

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q.	What is the Trust doing to install electric charging points on the Oxford Canal?
A.	This is a very current issue, especially in London following the Mayor’s no emission standards and cleaner zone policy. For instance we are looking at this in Islington at present. Due to the cost of changing the infrastructure (including on boats), this is unfortunately something that is not going to happen very soon, but we are keen to work with partners where we can. We will be continuing to review this area and engage with our boating customers about the implications.
Q.	Are there ways electric points can be installed on canals at lower cost? This question was asked with specific reference to closer partnership working between the Trust and Oxford City council.
A.	The technology in this area is constantly changing and updating so the Trust will continue to look at this issue. Further clarification The Trust does work closely with Oxford City Council and is an active participant of the Oxford Waterways Partnership.
Q.	What are the Trust’s views on permanent moorings for people living on boats that are moored permanently?
A.	The Trust is working with Oxford City Council to look at the whole area including Castle Mill Stream regarding the possibility for long term moorings. Tim Wiseman - Oxford City Council: There is a need for Oxford City Council to look at the underlying problems and work with our partners.
Q.	What is the Trust doing to increase and encourage bio-diversity?
A.	The canal network is full of biodiversity along its full length. The Trust are always looking at schemes to enhance biodiversity and wildlife across the network e.g. towpaths as it is integral to our work. For example in London we worked with the Lower Regents Coalition to put in reed beds to support wildlife. We are looking to do more of this kind of work and, as part of the new restructure, a dedicated Heritage and Environment team have been brought into the Region to help with this.
Q.	Is it normal for grass not to be cut on the edge of the lockside as not seen this before where I live – lovely wildflowers growing?
A.	Lockside cuts to the edge take place nine times a year by our contractors. Two areas were left on this cut at Isis Lock one due to wild flowers and the other because of the proximity to a nesting swan. Generally, specification for locks is full width – on site constraints and in the interest of safety or biodiversity may be justification for any deviation.

Q.	Lift Bridge 231 is to be replaced with a hydraulic mechanism and the canal will be closed to navigation. How will fuel supplies be delivered over the winter period as many resident boaters are concerned?
A.	<p>We appreciate that this is of concern for boaters and the operations team are looking at options and this will be communicated as part of the project. This is a replacement works stoppage over the Christmas period.</p> <p>We recognise that in the past communication has been an issue with a need for further clarification and updates for our resident boaters. The Trust does consult on up and coming stoppages before they are confirmed. However, in this case it appears that those effected have not been made aware of this consultation. In the future we will look to ensure that information around the consultation is shared with specific user groups in the area so that they have a chance to comment.</p>
Q.	Why are we changing to a hydraulic bridge at extra cost to the Trust?
A.	This replacement work is to meet a minimum safety standard whereby movable bridges need to be locked in position and safe for operational use. The Oxford accommodation lift bridges are often left up rather than down and fixing chains cut or tampered with.
Q.	Concerns were expressed in regard to the condition of lift bridges 231, 233 and 234 on the Oxford Canal.
A.	<p>Our assets are regularly inspected and any defects with bridges should be reported to the Trust immediately. The Trust is constantly assessing and prioritising maintenance of our assets in accordance with their condition.</p> <p>Further clarification – The Trust has a robust Asset Management system and all work is assessed and prioritised. Following a reported default with bridge 231 bridges 231,233 and 234 were inspected by Trust engineers on the 19th July 2019. Minor works were carried out to bridge 231 and no fault was found that affected operation of either bridge 233 or 234.</p>
Q.	What has been lacking is a clear plan of action of what the Trust are doing regarding these lift bridges. Can we have some feedback?
A.	<p>The Trust's engineer will be attending the Oxford Canal Partnership meeting on Wednesday, 11th September 2019 to provide a full update on the project</p> <p>Further Clarification- There is a program in place to refurbish bridge 231 this winter and to install a hydraulic mechanism to improve operation for our customers. Bridges 232 and 234 are scheduled to have the same manual hydraulic system installed in 2020/21.</p>
Q.	There are all sorts of lock problems on the Southern Oxford Canal. How are we dealing with the amount of work after the loss of staff? (referring to the restructure)
A.	All our work is prioritised through our planned preventative maintenance (PPM) programme and led by our local teams who work to maintain and rectify the faults. If anybody has any queries regarding PPM on a specific asset, then please contact us.
Q.	

