



MINUTES

Title South East Boating Sub-Group

Date 5:30pm- 8:00pm, Monday 20th June 2016

Venue Canal & River Trust, First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes, MK9 1BB

Attendees Members – John Best- Chair (JB), James Griffin (JG), Alan Wildman (AW), Alan Fincher (AF), Neville Reeves (NR)

Canal & River Trust Staff- Vicky Martin (VM), Matthew Symonds (MS), Amy McEleney (AM)

Apologies – David Daines (DD), Judy Clegg (JC), Kathryn Dodington (KD)

Action

1. Introductions & apologies

- JB has stepped in as Chair for the purpose of this meeting. LP has temporarily withdrawn from the Boating Sub Group for personal reasons
- The group introduced themselves for the purposes of new member Neville Reeves. NR is a continuous cruiser who is very familiar with the South East Network. Neville is also a volunteer lock keeper in the London waterway. NR describes himself as passionate but analytical.
- Discussions have taken place with DD regarding joining the South East Partnership with KD regarding the Boating Sub Group to ensure efficient communications between the 2 groups.
- DD, JC & KD send their apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.

2. Declaration of interest

- JB asked members to advise of other interests they may have that should be declared due to the nature of the group to ensure transparency

3. ANO

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3. Previous meeting notes/matters arising

- Concerns were raised by the BSG regarding unofficial signs on locks.
- AM to circulate official list of locks that should have 'lock left empty signs'
- AM has ordered metal signs to replace the correx signs. These will be installed by the customer operations teams as soon as they are delivered. AM to advise BSG once signs have been delivered and once they are installed. BSG advised signs should be on both ends of locks.

AM

- VM thanked the BSG for all their hard work analysing and providing data for work on customer service standards with regards to facilities
- KD has co-ordinated surveys to Canal and River Trust of winding holes on official list agreed with IWA. KD had compiled a complete list of all winding holes in SE. However winding holes can only be recognised as official where we are able to access and maintain as such.
- BSG want to explore the possibility of all official winding holes being signed. VM advised that this was not in plan for this year but if it was a priority for the group we could pay for the signs through the destination signage budget and recruit volunteers to assist with installation. There was no budget to pay contractors for this work.
- VM is extremely frustrated that the mooring rings have not been reinstated at Marsworth as this was agreed in February with the Property team. VM advised that the matter had been escalated. BSG are concerned by facilities such as Apsley and Leighton, the group believe this should be secured so the sites cannot be abused. The waterway currently do not hold the budget for customer service facilities and this sits within Operational Buildings team who prioritise works. The group agreed on 3 points:
 - The specification of doors at facilities should be looked into such as providing steel gates/doors rather than timber
 - Where gates are vandalised they should be replaced with steel gates/doors. VM advised this leads back to the lack of funds issue.
 - If issues are determined on a national policy, vandalism should be part of this policy
- VM explained that the CSF review was intended to inform future funding priorities
- BSG questioned why sightings data is still being collected after changes to moorings at Berkhamsted have already been agreed. It was advised that this was a requirement of the policy where changes had been made to understand what impact the changes make.

JB/VM

VM

4. Rickmansworth – Mooring for Floating Classroom

- For the last 20 years, the Rickmansworth Waterway Trust has had a classroom on an adjacent site to deliver its education programme. About 1000 children each year visit to learn about the canal. However due to urgent health and safety concerns in the building, their lease has been permanently terminated.
- RWT is looking to have built a semi wide beam boat in the region of 70' long from which they can base their programme and assist others (i.e. C&RT) in providing theirs as well. A permanent mooring near Batchworth Bridge, directly behind Roger, has been requested. This would result in the loss of one visitor mooring.

