

**involve**

## **Licensing Futures – Stage 2**

Report to the Canal and River Trust

August 2017

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# Executive Summary

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## 1. Context

1. The Canal and River Trust (C&RT, the Trust) commissioned Involve to carry out an engagement and consultation project to review the future of boat licensing. The objectives of the review are to:
  - Gain support from a wide range of boaters and boating organisations to make changes to the licensing system should the Trust wish to do this;
  - Explore other relevant new ideas from boaters and boating organisations.
- 1.2 C&RT will use boaters' views to inform the development of a boat licensing system that is:
  - More simple and administratively less burdensome than the current system;
  - Robust and workable;
  - Balances pricing and affordability.
- 1.3 The findings from Stage 2 will inform Stage 3 of the project, which comprises an online consultation to which all boaters will be invited to respond. The outcomes of the final stage will help the Trust to identify a future approach to its licensing framework that is:
  - Fair: it aims to ask boaters how the important financial contribution made by the different types of boats and boater toward the upkeep of the waterways can be generated through licence fees in the fairest way;
  - Straightforward: simple to understand and sustainable.
- 1.4 There are three stages to the consultation:
  - Stage 1: telephone interviews with boating organisations, with outputs used to inform the development of broad scenarios for the future of licensing;
  - Stage 2: workshops with boaters to refine and improve scenarios, with outputs used to inform the development of clear options for the future of licensing;
  - Stage 3: Consultation on options, open to all boaters.

This report outlines the findings from Stage 2, carried out in May and June 2017. Stage 2 comprised nine workshops with individual boaters.

## 2. Main findings

- 2.1 Views were mixed on whether the current licensing system is fit for purpose or needs changing. Some felt it is appropriate as it stands whilst others identified a range of possible improvements. Many felt that the logic underlying the current system is unclear, as is the use made of monies raised through licensing.
- 2.2 Participants had different views on the purpose of a boat licence and on the rights it bestows. Some focused on upkeep of the waterways, some on the licence as a permit to use the waterways and others on its use as a means by which to ensure compliance with legal obligations.
- 2.3 Boaters were adamant that the licensing system should not be used to penalise specific types of boating or set different types of boater against each other. Any changes to the system

should be transitional (3-5 years was suggested) and not retrospective. Different views were held on which types of boater would be affected most adversely by any changes.

2.4 Participants identified a number of principles they felt should underpin any licensing system. These include fairness, intelligibility, simplicity and ease of enforcement.

2.5 There was broad support for licensing by area of boat (length x width), though this view was not unanimous: a substantial proportion of participants argued for retention of the current system.

2.6 Participants considered fairness in relation to whether and how to include the size of a vessel in licensing: factors taken into account included the perceived cost to C&RT; the impact on capacity and ease of use of the waterways; personal choice to own a particular size boat; access to the waterways and the importance of low cost entry points to boating.

2.7 In addition to the size of a vessel, participants discussed three main factors that they felt had relevance to the licensing system. These were regional pricing or zoning; the use of technology; the level of use of a boat. There was no widespread support for these options. Other themes included the duration of a licence.

2.8 Discussion of business licensing was limited, as private boaters felt their knowledge of the business licensing system was not sufficient for them to make any substantive comments.

2.9 With the exception of the prompt payment discount, responses to the different discounts were moderated by information on the small number of boats claiming each one.

2.10 Most discounts received some support, though the rationale for some was questioned. The charity boat discount was widely supported and participants felt it should be increased. The electric boat discount was discussed at most length and many participants felt it should be removed.

2.11 Congestion on the waterways was raised frequently during workshops and participants defined it as a problem for both mooring and navigation, as well as a safety concern. Congestion is seen as localised but spreading.

2.12 There was a strongly and widely held view that congestion is a problem of mooring and enforcement, and not something for the licensing system to resolve, though there were a few voices who did see a role for licensing in managing capacity.

2.13 Enforcement is seen as important but poorly managed. Some participants feel it is applied unfairly or aggressively.

2.14 The quality of the Trust's communication and information provision was raised in a number of workshops and many participants felt there was room for improvement. Some participants felt that the Trust could be more transparent and open and some suggested that they might work with the Trust, particularly on improvements to the website.

2.15 In evaluation questionnaires<sup>1</sup> completed at the end of workshops, boaters were asked:

*“What three points do you think it is most important for C&RT to consider in this licence review?”*

Participants raised a wide range of topics, including fairness and the importance of acknowledging and responding to change on the navigation. Many of the comments reiterated and reinforced themes discussed during the workshops.

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<sup>1</sup> A table of verbatim comments in response to this question can be found in Appendix 8 to the full report (published as a separate document).

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## The Canal and River Trust

The [Canal & River Trust](#) was formed in 2012. One of the UK's largest charities, it is responsible for 2,000 miles of canals, rivers, docks and reservoirs, along with museums, archives and the country's third largest collection of protected historic buildings. The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is a company limited by guarantee registered as a charity. The assets and undertaking of British Waterways in England and Wales were transferred to the Trust by a Statutory Transfer on 2nd July 2012 and the objects and powers of the Trust are set out in its [Articles of Association](#).

The Trust has approximately 32,000 licence holders distributed across its network and is responsible for some two-thirds of the national network, with most of the rest operated by the Environment Agency.

