

Meeting notes summary for West Midlands User Forum

Tuesday 21st April 2015 – Coomeswood Canal Trust

Style of meeting

Ian asked for suggestions on improvements/changes to the format of the WM User Forum.

- A more varied audience
- Anglers/cyclists seen as key users
- Other agencies and could include local authorities/Police/Other volunteer bodies etc
- Difficulties are being encountered generally engaging with new partners and this includes the waterway partnerships.
- Hearing from additional users of the network informs decisions when it comes to business plans
- Individuals and organisations attending the forum can always give a presentation
- Other user forums request pre meeting questions
- Agenda circulated prior to meeting
- Suggestion to hear from other members of CRT teams
- Presentations should be short and sweet
- Ian advised he was considering a monthly open day at the Cambrian Office
- Consider offering more time to mingle before the meeting commences
- The discussion moved towards information generally
- Signboards contain out of date info
- More notice boards needed
- More local information on signboards and website. (Ian advised this was already in hand)
- QR codes on information boards can help guide users to where they need to be on the website
- Suggestion that information boards could be managed by volunteer groups as already happens on W&B Canal.
- Suggestions that website was poor and Ian explained that the site is currently being reviewed and a revised version will shortly be assessed by a group of volunteers
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Introduction of new waterway team

- Ian explained the new team structure and provided details of current team
- New Engagement and Development Manager Bashir introduced and Ian commented on one of the new initiatives was to talk to waterside businesses on the offside of urban navigations having the ability to offer secure overnight moorings (In my view this could also offer additional security benefits for the businesses too.

Discussion on tunnel signage

- Some differing views on Gosty tunnel. It was agreed representatives of both canoe and boat clubs would meet on site with a large workboat to perform a trial.

John Pritchett presentation

Following John's Power point presentation he explained he was involved in a national project looking at Pawls and Spindles and would welcome feedback on the subject from the forum

- There are occasions when an emergency situation where dropping closing the paddles is required very quickly
- Maintain individual canal designs and although pleased to hear heritage would be taken into account it should be canal heritage not general heritage
- Ground paddles and gate paddles behave differently
- Maintain the existing canal in tip top condition and there should not be a problem
- Consider re-casting as an option
- Consultation vital

- Some deliberate abuse by some users
- Modifications could lead to more people dropping paddles?

Motor Cycle Barriers

- Is there any evidence that a better service increases the problem
- Regular occurrences at Withymoor
- Who is responsible, is it the Police or CRT?