful if Canal & River Trust can work with local highway authorities to identify an alternative parallel route.</p> <p>What the Trust will do.</p> <p>Would be useful to have reference to the Towpath Guidance Document mentioned; is this on-line?</p> <p>Would be useful if alongside providing information on the condition of towpaths, the Trust can provide information on the nature of access points, i.e. are there any access controls? Can wheelchair/ mobility scooter/ pushchair users gain access? Can non-standard cycles, e.g. tandems, those with child seats/ trailers access?</p> <p>Should there be something to say that there are often specific historic features, e.g. stone-set sections of towpath under bridges, where features have a Listed status and that these may not be able to be redesigned/ re-engineered to better accommodate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, but should not prevent through access. For example I am thinking of bridges on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal where there is steep access through the bridge immediately next to a lock (Milnsbridge, near Huddersfield). There might have to be signage to say dismount and walk with your bike but I wouldn't want this 'pinch-point' to prevent the opening up of the canal to cycle use.</p> <p>I agree with the measures to follow if evidence of conflict arises.</p> <p>I agree with all the information on: Behaviours expected; Working to enhance the environment; What visitors can do, though should there be a more solid statement to say visitors Should follow the Towpath Code?</p> <p>Towpath Code – great!</p> <p>To encourage better sharing of towpaths there might be benefit to link in to British Cycling's Sky Ride Local programme of led leisure bike rides www.goskyride.com . Maybe there could be a joint promotion/ film clip of responsible use. Also British Cycling can link in to cycling celebrities.</p> <p>Maybe urban towpaths should be recognised more as routes to work so they could be busier in the peak travel times.</p>
74	 <p>towpath consultation response.docx The Ramblers</p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>
75	<p>I would like to ask for the use of many of our towpaths where ever possible to be considered for multi user purposes including equines.</p>
76	<p>Dear sir. We have no problem with bikes, in fact my wife and I cycle here in Newbury, and it is those who do not</p>

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	<p>have a bell can cause a little hell!!</p>
77	<p>After reading your latest consultation I am moored on the Grand union at Cowley Middlesex near The Malt Shovel Public house and lock at the point that Iver Lane Cowley crosses the canal we are constantly have problems with fast learner drivers 2 up on motor bikes and moped etc. tearing down the canal towpath - on 1 occasion leading to the recently sliding on wet muddy towpath and crashing into the side of my boat Phyllis Rose 519619 This also causing deterioration to the surface of the towpath - This problem has been reported to C&RT by a number of boaters and to police.</p> <p>2. At the bottom of the slop near Cowley lock is bike prevention metal system that makes it impossible for disabled people using mobility scooters to gain access to the lock area (possibly with children from the nearby park or to get to the local Cafe teashop or Local pub restaurant (Malt Shovel)</p>
78	<p>I welcome your consultation on towpaths and generally find your code reasonable however I feel there will be difficulty in getting people to follow it.</p> <p>As a cyclist riding many thousands of miles a year in many areas of the country I have used towpaths in many areas and use some in my own area frequently.</p> <p>Problems I see are inconsistency of routes on towpaths and uncertainty as to how far a reasonable surface will continue and where there will be reasonable access.</p> <p>For example I tried to follow a signed cycle route west out of Edinburgh along the canal on my tandem. After several barriers that could not be negotiated without dismounting and attempting to tip the tandem up on its back wheel to get through the barrier I eventually resorted to the road.</p> <p>Going back to your Towpath Code:-</p> <p>I think you could advise pedestrians to listen out for cyclists. Many times on cycle paths I pass pedestrians after ringing a loud bell only to get an angry shout of "why don't you ring your bell".</p> <p>Another problem is dog walkers who stand on one side of a path and call their dog which is on the other side as a cyclist approaches, or ones who try to grab their dog which was behaving quite safely but shies away as they lunge for it. Extending leads are a regular problem on cycle tracks though not so much on towpaths. They can be hard to see when stretched out across the path.</p> <p>You say Cyclists Should dismount where required. Yes there are dangerous places and some very busy places and when the hazard is clear most cyclists will behave sensibly BUT "Cyclists Dismount" signs are scattered about in so many stupid and inappropriate places by highway authorities in clear contravention of DfT guidance on the use of the signs so that most regular cyclists will ignore the standard blue "Cyclists Dismount" sign. Please don't use them. Warn of the hazard and if it really is necessary say "Please dismount through pub terrace" or whatever the hazard is.</p> <p>You should also ask your Boaters and Fishermen not to obstruct the free passage along the towpath. I have come across fishermen who camp right across the decent surface and expect cyclists to ride round in long grass or on muddy slopes. One boater had mooring lines stretched across the towpath to a tree behind the path while another appeared to be spring cleaning with a load of stuff piled up across the path. These are exceptions though not common occurrences are more often embarrassed by cyclists I see passing far too close to walkers.</p> <p>I hope this has been helpful and I wish you every success with improving the towpaths</p>
