

Title:	Future of Boat Licensing Review Commission – Inaugural Meeting	
Date:	14 th January 2025	
Venue:	Devonshires (London office) in-person/Teams	
Present:	Andrew Cowan Sir Chris Kelly Penelope Barber (on Teams)	Chair
In attendance:	Tom Deards Poppy Welburn	Legal & Governance Director, Canal & River Trust Project & Infrastructure Lawyer, Canal & River Trust
Apologies:	n/a	

MINUTE	DISCUSSION/ACTION	WHO
	Welcome and Introductions	
1/25	<p>The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, introducing himself and inviting others to introduce themselves.</p> <p>The Chair noted that slides and Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Commission were happy to use those slides as a framework for discussion.</p>	
	Commission Governance	
2/25	<p>TD summarised the 1st slide which contained a high-level overview of the Trust's Governance framework and briefly described the role of Council, the Board and the various Board Committees, noting the Board of Trustees as the ultimate decision-making body for the Trust with day-to-day operation of the Trust delegated down to the Chief Executive who was supported by the Executive team.</p> <p>TD moved to the 2nd slide which set out the status of the Commission, constituted by the Board of Trustees (in the Board meeting on 20 November 2024) as per the Terms of Reference. These confirmed that the Commission would report to the Board.</p> <p>There was discussion on the role of the newly-formed Board Boating Committee (currently made up of 4 Trustees) as a suitable forum for discussion of the detailed issues which the Committee would become engaged in as it shaped its recommendations. It was noted that the Boating Committee had its own Terms of Reference, which set out that Committee's primary role in helping the Trust improve long-term boater satisfaction.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Committee would be a useful sounding board for the Commission and could help inform the deliberations of the Commission alongside other stakeholders.</p>	
	Terms of Reference	

<p>3/25</p>	<p>The Commission noted that the Terms of Reference had been approved by the Board of Trustees at their November Board meeting, and it was for the Commission to agree to work under those Terms. Any proposed amendment to the Terms of Reference would, therefore, have to be approved by the Trust's Board of Trustees.</p> <p>The Chair noted and welcomed the representations received by the National Barge Travellers Association ('NBTA').</p> <p>The Commission discussed the NBTA representations, noting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That any recommendation from the Commission needed to be rooted in furthering the charitable objects of the Trust. To that end the objects of the Trust were tabled and read out. • It was suggested a publicly available microsite could be set up for the work of the Commission. TD agreed to look into this. • Whilst the Terms of Reference did set out the Trust's challenges, the Commission would keep an open mind about the nature and extent of these issues and not start from any presumption that new or amended legislation or any change was necessarily required. • The Terms of Reference did make a number of assertions about the change in use of the Trust's inland waterways over the past 30 years. The Commission would not take this as necessarily established and would expect to see evidence and data that supported these assertions, including those relating to numbers of iterant and liveaboard boaters before and after the British Waterways Act 1995 and that any recommendations would need to be data led – with part of the initial work focusing on data gaps which could inform the work of the Commission so that the right data can be obtained. • The Commission would be interested in the views of the Board but would make its own decision on its recommendations. • In that context, members discussed whether they were content to accept the Terms of Reference. Members unanimously agreed that they would accept them. However, they did have some areas of clarification. It was agreed that the Chair, in conjunction with the other members, would write to the Chair of the Board to set these out. <p>It was agreed that the response should be posted on the proposed microsite.</p> <p>The Commission were happy to ratify the Terms of Reference on this basis.</p>	<p>TD</p> <p>AC</p>
Principles and Approach		
<p>4/25</p>	<p>The Commission considered the 'principles' sought by the Trust for any boat licensing reform in the Terms of Conditions:</p> <p>The Commission agreed that one of key issues it should focus on initially is to define and understand the issues the Trust is trying to resolve and, once this is clear, the evaluation criteria the Commission should adopt to assess possible options.</p>	

	<p>It was agreed that the Commission was not seeking to produce a detailed set of proposals for the Trust which could be immediately implemented - but rather a series of broader recommendations for a boat licensing framework that the Trust could then, if it wished, use as a basis for taking forward.</p> <p>The Commission went on to consider the 'approach' set out in the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The Commission agreed on the importance of openness and was happy to publish minutes of its meetings on the Commission page on the Trust website.</p>	
	Work Programme	
5/25	<p>The Commission considered a proposed work programme.</p> <p>It was agreed that an initial briefing day for the Commission would be set up in early February.</p> <p>TD agreed to co-ordinate relevant Trust colleagues to provide these briefings.</p> <p>The Commission noted how useful the NBTA submission had been to help it consider its work, noting that it represented the view of one user group and that it would be important to have a broad view of users. It was agreed that early stakeholder engagement was important to ensure that the Commission was able to obtain a representative sample of views.</p> <p>There was discussion as to how any engagement should be framed. The Commission agreed to seek responses on a series of questions, designed to help the Commission define the issues, evaluation criteria and potential recommendations.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Commission should try to agree these questions (alongside a plan on how to carry out the engagement) at the February briefing day, ahead of a possible 6-week engagement period from mid-February to the end of March.</p> <p>The Commission noted the proposed periods for option review from April to June and then for development of draft recommendations in July and August, before final recommendations were presented to the Trust Board in September.</p> <p>It was also agreed that the Commission should provide a series of updates to the Trust Board Boating Committee, which could take place in March, June and early September.</p> <p>TD went through the resources available to the Commission, including an internal Trust project team (which included colleagues from Boating, Enforcement, Legal and Communications teams) as well as external resources such as Counsel, public affairs agencies and research consultants.</p> <p>TD confirmed that the Commission was free to request additional resource to assist it in its work in forming an independent view.</p>	TD
	Background Briefing Day	
6/25	<p>The Commission discussed the content for the briefing day and agreed the follows areas and order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial • Operational 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders • Legal 	
	AOB	
7/25	<p>The Commission agreed dates to hold for possible future meetings.</p> <p>As there was no other business, the Chair thanked the attendees and closed the meeting.</p>	