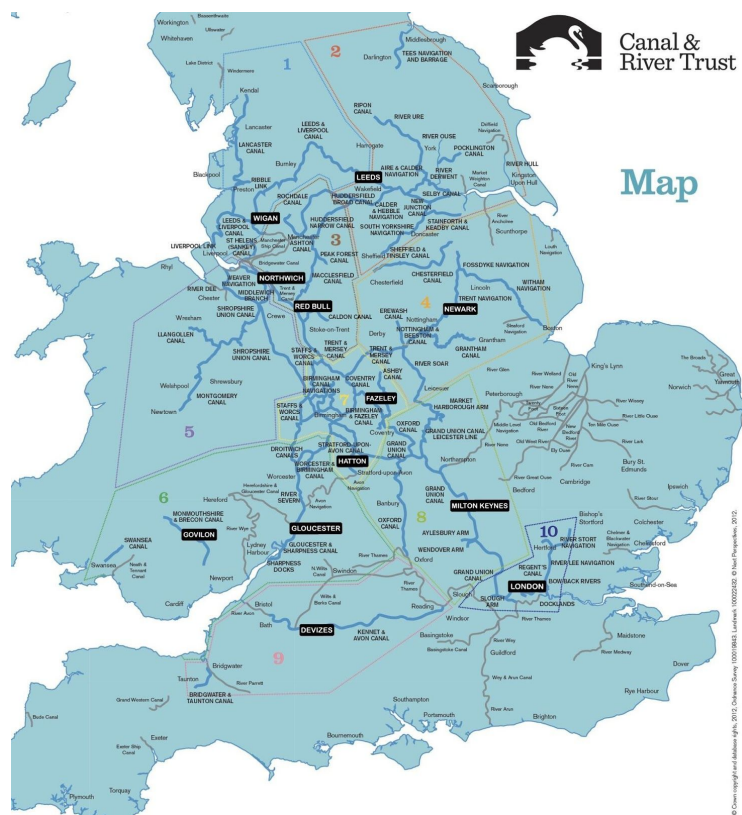


Figure 1. National navigations network (C&RT navigations marked in blue)

## Licensing consultation

The Canal and River Trust (C&RT, the Trust) commissioned Involve, an independent charity, to carry out engagement and consultation to inform a review of its boat licensing system. The primary objectives of the review are to:

- Gain support from a wide range of boaters and boating organisations to make changes to the licensing system should the Trust wish to do this;
- Explore other relevant new ideas from boaters and boating organisations.

At the conclusion of the engagement and consultation activities being carried out by Involve, the C&RT will use the views of participating boaters to inform its development of a boat licensing system that is:

- More simple and administratively less burdensome than the current system;
- Robust and workable;
- Balances pricing and affordability.

The initial design of the programme comprised three stages, as follows:

- Stage 1: Ideas to scenarios
  - Telephone interviews with boating organisations
  - C&RT to develop broad scenarios informed by views of boating organisations
- Stage 2: Refining and improving scenarios
  - Regional workshops with boaters and boating organisations to improve, refine or discard options
  - C&RT to develop clear options informed by outputs from workshops
- Stage 3: Consultation on options
  - Online consultation for all boaters/boating organisations
  - Alternative response channels available on request (e.g., paper forms)

Following Stage 1, the approach to Stage 2 was amended slightly, based in part on feedback from Stage 1 interviewees. The initial approach was for the Trust to use input from Stage 1 to develop different scenarios for discussion in the Stage 2 workshops. This was changed to enable more open discussion of workshop participants' views on licensing. The approach to recruiting participants for the Stage 2 workshops was also amended following feedback from interviewees in Stage 1. More detail on recruitment is provided later in this chapter.

## Project overview

### Stage 1

Fourteen telephone interviews were carried out with boating organisations representing a range of different interests. Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, with the majority taking approximately 50 minutes. Interviews were digitally recorded and analysed.

Participating organisations were:

Navigation and Advisory Group (Licensing & Mooring)	National Bargee Travellers Association
Dutch Barge Association	Inland Waterway Association
National Association of Boat Owners	Roving Continuous Traders Association
Association of Waterway Cruising Clubs	Residential Boat Owners Association
British Marine Inland Boating	Historic Narrow Boat Club
British Marine	Hotel Boat Association
Canal Boat Owners Association	Royal Yachting Association

Table 1. Organisations participating in Stage 1 telephone interviews

## Stage 2

Stage 2 comprised nine workshops with individual boaters. Workshops were held in:

Leeds (18 May)	Newark (23 May)	Hatton (1 June)
Northwich (5 June)	Gloucester (6 June)	London (20 June)
Birmingham (22 June)	Milton Keynes (27 June)	Devizes (29 June)

Table 2. Location of workshops, Stage 2

The workshops lasted for three hours and were guided by a semi-structured process plan, designed to ensure focus on the issues of importance to C&RT in the licensing review and informed by views expressed in Stage 1, whilst also allowing time for participants to raise other topics. The three main themes for discussion were:

- Size: licensing by length; length x breadth; single flat fee, or; other options suggested by participants;
- Other factors relevant to licensing: for example, extent of access to the network; zoning; regional pricing;
- Discounts.

The agenda was approved and signed off by C&RT and can be found in Appendix 4.<sup>2</sup>

Data collection was done on a laptop and the main points raised in discussions were recorded on flipcharts. In the final 30 minutes of the workshops, participants used four red and four green sticky dots to indicate their support for or opposition to, the points recorded on the flipcharts. This

<sup>2</sup> The Appendices are collected in a separate document.

exercise was not intended as a vote, but to provide a broad overview of what was particularly important to participants in each workshop.