79	<p>The cyclists are a problem on my section of the towpath. Riddlesden to Bingley They cycle too</p>

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	<p>fast (some of them) they are abusive when you request they use a bell. They do not slow down when passing pedestrians. 3 people have been knocked down. There is no redress. I no longer feel safe. Creating cycle routes on this section has given cyclists permission to ride as if they were Bradley Wiggins racing</p>
80	<p>I have some views on the shared use of the towpaths in the Springfield Park area down to Clapton and beyond. They are overrun with cyclists, unfortunately the majority of whom seem to believe that pedestrians shouldn't even be there let alone have priority (and most of these are male). They go way too fast and are often rude to pedestrians who are enjoying a leisurely walk. People have put signs up asking cyclists to slow down. One said cyclists were a danger to children and dogs.</p> <p>In the summer I walk from Springfield Park to Clapton Pond to get the bus and had to stop walking on the towpath and cross over the bridge to Sandy Lane as it was too unpleasant trying to walk along a narrow towpath with cyclists on their way to work going too fast. Most cyclists seem to believe that once they start their journey they do not have to stop until they reach their destination. These cyclists should not be on the towpath. If they want to cycle at speed and not stop they should be on the roads.</p> <p>Pedestrians seem to be in danger of being forgotten about and the towpaths are in danger of being ruled by cyclists who think they are superior beings because they are on bikes. I used to cycle to work in the summer but stopped when I hurt my shoulder but I was a considerate cyclist, as I am also a pedestrian. I know other cyclists who are also walkers and have dogs or children and are angry about the speed and number of cyclists that now use the towpaths.</p> <p>Signs need to be clearly displayed stating that pedestrians have priority and that cyclists must cycle slowing if they wish to use the towpaths.</p> <p>On the towpath near the park I have also seen cars (!) and scooters using it. Barriers should be put up to prevent this.</p>
81	<p>The towpath at Crick from bridge 13 to Crick tunnel entrance is has many regular shared users including walkers, joggers, dog walkers, children, cyclists, fishermen and those visiting the Canal and Crick Tunnel – which is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year. The towpath is a regular route for those doing a circular walk/ride from the village. It is an access route for those visiting Daventry District Council's Country Park at Cracks Hill or Crick's Millennium Wood Pocket Park – both have access via bridges 13 and 14 (recently reinstated by public subscription).</p> <p>Unfortunately the state of the towpath is regarded by walkers and cyclists as dangerous at this time. The section from bridge 12 to 13 is so muddy that some people fear to use it because they feel they will slip and slide and fall into the canal. I understand a petition is being organised by concerned users.</p> <p>This section of the canal is very well used but is in a poor state. What can be done to bring it into full and safe shared use?</p>
82	<p>Horses were always originally allowed on the towpaths- it is why towpaths were invented. Access for all is not actually true if you don't include horse riders. There would be no issue for us to stick to walk and trot (or even just walk) as it would a privilege to have access to actually what rightfully originally belonged to horses. With roads so busy and bridle paths very limited, especially in Derbyshire Dales where we live, it is extremely important that we are allowed to share this access.</p> <p>We have no access at the moment to the towpath along the canal from Matlock to Belper. We are told it's a health and safety issue.</p>
83	<p>I have read in the NABO magazine & in Towpath Newspaper that you would like comments on</p>



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	<p>towpath "sharing".</p> <p>Until fairly recently there was rarely any conflict between the various groups of people & dogs using the towpath, but, in the past months since cyclists have been encouraged to make more use of the towpath we have experienced & witnessed as well as having been told of several incidents between pedestrians & dogs vs cyclists.</p> <p>My wife & I have been "bumped out of the way" twice by cyclist who have come up SILENTLY behind us.</p> <p>We were witness to an incident on the River Stort towpath at Roydon 2 weeks back, where a speeding cyclist bumped into a stationary pedestrian, fell off her bike & hurt herself badly. The pedestrian was then blamed for the incident by the woman's partner who was riding ahead of her & did not see the collision. Fortunately she just missed falling onto 1 of our mooring pins where she would have been very badly injured & the pedestrian has only been badly bruised.</p> <p>on the same day another elderly lady walking her dog told us that she had been sworn at by a cyclist because she hadn't got out of his way quickly enough, & on mentioning this to other people another elderly lady said that she had experienced a similar incident 2 months back on the River Lee towpath near Stanstead Abbotts.</p> <p>Last week I was threatened with physical violence & experience verbal abuse when yet another silent speeding cyclist almost rode over a lady dog walker's pointer puppy & became abusive towards all of us in the group that was standing & chatting.