



## NOTES

<b>Title</b>	Meeting with National Boating Organisations
<b>Date</b>	22 September 2014
<b>Venue</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Attendees</b>	Richard Parry (RP), Dean Davies (DD), Denise Yelland, Matthew Symonds (C&RT), Gren Messham, Les Etheridge (IWA), Paul Le Blique (AWCC), Alan Wildman (RBOA), Mark Tizzard, Mike Rodd, (NABO) John Sloan, Steve Jay (ACC)

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### 1. Update from previous meeting

RP summarised the notes from the previous meeting which largely focussed on the enforcement presentation.

DD reported that the recruitment of the Welfare Officer role was progressing. Approximately 20 applications have been received. Interviews are expected to take place by mid-October with the successful applicant in hopefully place by the end of November.

It was suggested that the Trust should look at whether it was necessary to bring in an external person with welfare experience to assist with the interview process. It was agreed that the Trust would look at this. JS offered to suggest a name of someone who may be able to assist with this process.

**ACTION: DD**

RP asked the group to agree the need for a degree of confidence around the discussions at these meetings. The meeting agreed that abbreviated notes from the meeting would be published, but all agreed that to facilitate open discussion, there would be no verbatim notes so that all attendees could speak openly. The meeting notes would be agreed and serve as the record of the outcome of the discussions.

### 2. Places, Bona Fide Navigation and Enforcement

DD summarised the feedback received from boating organisations re places. There was full agreement that there needed to be wider discussion on guidance for bona fide for navigation, as well as on the use of 'places'. As the two subjects are so closely interlinked it was agreed to temporarily suspend the implementation of places (and their associated maps) so that the discussion today could focus on bona fide for navigation.

There was a discussion on what the Trust is seeking to solve.

RP said that it is clear that boating groups broadly want the Trust to enforce, but to be able to do that we need to have an agreed understanding of what we mean by 'movement' as required by the license

agreement and the legislation, and that – in the Trust’s view – this would include considering both the next movement after 14 days, and the navigation/ range of a journey over a longer period..

DY confirmed to the meeting that although there are clearly hot spots in certain areas, overall movement patterns were a wider problem in more places than just London and the K&A Canal. The group discussed whether there was a need for targeted action in specific locations instead of, or as well as, a general approach across the whole network. It was felt that an overall national guidance was needed with targeted management plans locally to meet that guidance.

It was highlighted that at present boaters who are not currently moving sufficiently are often unaware of this until they receive a letter from the Trust telling them that they are in the enforcement process. This was acknowledged but DY confirmed that 14 day text message reminders are being trialled on the K&A to give boaters more notice, and to tell them that we’re concerned that they are not moving sufficiently. The text reminders happen before the formal enforcement process so that customers are aware of the Trust’s concerns. 14 day notices were also recently introduced in London. RP said the use of text messages may be a more effective use of the Trust’s limited resources than trying to deploy staff along the thousands of miles of waterway.

There was a discussion on different interpretation of what movement is required of a boater after 14 days. There were different views on what can or should be expected in terms of distance that boaters are required to move. This clearly links to guidance on ‘place’.

The question on what would success look like was asked and an agreement was reached that the group should help advise the Trust in this regard.

The meeting moved on to debate what measures might be desirable, enforceable or achievable and over what time frame. The group also discussed how to communicate guidance on bona fide for navigation to boaters before they purchased a boat. How the Trust reached this audience was recognised as being difficult, but important.

DY gave a summary of the process for new boaters without a home mooring, whereby the Trust monitor whether new license holders are meeting our guidance for continuously cruising. This is currently applying to a small number of new license holders, and ultimately some of those may not be permitted to re license without a home mooring. When asked DY estimated that approx 30% of this first group coming up to licence renewal were currently at risk of not having their licence renewed unless they took a home mooring. A small number the group felt this would be a significant deterrent to others if CRT published this information and carried out its intentions to refuse to license in these circumstances. The meeting agreed that there was a need for a discussion on what guidance should be provided as part of the wider package of information for boaters around the Trust’s enforcement process.