## Recruitment and participation

Participants to the workshop were recruited by C&RT. The Trust emailed a brief questionnaire to all boaters on its email lists.<sup>3</sup> The questionnaire asked respondents to identify what type of boater they are (e.g., liveaboard or leisure; without or with a home mooring; business/charity/trader), their views on the need for the licensing system to be reviewed and which workshop they wished to attend. Completed questionnaires were returned to the Trust. Working on a spreadsheet provided by the Trust, which organised data from the questionnaires by workshop location, Involve used a three-stage process to identify participants to invite to each workshop:

1. Personal details were hidden (i.e., name) and potential participants were segmented into five broad categories:
  - Liveaboard boater without home mooring
  - Liveaboard boater with home mooring
  - Leisure boater without home mooring
  - Leisure boater without home mooring
  - Commercial / charity / roving trader

This initial sorting process was aimed at ensuring a diverse set of different types of boater in each workshop.

2. A random number generator was used to select participants from within each of these categories and, as far as possible, to achieve a spread on views about the need or otherwise for the licensing system to change.
3. Personal details were un-hidden and, if possible given the above criteria, a gender balance was sought within each workshop (this was not achieved, perhaps because of the overall gender balance of the boating population or of licence holders).
4. Details of the boaters selected were sent to C&RT who confirmed the workshop details (location, date, time) with each participant.

We aimed at 12 - 15 participants in each location. C&RT emailed formal confirmation of attendance to selected participants, together with information about Stage 2<sup>4</sup> and some data on licensing.

In the first two workshops in particular, attendance was lower than ideal, with boaters who had confirmed attendance not turning up on the day or insufficient numbers of boaters sending confirmation to the Trust of their attendance at particular workshop. To address this, the Trust invited additional boaters, on a 'like for like' basis. That is, if no liveaboard continuous cruisers had responded to the Trust's confirmation email, the Trust invited more liveaboard continuous cruisers in their place. As a consequence of boaters who had confirmed attendance in advance not in fact attending on the day, the number of people in all workshops except Milton Keynes was lower than aimed for. One hundred and eighty six boaters confirmed their attendance at a workshop.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2 for information sent to participants in advance of workshops.



## Stage 3

The findings from Stage 2 will inform Stage 3 of the project, which comprises an online consultation to which all boaters will be invited to respond. The outcomes of the final stage will help the Trust to identify a future approach to its licensing framework that is:

- Fair: it aims to ask boaters how the important financial contribution made by the different types of boats and boater toward the upkeep of the waterways can be generated through licence fees in the fairest way;
- Straightforward: simple to understand and sustainable.

## Stage 2 methodology

The approach taken to the workshops was broadly deliberative. That is, whilst it drew on the principles of qualitative research, it did not aim to be entirely extractive in approach.

The approach taken to these workshops drew on qualitative principles in a number of ways:

- In the recruitment process, which was purposive, and aimed for diversity: a representative sample was not possible, given the small numbers of boaters involved and the limited personal and demographic information on boaters held by the Trust;
- In the exploratory nature of the discussions, which aimed to explore in more detail the issues raised in Stage 1 and involve boaters with no organisational affiliation.<sup>5</sup>

The deliberative aspect of the workshops was reflected primarily in:

- Selection of topic areas for discussion: these were all issues where there is scope for change and for boaters' views to influence that change.
- The Trust's commitment to include details of how boaters' views have informed their thinking on the proposals they put forward in Stage 3. If boaters' views have not influenced the proposals, the Trust has committed to providing an explanation of why not, and to explaining the rationale behind any proposals they have developed independently of the workshops and interviews. This will be done by the Trust in their response to the consultation as a whole, following the close of Stage 3.
- Workshop design and facilitation, which aimed to: ensure all participants' views were heard; gain some insight into boaters' priorities, through the 'sticky dots' activity, and; encourage participants to share and debate different views, generate ideas and learn from each other.

Ongoing uncertainty about how many of the people who had confirmed their attendance in advance would be present on the day meant that we needed to be flexible in how we ran the workshops. Our initial plan was to have one lead facilitator and two table facilitators, each one working with small groups of between 5-10 people, and for these groups to come together at points during the process to share the outcomes of their discussions. Due to smaller than anticipated numbers, we revised this approach, with each facilitator leading a session in turn, with the others recording the discussion on a laptop and on flipcharts. We did split one group into two smaller groups (Hatton) but participants felt that this led to some duplication in the plenary of areas covered in small group discussions, so we did not repeat this approach. Where groups were larger (e.g., Birmingham and Milton Keynes) we provided participants with the option of working as a single group or dividing into

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<sup>5</sup> Two participants in two separate workshops declared organisational affiliations during the workshop: others may have had these affiliations but not declared them.

smaller groups. Neither group chose to work in smaller groups.

At the close of each workshop, with the exception of London, participants completed an evaluation questionnaire and feedback from each location was used to inform improvements in subsequent events. Printed evaluation questionnaires were (inadvertently) not brought to the London workshop, but participants were emailed a copy following the workshop. Two people returned comments.

## About this report

This report describes the views of more than 80 people who attended the workshops: it does not pretend to describe the views of all boaters holding a licence from the C&RT.<sup>6</sup> As noted elsewhere in this report, the work was not intended to capture representative views, but aimed rather to gather the opinions of individual boaters, to build on and enrich the findings of Stage 1 and ensure that individual boaters' views help to inform the Trust's thinking on the proposals it sets out in the formal consultation at Stage 3. We hope it provides insight into participants' views, thoughts and concerns on the licensing system and the other topics discussed, including mooring and enforcement. We mention particular locations at times: where we do so, this does not mean that the topic did not also arise in other locations.

