



MEETING NOTES

Title	South East Boating Sub-Group
Date	5:30pm, 20 October 2014
Venue	Canal & River Trust offices, First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes, MK9 1BB (Rooms 1 & 2)
Attendees	Members – John Best (JB), Ann Davies (AD), Lynda Payton (LP), James Griffin (JG), Alan Wildman (AW), Alan Fincher (AF), David Daines (DD) & Judy Clegg (JC) CRT Staff - Matthew Symonds (MS), Hannah Roe (HR), Julia Moore (JM)
Apologies	Neil Owen (NRO) and Sally Miller (SM)

Action

- Notes of previous meeting/matters arising**
 - The group acknowledged SM and NRO's apologies for absence.
 - AD thanked members who attended the Annual Partnership Meeting on 15th October 2014.
 - DD has had a meeting with Osi Ivowi (Engineer) and NRO regarding locks to be left empty. All signage on locks are currently being reviewed.
 - ❖ HR to put list of locks to be left empty on notices/website.
 - The group are still looking for a canoe representative, Suggestion that BCU be approached. HR
 - Terms of reference, No further amendment.

- Declarations of Interest**

AW is now the vice-chair of the RBOA.
LP is no longer a member of the Associated Nene River clubs, but is now a member of the Friends of the River Nene.
AD will be stepping down as a member and as Chair of the Boating Sub-Group from next month as she will be taking up the position of chairman of the hire trade group APCO. LP will become the new chair for the Boating Sub-Group (JB has offered to be a fall back chair if necessary)
JB thanked AD for her time as the Chair of the Boating Sub-Group.

- Water bus update**

- The water bus trial has now been completed and the boat has been removed, the operator has advised they are happy with how the trial has gone. However there has been low numbers 15-20 per day and costs were also greater than expected.
- The Trust feels that the trial has been operated well and the operators are looking to request permission to run again next year.
- The Trust has received a few complaints from local moorers and residents regarding privacy and the speed of the boat.
- The group feels very supportive of this business and hopes that it highlights the canal to Oxford City Council.
- The group feel the design of the boat needs to be more fit for purpose and be able to go through Locks.
- The Trust will only allow a maximum of 2 boats in this area.
- The operator is also discussing the option of running a similar business on the Thames.

4. **Visitor Mooring Update**

- Current sites - Thrupp, Stoke Bruerne and Foxton continue to be monitored, there have been no changes and very few extended stay charges issued at these sites. Winter stay times will come into force from 1st November (some winter stay signs may have gone missing – Stoke B. MS/HR to investigate and replace if necessary)
- CRT will still have volunteer rangers taking sightings in Marsworth and will carry on monitoring through the Spring. A short consultation will be completed before introducing any changes at Marsworth.
- Berkhamsted no change to visitor moorings, but less frequent monitoring will continue to keep an eye on the visitor moorings. It was reported Berkhamsted Council are expected to make changes to stop mooring overnight on the Moor which would impact on VMs. MS to contact the Council to clarify.
- Questions were raised about whether CRT are installing new rings at Berkhamsted – it was reported that IWA Chiltern Branch was asked for a contribution by the Canal & Riverside Partnership. NAO to clarify. Post Meeting Note:- installation of rings will be included in an extension to the towing path surfacing works, currently being developed by the Enterprise Team.
- Measuring the size of visitor moorings and reporting on availability, MS advised it can be done, but it is not an easy task, the information on the boat length is attached to the licence and not the site. LP noted the difference in the size of

HR/MS

sites and the frequency of the sightings – eg. Thrupp vs Stoke Bruerne made data incomparable. The group would like clearer information. The cost and resource implications mean that the Trust are not able to provide a real time view of visitor mooring sites at present.

- There is currently a request for an app to be developed to help show availability, this work has not yet been started.
- CRT are still having ongoing discussions regarding 'place maps' with the boating organisations.
- CRT are going to recruit volunteer rangers at the following sites, Braunston, Cowroast, Cosgrove to help gather increased sightings next year to help inform any decisions about changes to visitor moorings at these locations..
- AF concerned that this data checking is not about space availability, but about overstaying/enforcement. If it is an enforcement issue it shouldn't affect the visitor mooring stay times. DD advised in his experience he has found in Cowroast that there hasn't been much space available. Shorter stay times do increase the movement of boats. AF thinks we should concentrate on enforcing what times are there now, not making the rules tighter.
- MS advised moving boats through enforcement action can take a long time, using the volunteer rangers to monitor VMs means that boats overstaying on these can be addressed in a shorter time.
- The group thought the old mooring warden scheme to be useful and effective and asked if the scheme could be re-instated.
- The Auction Mooring consultation paper was discussed. Some members expressed concern about the auction process eg. putting one mooring up for auction when there are more available might inflate prices and selling to highest bidder rather than setting market rate could result in social exclusion. MS said that he can request a short report about mooring auctions from the Moorings Team.
- A request had been made in Stoke Bruerne for a space for an extra historic boat at the Museum, The Trust have agreed the disabled mooring will be moved slightly to accommodate this but it will not reduce the length of available visitor moorings..
- Stoke Hammond/Soulbury Three Locks, the newly installed towpath mooring signs have been removed above the lock and are being replaced. The site is not being monitored by volunteer rangers, details of the trial have been put on the website at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating/mooring/south-east-visitor-moorings/stoke-hammond-soulbury-three-locks->

MS

[visitor-mooring](#) JG advised that it is now easier for people to moor at the pub.