</p> <p>After mentioning these incidents to other people on the towpath there have been several people who have either experienced hear misses, actual collisions or verbal abuse from cyclists. One was told that the towpath is now a cycle track, another was shouted at "to get out of the way> I am on a time trial for f***s sake", & several of the more considerate cyclists have said that they are being forced off the towpath by the "lycra louts" & "fair-weather speedsters". I have heard one cyclist saying to another " we can only do 20 mph here but we can do better further on</p> <p>There are also people that we have spoken to on the Rivers Lee & Stort who are now afraid to bring their children onto the towpath for fear of them being severely injured or even killed.</p> <p>There are now times when we are trapped inside our boat on weekends & afraid to allow our dog outside.</p> <p>The cyclists now believe that they have right of way, & until speed limits are imposed & advertised at every point that cyclists can enter the towpath this problem is likely to get worse until there is a death by speeding cyclist.</p>
84	<p>I like where you are coming from as the slowest should be the starting point as boats and anglers are the prime group and the only ones that pay to us the canal.</p> <p>Wiliest I except that pedestrians use the towpath "for free" and these caused the least problems if they have dogs they become a greater problem.</p> <p>I feel the cyclists and canoe need to be regulated as they are using the canal and get full use without giving anything back e.g. licences or day ticket.</p>
85	<p>Unfortunately we as a family recently experienced an up setting altercation with a barge owner on the stretch of Grand Union Canal between Bletchley and stoke Hammond.</p> <p>We have in the past experienced enjoyable times along these tow paths whether we are jogging cycling or just walking the dogs.</p> <p>On this particular occasion recently a member of my family who was jogging along with my son and the dogs which are always well controlled and behaved, were greeted when approaching this particular barge with we believe the lady owner potting up some plants and their dog which</p>

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	<p>approached our youngest dog which is a springer spaniel, at this point there seemed no threat to either dog until all of a sudden the boat owners dog attacked our dog pinning him down to the ground for which our dog in shock tried to get free resulting in him falling into the canal, at this point we were very concerned for our dog and managed to pull our dog out of the canal that was experiencing shock.</p> <p>Soon after this a man emerged from inside the boat and proceeded to attack us verbally in a very aggressive and threatening way and one occasion was prepared to get physical. At this point it was realised there was no way of reasoning with this guy and plus this was being witnessed by our fourteen year old son, so with this in mind my family returned home in a shocked state of what had happened.</p> <p>I am writing this review although I was not in attendance when this incident first happened but on hearing how this boat owner conducted himself in such an aggressive way as we are the injured party and in front of my son I decided to take this further by seeing where this all took place myself and to take photos of the barge and permit to submit when reporting it to the police.</p> <p>When arriving at the boat the lady was still potting up her plant's and recognised the other member of my family, I was prepared at that time just to take the photos and go but at that point I decided to ask what actually happened and told her that our dog was slightly limping but was still in shock, with this she replied with attitude" well what do you want me to do about it", at this time we were then approached from a distance by the guy that again started being very verbal and aggressive towards us and at one point produced a claw hammer with this his partner pacified him with saying no don't it is not worth it.</p> <p>I then thought that this was reason for a higher level of concern and decided to take the photos and go, we have reported this to the police and submitted statements along with the photographs of the barge and their permit.</p> <p>To this end I am hoping this will not spoil or give us doubts as to whether we will use and get the pleasure of the tow paths again but will keep in mind that this will be hopefully a one off occasion.</p>
86	  BHS response Canal & River Trust.docx Sharing Towpaths final.doc See separate PDF responses
87	<p>I'm writing on behalf of our local Bridleways group- The Fenland Bridleways Association.</p> <p>We have a very large horse riding population in this area (around Burwell, Wicken, Swaffham Bulbeck, Lode, Reach, Cambridgeshire) and yet the area is intensively farmed and therefore there is very little off road riding or ways of extending access for horse riders. However we have some very important and well used routes alongside the local waterways. These waterways are tributaries of the Cam and are called Lodes - Reach Lode, Burwell Lode, Swaffham Bulbeck Lode. They were all straightened and banked way back when the Fens were drained, and the actual water level is now far above the surrounding level of the farmland. These waterways were important routes for the transportation of stone from the local quarries and other materials by narrow boat up until the 1930s and much of this transport was horse towed. One local resident, now dead unfortunately, recounted to me how, even though the Lode banks had occasional fences to manage cattle, the two horses would jump the fences. The boat people would stop the horse and let the boat drift forwards until there was enough slack in the rope for the horse to have a short run up and jump the fence before taking up the tension again and resuming his towing duties along the next stretch of towpath! So there is a long history of horses in the area, and more recently of horse riding along the tops of the riverbanks, and along the under bank droves where these still exist.</p>