We use broad terms such as 'many', 'some' and 'few' for the most part, to give the reader a sense of how widely a particular view was shared, but these terms are not exact. We use the term 'participants' broadly, without inferring any particular number of people. Occasionally we use the term 'boaters' in place of 'participants': this refers to boaters taking part in the workshops and is not a claim about the views of boaters in general, unless the context makes this clear.

One perspective not discussed in any detail in this report is that of business boaters. Whilst a number of business boaters took part in the workshops, including those running hire boats and roving traders, the complexities of the business licence meant that many private boaters were either unfamiliar with, or unwilling to comment on or make suggestions about whether and how the licensing system as it applies to businesses might be reformed. Many of the broader issues raised in the discussions have relevance for business boaters, however particular issues relating to business boat licence are discussed only briefly.

We have aimed, where possible, to identify the principles that underlie the detailed points that participants raised in their discussions - for example, fairness. In the workshops, we sought to gain some understanding of participants' strength of feeling in relation to the topics discussed<sup>7</sup> and we have tried to reflect that feeling in this report. For example, where a particular argument was raised across many workshops or received consistently high levels of support from boaters in many workshops, we have indicated this. We have also illustrated the report with images of the flipcharts showing the results of some of the 'sticky dot' exercise.<sup>8</sup>

All quotes used in this report are verbatim and were made by participants during the workshops.

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<sup>6</sup> A few participants contacted Involve following the workshop, either sending in information or wanting to elaborate on comments made in workshops. Views expressed through these channels have not been taken included in this report. All information sent to Involve was forwarded to the Canal and River Trust.

<sup>7</sup> This was done by the use of sticky dots: participants were given 4 red and 4 green sticky dots at the end of the workshop and asked to indicate which of the statements a recorded on the flipcharts throughout the workshop they most agreed with (green dot) or disagreed with (red dot). People could use all 4 red/green dots on a single point or distribute them across different points.

<sup>8</sup> We apologise for the poor quality of some of the images: we felt they were worth including as they provide some illustration of the weight of feeling on some topics. The images used in the report are selected on the basis of quality and not intended to be representative of the views expressed in workshops, though we have tried to include at least one image from each location.

Quotes are either presented separately from the main narrative or in italics, in the narrative.

The Appendices contain data on the specific points raised in each workshop, both in discussions and in comments made in evaluation questionnaires and are available as a separate document.

## Structure of report

- Chapter 1 (this chapter) introduces the project, its aims and methodology.
- Chapter 2 covers participants' views on licensing and the licensing review:
- Chapter 3 looks at the fundamental criterion of the licence. Participants were asked for their views on licensing by length (as is currently the case); licensing by length x beam, and; licensing on the basis of a single flat fee for all boats, regardless of size. They were also asked for other suggestions on what this basic building block of licensing might be.
- Chapter 4 looks at other mechanisms that participants in the workshops thought relevant to determining the cost of a boat licence. This includes regional licensing, licensing by use and technology. This chapter also includes a brief discussion of business boat licensing.
- Chapter 5 looks at participants' views on discounts: whether the categories of discount currently applied are appropriate and whether they are set at the appropriate level.

In chapters 6 and 7, we look at other topics raised in all of the workshops. Whilst not the focus of the discussions, the frequency with which these issues arose warrants to their inclusion.

- Chapter 6 looks at comments on mooring and enforcement.
- In Chapter 7, we look at participants' comments on the Trust itself, including communication and information.

The final Chapter 8 summarises the main points raised by participants in their evaluation questionnaires in response to the question:

*“What three points do you think it is most important for C&RT to consider in this licence review?”*

Each chapter begins with a brief summary of its content: together, these summaries comprise the Executive Summary.

The Appendices are presented in a separate document. They cover:

- Appendix 1. The recruitment questionnaire;
- Appendix 2. Information provided to participants by C&RT, in advance of workshops;
- Appendix 3. Numbers attending workshops;
- Appendix 4. Workshop agenda;
- Appendix 5. Summary of comments on licensing mechanisms: length; area (length x beam); single flat fee; other suggestions;
- Appendix 6. Summary of comments on discounts;
- Appendix 7. Verbatim evaluation feedback on the workshop process: Q1-3 (Appendix 5);
- Appendix 8. Verbatim evaluation feedback on points for C&RT to consider in review and any other comments: Q4&5.

# Chapter 2: The wider context

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## Summary

Views were mixed on whether or not the current licensing system is fit for purpose or needs changing. Some felt it is appropriate as it stands whilst others identified a range of possible improvements. Many felt that the logic underlying the current system is unclear, as is the use made of monies raised through licensing.

Participants had a number of views on the purpose of a boat licence and on the rights bestowed through a licence. Some focused on upkeep of the waterways, some on the licence as permission to use the waterways and others on the licence as a means by which to ensure compliance with legal obligations.

Boaters were adamant that the licensing system should not be used to penalise specific types of boating or set different types of boater against each other. Any changes to the system should be transitional (3-5 years was suggested) and not retrospective. Different views were held on which types of boater would be affected most adversely by any changes.

Participants identified a number of principles they felt should underpin any licensing system. These include fairness, intelligibility, simplicity and ease of enforcement.

## The licensing system

Participants had different views on the current licensing system. Participants in Devizes and Newark, in particular, felt that the current system is fit for purpose, and does not need changing, a view with which some participants in other locations agreed.<sup>9</sup> Some questioned the extent to which boaters had complained about the current system. Participants in Leeds suggested that the licence system is broadly appropriate as it stands, arguing that the real problems lie with enforcement and mooring which, in common with the great majority of participants in all workshops, they do not see as matters for the licensing system to address. Some participants - in London and Birmingham in particular - differentiated between business licences and licences held by private individuals, agreeing that the former are particularly complex, in both structure and application.