It was suggested that the Trust may need to set out where it intends to get to in terms of guidance/ success, even though it may take a number of years to achieve. Once that overall target has been agreed, it may be necessary to put in some interim arrangements in some areas.

RP suggested that the group may need to meet more regularly so that by March/April next year we can have something we can apply with the support of the boating groups, and aired for general boater consideration. It was agreed that the Trust takes away the discussion and comes back in 4-6 weeks with some suggestions that the group can consider.

In the meantime it was recommended by the group that it would be helpful to set out some questions for everyone to consider. The following questions were agreed to guide the work on this issue:

- Why are we doing this/ what are the success factors?
- What is the range of distance that, over the course of the 12 month licence period, we would expect to satisfy bona fide for navigation? What would we, in addition, apply to communicate that we would expect movement to be on-going - over three months say - to avoid extreme movement patterns?
- What is the way we should communicate the 'next movement' or place to boaters?
- How would this guidance be enforced?

RP suggested that the group reconvene in 4-6 weeks to continue the discussion.

**ACTION DD to arrange.**

### **3. Visitor Moorings**

DD outlined the proposal to develop a national visitor mooring framework that would be used to help inform local decisions about visitor moorings and ensure consistent decisions are taken.

RP clarified that this is not about implementing a high number of 48hr visitor moorings, and in fact it may see the removal of many 48hr visitor moorings where they are not needed. This process is intended to give some consistency and guidance.

It was recommended that the Trust consider the implications of where 48hr visitor moorings impact on the ability of boaters being able to moor elsewhere. JS said their needs to be alternative places for boats to moor for 14 days, if you introduce 48 hour moorings.

The need for clear signage and information to boaters whether in published communication, or volunteers on the ground was highlighted as important.

It was agreed that whilst different groups may have particular interests, the framework should include reference to talking to the relevant local groups and that it was also important to talk to the internal Trust commercial groups so they were bought into this also.

There was a discussion on the need to consider relaxing stay times in winter and or have short stay times only at certain times of the year (for example summer holidays, Easter or bank holiday). Other things that the framework needs to consider include guidance on disabled moorings, 'Quiet Zones', how visitor moorings are enforced.

It was agreed that these are valid points that should be considered and incorporated into the visitor mooring framework. ACTION : DD

RP confirmed that he had communicated to all Waterway Managers that no further changes should be made without reference to DD, and did not expect there to be any further changes to visitor moorings until the framework was introduced or there was an evidence-based case for the change.

### **4. Enforcement update**

This has been largely covered in previous discussions. DY added that there will be additional focus on non-display of index numbers.

Clarification was sought on whether data checkers log boats as being moored or moving.

DY clarified that at the moment these are not automatically recorded differently, but if a boat is cruising it can be noted and recorded in a free text section. The new system to be introduced in 2015 will mean boats are logged as either moored or cruising.

## **5. Customer Service Standards Update**

DD gave a brief update on the process and timetable for agreeing and implementing the proposed review of customer service standards as set out in the report circulated prior to the meeting.

It was suggested that in addition to introducing some mystery shopping, and Key Performance Indicators, that include feedback from boating customers might also be incorporated.

## **6. Towpath Mooring Management Project Update**

The update report was circulated prior to the meeting. The group gave some feedback on the K&A local plan. Several people commented that the plan was having some effect. There was concern that some boats have moved from the K&A local plan area and are now causing significant problems past Devizes, Hungerford was mentioned as a particular area that has concerns. DY/MS confirmed that we are monitoring boats on the K&A outside the local plan area and if there is a significant problem we will take a closer look at whether other action is required. Some members noted that the number of boaters that had complied in full with the published plans now in force was in fact very small and that the vast majority had failed to do so.

## **7. AOB**

DD highlighted that there will shortly be a consultation on directly managed moorings. Details of this will be circulated to boating organisations in the coming months.

It was agreed to check the circulation list for the meeting to ensure everyone received the papers.

Agreed that future meetings will begin at a later time at 1pm. The focus for the next meeting will be on the questions outlined around guidance to boaters on bona fide for navigation.

The positive All Party Parliamentary Group report was noted.

## **8. Date of next meeting**

Proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1:00pm to 4:00pm Milton Keynes Room 1