- AF repeated his objection to the introduction of the 2 day moorings trial at Stoke Hammond (Soulbury Three Locks), with no prior data having been gathered to support the case for them.

5. **Arrangements for moorings at Cropredy Festival 2015**

- MS asked the group for their views on how the Trust might improve the management of moorings during the festival in 2015. In previous years there have been complaints about overstaying and lack of space unless boaters turn up weeks in advance of the festival.
- LP recommended the Trust speak to the organisers re: whether a booking system for moorings, like camping, would be fairer. Other waterway events have bookable moorings.
- AF reported a straw poll of boaters indicated CRT should not attempt to micro-manage moorings but leave as is. Post Meeting Note: *AW has now circulated poll results.*
- Some members reported the condition of the site poor and in need of improvement.

6. **Winter Mooring Update**

- MS advised not many fixed location winter mooring permits have sold in the SE except at Batchworth. No feedback yet received, but some members considered a very expensive option.
- The General Towpath Winter Mooring Permits are selling well.
- Permit holders cannot moor ½ km to a Canal & River Trust mooring or 1km of private mooring.
- Boaters will get a winter mooring card. *HR to send an example of a winter permit to JG.
- The group would like The Trust to understand the economics of the Winter Mooring permits?
- LP suggested that the trust should be encouraged to sell Winter Moorings in locations that support the local businesses and economy at what is generally a quiet time of the year.
- JG would like to know how many live aboards [boats without a home mooring] have brought a winter mooring permit.
- JB suggested selling the fixed location winter mooring permits that have not sold well on eBay

HR

7. **14 day movement report**

- AD stated that in the South East we are very proud of our enforcement figures. National percentage is 4%, the South

East has more boats than any other region. There are very few boats that the enforcement team do not know.

- The group looked at a report from MS summarising a 14 day boat sighting on the Grand Union Canal between Cosgrove Lock and Leighton Town Bridge with 50% of boats sighted having a home mooring. There was some concern re: Ghost Moorings. The Group requested information re: how many boats had home moorings a long way from the area & whether this information was checked. JC felt that mooring providers should be asked to provide regular moorer lists. JG requested checks with marinas & boatyards be re-introduced.
- DD felt a large majority of cruising boats are flouting the 14 day mooring rules.
- The group feels that Boaters should have an obligation to advise the Canal & River Trust of when you change your home mooring.
- JC could marinas not be obliged to provide data of who is mooring in their marinas. Post Meeting Note:- CRT do sightings in marina so CRT do know which boats are there.

MS

8. Sharing Towpath

- The group discussed the rubbish/objects left on the towpath, JG advised the group that 12 tons of rubbish was removed during the Friends of Leighton Lock clear up on 3rd September.
- MS advised that everyone is going to be provided with a new copy of the boaters handbook with their license renewal. This contains information reminding boaters not to leave belongings/refuse on the towpaths.
- LP if Canal & River Trust work with EA when issuing new guidelines.

9. AOB

- JG stated that if the Canal & River Trust takes over EA there needs to be a fair licensing policy. The group feels they should be advising on this. Post Meeting Note:- The EA navigation transfer is not being progressed at present.
- AF enquired how he could request items to be added to the agenda before the next meeting, AD advised that he would have to email the chair and that the chair would decide whether to add to the meeting agenda or not. AD advised the group cannot discuss everything that should be discussed with the operational side of the business.
- The group feel that Visitor Moorings should not be the only subject of this group.
- JB highlighted that the group is within the 3 year rolling action

plan of the Partnership to improve the boating experience.

- AW feels there should be more interaction between the boating groups eg. RBOA re: boaters who need special assistance and CRT.
- JC –concerned about reports of volunteer lock keepers not operating locks correctly & giving out incorrect information. The group felt Volunteer Lock Keepers should offer help and not take over if the boater doesn't need any help. Post Meeting Note:- A new training video and programme has been developed for 2015/16.
- AF would like to know what are Volunteer Lock Keepers allowed to do? i.e. water control and who trains the Volunteer Lock Keepers? Post Meeting Note:- John Highmore (Volunteer Co-ordinator) confirmed that new volunteers are trained by experienced lock keepers and are CAATS assessed by a qualified CAATS assessor, who also has extensive lock keeping experience and they can also do water control if they have been trained by a local CRT supervisor, but the expectation is that this will only take place by direction of the local supervisor. JB wondered if a “mystery shopper” approach might help with monitoring.

10. Dates for future meetings:
26th January 2015