	The Thames is becoming quieter would the Trust be open to a conversation with the Environment Agency about allowing boater with a Trust licence to temporarily access EA waters so that they can loop round back on to the canal?
A.	<i>Tim Wiseman – Oxford City Council</i> This is something that could be explored as part of the newly formed Oxford Waterways Partnership. Further Clarification The Trust offers a Gold Licence which is for people who wish to spend time cruising on a combination of Canal & River Trust and Environment Agency (EA) navigations. EA navigations include the River Thames, Anglian waterways and River Medway: currently each of these areas has its own registration/licensing scheme. The Gold Licence replaces the need for separate licences from the different authorities and covers all Canal & River Trust and EA navigations. More information can be found here .
Q.	How many more times do your customers need to go through re-organisations?
A.	The Trust needs to continually adapt to changing circumstances and our aim is to try to continually improve and deliver a better experience to users and visitors. This re-organisation brings much more resource into the region so that we can be more responsive.
Q.	In 2014, the 10-Year Plan was announced. Why was that not completed – what happened?
A.	The 2014 10- Year Plan was announced before the Trust repurposed to become a waterways and wellbeing charity, this meant our long terms plans needed to be refocused in line with our new purpose as a charity.
Q.	With the combining of the London and South East Regions, how are you going to cope with a bigger area and less people?
A.	The recent reorganisation meant we could regionalise our centralised teams so that we could ensure we put more resource into regional priority areas. The restructure has provided more frontline colleagues not less.
Q.	There are continuing problems with the emptying of recycling bins at Gooses Green and Wolford. What can the Trust do to help resolve this?
A.	The main problem is access – previously our commercial term contractor Biffa subbed the service out to City council who use smaller city type collection wagons. These wagons were able to access the bin via a third-party track at Wolvercote. This arrangement through Biffa supply chain was withdrawn. Biffa’s own fleet of wagons are too large for this access and are unable to travel down Goose Green access track. Biffa can only access with caged tipper and handball the bagged waste to landfill sites. We are working with Tim Wiseman to see if we can re-ignite the previous arrangement through the City Council.
Q.	Could the Trust develop an Online Forum for certain subjects to keep customers updated of what is happening? Realise this would need resource.

A.	Agreed, that this was a good idea for a tracker system, the Trust doesn't have a system of this type at present but is certainly something we could consider developing in the long term.
Q.	We are trying to pilot recycling at Thrupp. We haven't received any information on bins so far. Why can't the Trust provide them?
A.	Biffa do offer a recycling service and so where they can provide one we will assess feasibility- we are happy to instruct glass and DMR at College Cruisers because it's a managed site. The problem comes with the level of contamination at unmanaged sites along the towpath – if a recycling bin is contaminated we must reschedule the service to go as general waste which can often lead to site disruption. 86% of all general waste is diverted from landfill.
Q.	Can we have improved signage along the Oxford Canal for slowly passing moored boats and cycling.
A.	We can certainly review this.
Q.	How does the restructure impact on the Trust's ability to fundraise?
A.	Now that we are a charity this opens up a diversity of funding we did not have access to before. We will be renegotiating our funding with the government in 2021/2 so that we need to make sure we have access to a wider range of funding The Enterprise Team and Corporate Engagement Manager now sit within the region so we also have a greater opportunity to ensure that our fundraising efforts are targeted at specific regional problems.
Q.	Request for presentation to be uploaded onto website along with list of names of panel.
A.	Agreed.