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	<p>Your consultation document appears to us to be very urban in its concerns and we are worried about its generalised approach - all towpaths were originally for horses, and you acknowledge that they should cater for horse drawn barges, but at the same time state that horse riding is specifically excluded except in cases where bridleway status has been given.</p> <p>This very much does us a disservice. You should know that many rights of higher access exist over paths but have not been claimed for a variety of reasons, not least the sheer lack of resource (by the public) for the arduous process of making claims for higher rights, and the lack of County Council personnel for processing these claims. Even Wikipedia states 'Many public bridleways (as well as Roads Used as Public Paths, Byways Open to All Traffic and Restricted Byways) were recorded as mere footpaths as a result of the burden of maintenance required by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and so are now wrongly recorded on the definitive map at a lower status than they should be.'</p> <p>Horse riders are the one group which your document talks about excluding. Why do you have to do this? Please see it from our perspective too. We are easily the minority group out of all that you refer to in your document. We are fewer in number, and we have least choice of routes - I forget the stats but there is tiny fraction of mileage of bridleways compared with footpaths. We don't need your Trust telling the world that we should be excluded from towpaths also. Either leave this out, or find some positive way of dealing with us as a group.</p> <p>The danger is that we run the risk of some persons or group of persons using your document as ammunition to stop us from riding along riverbanks in this area, when actually your code of practice is only really relevant to users in urban areas.</p> <p>So please we would like to see point 8 worded more carefully.</p> <p>With best wishes, and it would be good if you could keep our group informed as you finalise your Code.</p>
88	<p>Dear Canal and River Trust,</p> <p>Yesterday I filled in the Survey concerning towpaths and their uses (I gave my name and email address), and spoke of cyclists not using bells. Today I walked (bad arthritis, limping badly and painfully with a stick) from Parbold towards Burscough, just for a short way to within sight of Course Lane Swingbridge. During the time I was along the canal (about two hours) I was using my camcorder to record the condition of the towpath and how cyclists approach someone walking badly with a stick (I am nearly 70). There were at least twelve cyclists during that time and not one of them rang a bell or shouted to draw my attention to the fact they were coming up behind me.</p> <p>In one instance I was walking on the narrow path – just wide enough for one person, which had a much wider grass verge on the canal side of the path, with plenty of room for bikes to pass, and yet a family of three headed straight for me (father first, then young daughter, then mother) on the narrow path, in fact I thought they weren't going to move over, they did but at the very last moment, and all three came very close to me. I said good morning (I have it all on video) but it was very disconcerting. I had the feeling if I had not have been videoing the incident it could have been quite nasty – I had the feeling they expected me to jump out of their way, and they weren't going to move.</p> <p>A short while afterwards, another cyclist came past me from behind, no bell, no warning, and as he passed he shouted abuse at me for no reason, basically telling me to get out of the way – and then stopped further on and turned round staring at me. At this point I had, unfortunately, put the camcorder away, but I did take his photograph with a different camera (see image below, and the attachment for larger image), he saw me taking his photograph and just after it he gave me a two fingered sign and cycled on. It is obvious I am walking badly with a stick, and my age is obvious too. What is the matter with these people? Walking painfully with a stick means I can't move quickly, I</p>

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	<p>can't jump out of the way, and I can't hear bikes coming from behind in the wind, when they don't ring their bells!</p> <p>Even though I walk with pain, for physiotherapy I have been advised to cycle, and I can actually ride a bike without pain (I have always ridden bikes), and sometimes cycle a short distance for exercise rather than walk, but I always use my bell and make sure that people are aware of where I am, and I always go round people rather than them moving. If they don't respond to a bell I shout that I am coming past, and if that fails I go very slowly past them, ready to get off if necessary – sometimes I have had to. The canal towpath should be an ideal track to use away from the road, but the state of the towpath round Parbold means that the actual 'path' is many places is very narrow, just wide enough for one person, and if a walker is using the path cyclists seem to think they should jump out of the way for them.</p> <p>Another incident was when two walkers hand-in-hand tried to manoeuvre me from the path because they would not separate. I stayed on the path but the woman nearly bumped into me.</p> <p>I hope this gives you an idea of what it is like along the towpath by Parbold, and the distress that people can cause by not being thoughtful, courteous and respectful.</p>
89	 <p>WSLAF_response_Canal_River_Trust_To West Sussex Local Access Forum</p> <p>See separate PDF responses</p>