Others suggested a range of ways in which the system might be improved: some of these referenced ongoing rumours about control of Environment Agency (EA) waterways being transferred to C&RT, noting differences in the two organisations' approaches to licensing and suggesting that a transfer might prompt or require change. Participants in Birmingham linked the need for a new licence to new uses of the canal network and felt that the growth in boaters was not currently being catered for by the licensing system. Some also suggested a single licence for all waterways, to remove the need to "juggle" licences when out and about, commenting that Gold licensing makes this possible but is very costly.

The relationship between different patterns of use of the canal and the licensing system was discussed, though not extensively, in relation to leisure boaters who use their vessel infrequently: for example, for a two-week holiday and the occasional weekend. A handful of participants argued

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<sup>9</sup> See Evaluation Feedback in Appendix 8 for boaters' verbatim comments, which include some on the need or otherwise for the licensing system to be changed.

that these boaters should not pay the same licence fee as those who use the canal year-round, as they were not using water or causing damage to the canals. Those countering this view said that leisure boaters expect the standards of the waterways and facilities to be maintained for when they do choose to use them and that the extent to which a boat owner uses their boat is a matter of choice.

Many participants felt that the logic underlying the current system is unclear, as is the use made of monies raised through licensing. This issue was raised in Leeds and Devizes in particular.

## The purpose of a boat licence

Participants' views on the purpose of a boat licence were mixed, or participants emphasised different aspects of a licence. Some focused on straightforward permission to use the waterways, others on the contribution they make, through licence fees, to the upkeep of the waterways and facilities. Some noted that licences are for moving boats and questioned whether houseboats fit within the current licensing system. In Leeds, participants disagreed over the rights bestowed with a licence - for example, whether or not it includes the right to moor on a towpath or gives the right to cruise the waterways only. Some participants suggested that licence fees are also used to ensure that people comply with their legal obligations to the Trust - i.e., for enforcement purposes. Some participants felt that licensing and the withdrawal of licences should not be used punitively.

## A single boating community

Participants in several locations were adamant that any changes to the licensing system should not be used to set boaters with different patterns of use against each other. This point was often raised in the context of continuous cruising, with boaters noting that many are genuinely cruising and that this choice should be respected by the licensing system, with the behaviour of the few "*bridge hoppers*" not driving changes to the system that would impact adversely on continuous cruisers in particular. In Hatton, for example, participants agreed that the issue is with boats that do not move properly, but were concerned that this problem is leading some boaters to call for the Trust to take action that would affect the far greater number of genuine continuous cruisers: the challenge is, they argued, to "*deal with continuous moorers, while not penalising continuous cruisers*". These boaters felt strongly that continuous cruisers should not be licensed separately. As noted elsewhere in this report, dealing with "*bridge hoppers*" is seen as an enforcement, and not a licensing issue.

Some participants discussed paper licences and whether or not these need to be displayed. One view was that their display is important, providing reassurance to other boaters and supporting enforcement, whilst others countered that enforcement is done through registration numbers, which must be displayed and pointed to the very low number of unlicensed boats (<4%).<sup>10</sup>

Views were also mixed on the legal powers of the Trust to impose minimum travel distances, set mooring times and impose fines, with participants in Newark returning frequently to this topic, with discussions becoming heated at times.

## The impact of change

The impact on boaters of any changes to the licensing system was discussed in all workshops and there was broad agreement that the Trust needs to consider how any increased costs will impact on

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<sup>10</sup> C&RT National Boat Check, 17 March 2017, found an evasion rate of 3.7%

existing boaters as individuals and on the waterways as a whole. Some participants emphasised that any increases could lead them to being priced off the waterways and some called for the Trust to recognise how vulnerable some boaters are: for example, some survive on very low incomes. The general argument was that increased costs could drive people off the waterways and hence reduce income for the Trust. In Hatton, some participants noted that any increase in fees would impact on them immediately and personally. Here, as in other locations, boaters expressed a desire to “*keep the colour of the canal*” that is reflected in the diversity of people and boats who use the waterways.

A few participants were concerned whether any changes to the system would provide a basis for future large increases in revenue from licensing, which would impact on less well-off boaters in particular. However, participants did recognise the need for the continued upkeep of the waterways and some felt that they may have to make trade-offs: for example, some noted that if the alternative to a manageable increase in fees, introduced over a transitional period, was the degradation or loss of canals, they would seek to “*pay their way*”.

## Introducing change

Boaters emphasised that any changes should not be retrospective, but introduced over a transitional period, particularly if there are increases in licence fees. Some suggested that changes should not be applied to existing boaters, who will have made economic decisions based on the current system. A few participants suggested that the Trust should seek to mitigate the financial impact of any changes on those least able to afford increases. A transition period of no less than three years and as many as five was recommended by those who thought that any changes would need to apply, in future, to current as well as new boaters.

Some participants, particularly in Gloucester, suggested that leisure boaters could be most affected by increased licence fees and could be driven off the waterways, making increases counterproductive by reducing the number of boaters or increasing the proportion of boaters who seek to evade the licence fee. These participants felt that any changes should be structured to minimise any potential detrimental impact on boaters, arguing that this could be achieved by basing any new system on current pricing structures. They were also concerned about the review being “*the thin end of a wedge*” and form the basis for future drastic increases in total licensing revenue.

