

## TERMS OF REFERENCE - Environment Advisory Group

### Rationale

One of the Canal & River Trust's key charitable objects is to *“further for the public benefit the conservation protection and improvement of the natural environment and landscape of inland waterways”*. The Trust's approach to this object is to add value to the natural capital in our care whilst maintaining the other uses to which our waterways are put for public benefits. To pursue this objective effectively, the Trust will benefit from the support of an advisory group that consists of a small number of skilled and expert practitioners with high standing.

The Group should meet at regular intervals and help the Trust with environmental management, hydro-ecological, and nature conservation issues at a strategic and technical level, especially those that may be innovative or controversial (for instance where a balance between potentially competing demands needs to be struck). The Group will give comfort to the Executive Directors of the Trust and others that the direction of travel is appropriate, well managed, and reflects the charitable objectives.

### Remit

The remit of the Group will be as follows.

- Validate the Trust's strategic direction in environmental management.
- Provide the Canal & River Trust with top quality expert advice about specific nature conservation, water, and general environmental issues that are brought to the Group's attention.
- Provide input into 'Horizon Scanning' by the Trust on forthcoming opportunities and challenges.
- Act as an advocate for the Trust and its environmental objectives.
- Lend credibility and legitimacy to Canal & River Trust's strategic decisions affecting the waterway environment.

The Group will have regard to ***all six*** of the Trust's charitable objectives (see below) in their considerations as not only the “natural environment” objective is relevant to their area of expertise and the Panel need to consider and balance the full range of objectives in their deliberations. The six objectives (in no order of priority) are:

1. To preserve, protect, operate and manage inland waterways for public benefit:
  - For navigation; and
  - For walking on towpaths; and
  - For recreation or other leisure-time pursuits of the public in the interest of their health and social welfare;
2. To protect and conserve for public benefit sites, objects and buildings of archaeological, architectural, engineering or historic interest on, in the vicinity of, or otherwise associated with inland waterways;
3. To further for the public benefit the conservation protection and improvement of the natural environment and landscape of inland waterways;
4. To promote, facilitate, undertake and assist in, for public benefit, the restoration and improvement of inland waterways;
5. To promote and facilitate for public benefit awareness, learning and education about inland waterways, their history, development, use, operation and cultural heritage by all appropriate means including the provision of museums;
6. To promote sustainable development in the vicinity of any inland waterway for the benefit of the public, in particular by:
  - The improvement of the conditions of life in socially and economically disadvantaged communities in such vicinity; and
  - The promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration and the prudent use of natural resources;

## Membership

The Chair of the Group will be appointed by the Chief Executive with advice from the Trust's natural environmental professionals. Members will be appointed by the Chair in consultation with the executive and the Trust's natural environmental professionals. The Group should consist of:

**A Chairperson** – someone of good reputation and standing in the environmental sector.

**A Vice-Chair** elected from the members to deputise for the Chair

**Around 8 members** representing the following areas of interest (all areas to be represented by at least one member):

- **Water quality and Water Framework Directive issues** – expertise on water chemistry but also particularly the hydro-ecological issues emerging from WFD classifications and improvement programmes; supporting the attainment and maintenance of Good Ecological Potential in our waterways
- **Sustainable / scarce water resources** – expertise in sustainable water use and abstraction – balancing the demands of human use with natural requirements of the water environment; addressing the need for climate change adaptation

- **Nature Conservation** – someone particularly with expertise in freshwater ecology, protected sites and relevant protected species; supporting the on-going protection and enhancement of the waterway natural environment through the application of appropriate, practical, good practices throughout our activities.
- **Sustainability** - someone encompassing the issues addressed by BW’s “Green Plan” such as resource use and efficiency (inc. waste management) and carbon footprint management; helping to improve resource efficiency and climate change mitigation.
- **Environmental Management Systems** – someone with expertise in systems for organising management of the full range of environmental issues across a diverse organisation like C&RT, including internationally recognised standards such as ISO 14001 and EMAS; supporting the maintenance of an appropriate level of EMS for the Trust.

Membership of the Group will be for a **term of up to 3 years** initially (with terms spaced to provide for succession and continuity) with an option to continue beyond that at the invitation of the Chair.

## Meetings

The Group will meet quarterly or as agreed by the members. Agenda items will be circulated in advance and accompanied by background papers where required. These will be derived from a number of sources:

- the Trust’s business processes (so for instance our national strategies; annual business planning; or the cycle of the Environmental Management System);
- issues raised by the Trust’s “horizon scanning” of forthcoming opportunities and challenges;
- issues raised by the Group’s members as of relevance to the Trust;
- interface with other areas of interest within the Trust (for instance where environment interacts with other advisory groups such as Heritage, or Navigation). This might involve joint meetings to discuss a common issue such as dredging, or consideration of the same paper by more than one group.

The Trust’s Environmental Policy Advisor will attend the meetings and will be accompanied by other Trust staff as required.

Meetings will rotate around the country as required to incorporate a high level of site visits to meet staff / volunteers and to see first-hand the challenges and successful delivery of mitigations and enhancements.

## Administration

The Environmental Policy Advisor will act as secretary to the Group.

## Remuneration

Membership of the Group will be voluntary and unsalaried although reasonable expenses will be paid to members.

August 2012

Updated July 2020 (minor amendments reflecting the Trust's restructure, rebrand and change of name from "Panel" to "Group" to align with other similar advisory bodies)

ISSUED