- VM confirmed there would be no cost to the Trust and mooring/licence fees will be discussed as part of the formal application process.
- Overall BSG agree this is a good idea and should be encouraged however considerations should be looked into such as:
- The effect of the boat being moored in a busy location and requiring use of facilities. Concerns were raised of the boat blocking use of the lock when using facilities due to its size.
- Cost of mooring/licencing should be fair and considerate of other boat owners
- There was discussion regarding licencing costs, which are currently priced on length of boat and not width. MS confirmed this will be considered as part of the wider license review to be undertaken by the Boat licensing team.
- MS did not expect this would have a massive impact on other canal users but sightings data for the area would need to be reviewed
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5. Moorings Review – MK Canal Corridor

- Jacqui Flint (Volunteer Development Coordinator) is currently recruiting volunteers to collect sightings data. Once volunteers are recruited training will be provided.
- JG advises he may have volunteers that could be interested. AM to provide Jacqui with JG details.
- JG wants to ensure his data for sightings match what Canal & River Trust have. MS clarified that the Trust has published data on boats who are on restricted (6 month) licenses because they have not met the continuous cruiser requirements. This information is on the website here <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/thumbnail/24805-cc-monitoring-review-march-2016.pdf>
- The members advised the recent changes to the enforcement process seem to be having an effect with more boats increasing their range of movement.

JF/MS

6. Winter Mooring plans for 2016/17

- MS shared with the group possible new signage to be erected. The group fed back the wording priority for permit holders should be stated instead of winter mooring for permit holders. There was emphasis on the importance of signage due to some not having internet access to read information online.
- MS asked the groups view on whether winter moorings should be in place for 5 months or 4. The group supported 5 months to fit in with the winter stoppage programme.

- NR raised a concern that with long stretches of bank used for winter mooring of the impact this could have on those who decide to continuously cruise. MS advises all winter mooring sites should not take up more than 50% of a visitor mooring.
- The Milton Keynes area should be looked at for potential winter mooring sites, however the Trust try's to locate WM sites where they will not cause conflict with other canal users/neighbours or block access to services. It may be difficult to find suitable sites in the MK area.AM to pass this comment to Lee King and Alison Crofts who are looking at winter mooring sites in the South East region.
- BSG praised Canal & River Trust for making a substantial effort with winter moorings that has been noticed in the boating community.

7. London Mooring Strategy

- MS brought the group up to date with the London Mooring Strategy that is currently being developed.
- MS is currently looking at;
 - The possibility of booking short term moorings (there has already been a trial of 14 day bookable moorings at Rembrandt Gardens, Little Venice.)
 - A survey is being developed to see the demand for bookable moorings?
 - Reviewing short-stay moorings, boating facilities, potential long-term moorings and a London Business Boating Strategy,
- MS advised that the new Housing Act includes a requirement for local housing authorities to include housing needs assessment for people living on boats. This may help to inform parts of the mooring strategy.
- Canal & River Trust is aware of making changes in the London area could impact other regions this will be taking into consideration for the development of the strategy.
- MS also advised Canal & River Trust is aware some designated moorings may not be suitable for wide beams or double, triple breasted mooring. This will be considered as part of the strategy.

ALL

8. Short Term Mooring Framework - Appendix

- A new appendix to the Short Term Mooring Framework has been approved. The appendix sets out clearly how boat sighting data should be used to understand if there is a need to change mooring stay times, it will provide an extra level of transparency about how decisions are made.

AM

9. Customer Service Facilities

- Following on from the work the BSG completed the figures against the draft standards have been populated and is currently at draft stage. VM requests the group to provide any feedback to AM as soon as possible.

10. AONB

- JG sent an email to enquiries and has not received feedback. AM to follow up.
- It was advised the description of online Permanent moorings at Leighton Buzzard is misleading. MS to follow up.
- MS also to look at online reductions
- NR raised concerns regarding Oxford City Council consulting stakeholders regarding a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). VM advised our Development & Engagement Manager is consulting with boaters locally to ensure we hear all our customers' views. The Trust has not yet responded to the consultation. The Trust supports reduction of anti-social behaviour in the area that can affect anyone using the canal but we would not want to see boaters unfairly targeted by any PSPO.
- The SE Waterway is encouraging boater representation on the Oxford Canal Partnership. Although there have been some complaints from residents about smoke/fumes from a small number of boats the Trust has no intention of decommissioning visitor moorings at Aristotle Lane
- A local councillor is looking at the possibility of funding to install electric bollards at Aristotle Lane.
- AW raised concern regarding to the published amendments to standard mooring agreement in which states if one of a married couple dies the widowed would be asked to vacate the mooring at the end of its lease. MS will get clarification on the matter.
- The boat owner's views survey results have been published. The survey results can be found on the website here
<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/original/7112-the-201314-boat-owners-survey.pdf>
- AM to circulate possible dates for meetings for the rest of the year.

MS

AM