Other participants felt that continuous cruisers were most likely to bear the brunt of any changes, with some participants suggesting that the review itself is aimed at curtailing or eradicating continuous cruising. In Devizes and Milton Keynes, for example, some boaters felt that the Trust is seeking to force continuous cruisers off the canals altogether, and wants all boaters to have a home mooring. In London, a number of participants argued that the licensing system should not be used as a stick to change behaviour.

Many of the discussions about the impact of any increase in licence fees were framed by a broader conversation about the wider socio-economic context. In Northwich, for example, participants felt that high housing costs were forcing people onto the canals and said that many become continuous cruisers as this is the cheapest option. Echoing these points, participants in Newark added that people of already limited means should not be disproportionately affected by any changes to the licensing system.

Participants felt too that the Trust should review and assess any changes, so that unintended consequences could be identified and addressed, and announce any proposed changes before they are implemented, providing a clear account of the sequence of steps involved in their introduction, alongside the rationale for the changes.

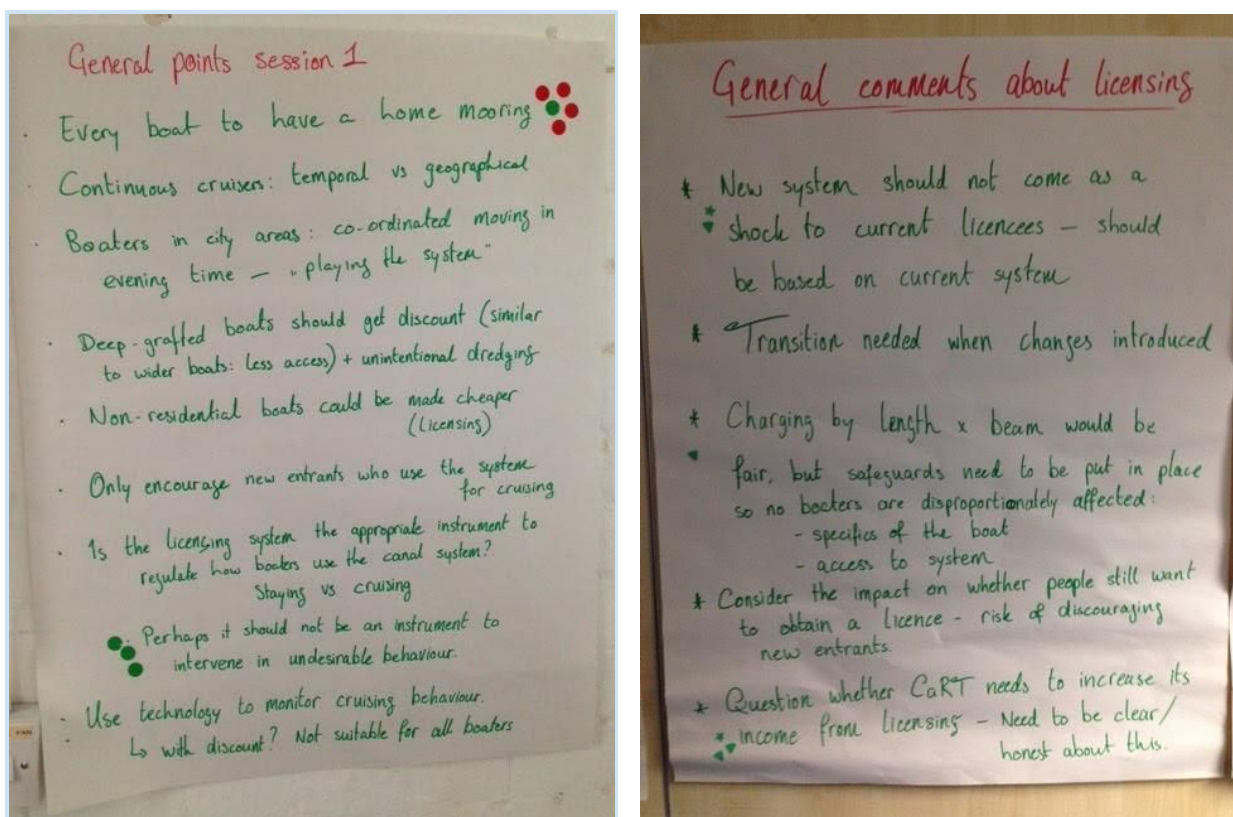


Figure 2. Hatton and Gloucester: general points on licensing

## Principles underpinning the licensing system

Throughout the discussions, workshop participants drew out a number of broad principles by which any licensing system should be judged. An effective system is seen as:

Intelligible. This means
<p>The licensing system has a clear structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Trust must be open and clear what it is seeking to achieve through licensing</li> <li>- The rationale for discounts must be explained</li> <li>- Any changes resulting from the review must be explained clearly</li> <li>- The reason why any views or ideas raised consistently in the review but not incorporated into any changes in the licensing system must be explained clearly.</li> </ul>
Fair. This means:
<p>The licensing system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is defensible, with a clear rationale that prevents some boaters 'free-riding' on a system to which others pay</li> <li>- doesn't seek to penalise one group of boaters or create an 'us and them' division on the waterways</li> <li>- Is supported by fair, equitable and consistently applied enforcement practices</li> <li>- Provides licence payers with information on how and where their licence fees are spent</li> <li>- Is easy to enforce</li> <li>- Supports a basic and consistent standard across the waterways</li> </ul>

*“Most people’s feelings about fairness is that it’s not about the structure of the system, it’s about evasion.”*

*“When everyone thinks they’re paying too much, that’s probably fair.”*

**Up to date. This means:**

- The licensing system reflects and accommodates the boating population of today and tomorrow, rather than seeking to change it.

**Simple and easy to enforce. This means:**

- Not introducing changes that increase the costs or difficulty of enforcement, which could force some boaters off the waterways and/or lead to a reduction in the money collected through licensing
- Providing clear explanations to boaters of what their licence fee covers
- Making it easy for boaters to understand the different elements in the cost of their licence (e.g., size of boat; any discounts etc)

**Coherent. This means:**

- The licensing system should work as a ‘whole package’

Table 3. Participants’ views on principles underpinning effective boat licensing system



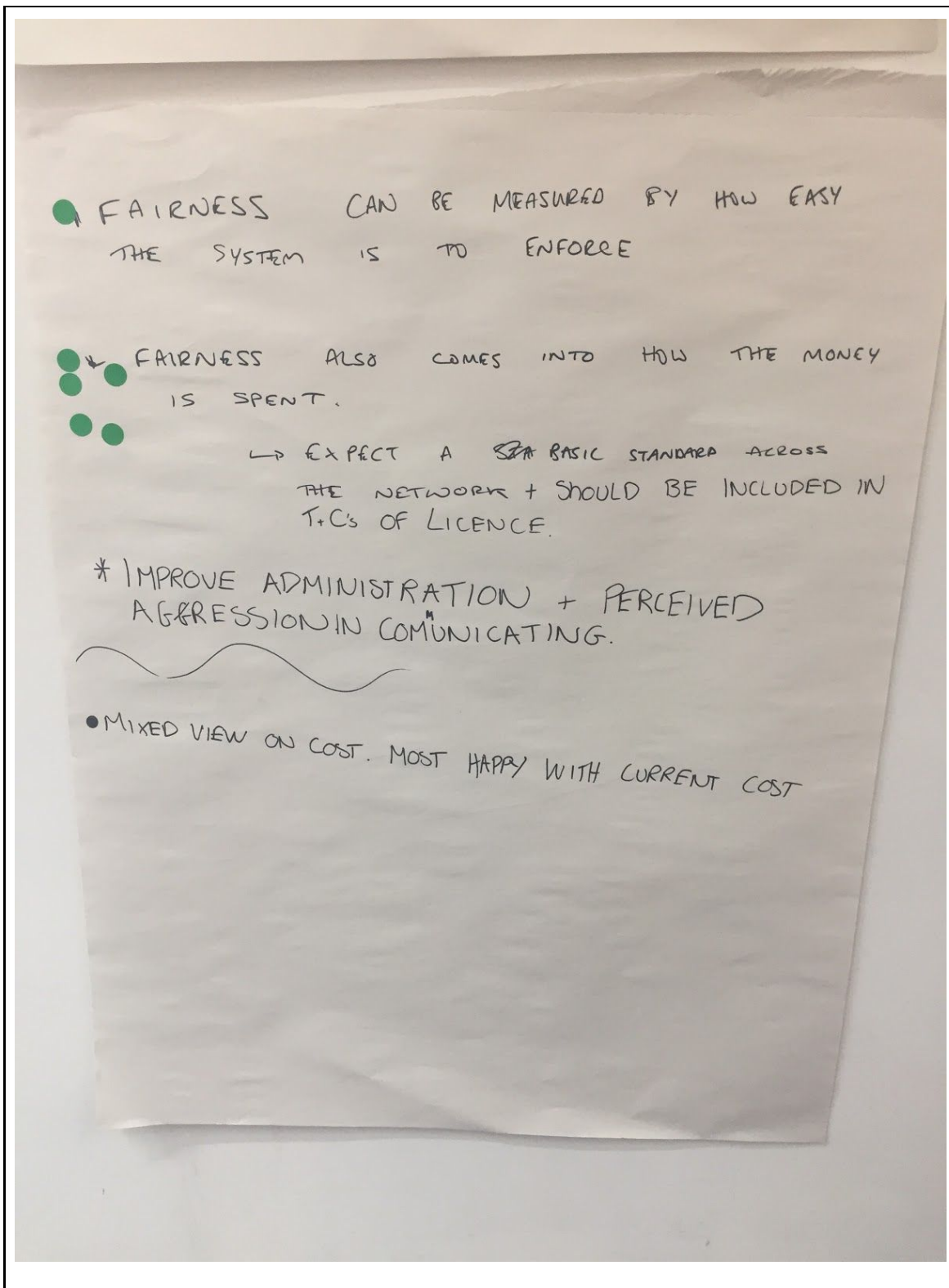


Figure 3. Devizes: comments on fairness

# Chapter 3. Boat size and licensing

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## Summary

There was broad support for licensing by area of boat (length x width), though this view was not unanimous and a substantial proportion of participants argued for retention of the current system.

Participants considered fairness in relation to whether and how to include the size of a vessel in licensing: factors taken into account included the perceived cost to C&RT; the impact on capacity and ease of use of the waterways; personal choice to own a particular size boat; access to the waterways and the importance of low cost entry points to boating.

## Principles underpinning the basic licensing mechanism

### Fairness and choice

As noted in the introduction, workshop participants focused on fairness in many of their discussions. In their discussions about which basic mechanism should determine the licence fee. Two perspectives on what is 'fair' tended to predominate in discussions about the basic licensing mechanism.

Boaters who support area-based licensing (length x width) argued that wide-beam boats occupy more space and use more water and that the increasing number of wide-beam boats has contributed to growing congestion in some areas. Boaters who support the current system of length-based counter this by arguing that wide-beam boats are not able to access the whole of the network and that congestion is not a licensing issue.

In many workshops, the debate on fairness led to a discussion of choice. Participants sought to reconcile fairness as a general principle with individual choice: for example, the choice to buy a wide-beam boat or a long narrowboat, or to keep a boat on a disconnected waterway, or to use a boat only rarely during the course of a year. Those who support length-based licensing tended to argue that wide-beam owners chose to buy a boat that could not access the whole waterway and that individual personal choice is not a valid argument against a length-based licensing system.

### License by length of boat (current system)

#### Arguments for licensing by length (current system)

The current system of licensing uses the length of a boat as the basic platform for determining the licence fee for a particular vessel. Boats up to 5.49m pay £523.39 for a 12 month private pleasure boat licence (2017-18, not discounted). Fees increase incrementally, with each additional 0.99m raising the licence cost. The licence fee for the longest boat included in the Trust's licence fee information stands at £1138.08 (21.50 – 22.49 m).

Workshop participants supporting licensing by length alone often framed their argument within a wider point about the current system as whole, saying that it is "*not broken*", is simple and fair: some said that changes were likely to increase rather than reduce complexity and that they therefore saw no reason for change. Points in favour of licensing by length were often framed negatively,

countering arguments made by supporters of licence fees being determined by area. For example, licensing by length was seen as providing a low cost entry point for new boaters, with shorter boats being more affordable and manageable. Some argued too that the width of a boat does not bear any relation to its individual cost to C&RT, using this as a the basis of a case for retaining the current system and against fees being determined by the area footprint (length x beam) of a boat. Participants in Gloucester argued that even if bigger boats did cause more damage on certain canals, this should not be addressed through the licensing system but instead, the C&RT should impose maximum dimensions for vessels using particular canals.

### Arguments against licensing by length of boat

Those participants who argued against retaining the current system suggested that its underlying logic is unclear. In contrast to those arguing that the size of a boat has no impact on the cost of maintaining the waterways, they argued that length-based licensing does not reflect what each boat costs the Trust and that an area based system is more fair.

	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
LICENSE BY LENGTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current system is simple and fair</li> <li>Distinction should be made through mooring fee (width/area)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very long boats have some access limitations on the system</li> </ul>
LICENSE BY LENGTH x BEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide-beam boats cause issues on some canals</li> <li>Boaters with wide beams enjoying advantages</li> <li>Taking up more space, more water, locks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Licensing the wrong mechanism to address issue → Law instead</li> <li>Access to fewer waterways – unfair</li> <li>Use mooring instead</li> </ul>
SINGLE LICENCE FEE	(No wide-beam boaters in the room)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different circumstances in different areas</li> <li>Penalises starters with short boats → would discourage new entrants (younger people)</li> </ul>
OTHER SUGGESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varying by area/zone</li> <li>Difference between mooring charge and licence fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New rules should not be applied retrospectively</li> </ul>

	+ve	-ve
LICENSE BY LENGTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CURRENT SYSTEM IS FINE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>boards of charging unfair + unnecessary given current computer systems</li> <li>AREA BASED SYSTEM MORE FAIR</li> </ul>
LICENSE BY LENGTH x BEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take up more space → more crowded canals. LIMITS CAPACITY.</li> <li>charge by square metres is fair</li> <li>widebeams use more resources</li> <li>impact canal not designed for widebeam (eg. bank damage)</li> <li>Will help control growth of widebeam which will become capacity issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People bought widebeam on current system licence ∴ need transitional period e.g. 1/2 year</li> <li>Problems with widebeams not as significant as some suggested.</li> <li>WIDEBEAM COMPARED TO BUTTY</li> <li>Exceptions / tolerance e.g. for boats carrying disabled (→ Discard)</li> </ul>
SINGLE LICENCE FEE		
OTHER OPTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AS BASIS FOR LICENCE</li> <li>Based on if you have a mooring or not. - do we share resources?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VAT EXEMPTION AS APPEAL</li> <li>Have choice to travel/access to resource + CC help with maintenance</li> </ul>

Figure 4. Northwich and Milton Keynes: the basic licensing mechanism

### License by length x beam ('area')

#### Arguments for licensing by area of boat

Broadly, there was more support for licensing by area of boat than there was for licensing by length alone, though this could be a function of the participants in the room: views tended to differ across workshops.

Participants who supported licensing by area of boat argued that if size is relevant to licensing at all, then area should be a factor and that if your boat occupies more space, then you should pay for it. Other arguments in favour of area based licensing were based on the claim that wide-beam boats cause more damage, adding to the cost of upkeep. In London, those participants who supported charging by area felt that the system should include “*starter prices*” to encourage use of the waterways: for example, a cheaper rate for newcomers or smaller boats.

Another argument made in favour of area-based licensing concerned what is seen as its potential to discourage the purchase of wide-beam boats, which are felt to be adding to increasing capacity problems. This point was one of several which, rather than focusing on the possible costs to the Trust of wide-beam boats, focused on the impact on other boaters. Other related arguments were that wide-beam boats cannot double up on mooring spaces (mentioned in relation to London), and thus add to congestion; that they can require tunnels to be closed; that only one can occupy a lock and that they can be harder to pass.

Some participants saw area-based licensing as inevitable, citing the likelihood that the C&RT will assume responsibility for Environment Agency waterways in the near future, with EA licences already being area-based (for the most part). One suggestion was that wide-beam boats are used primarily by liveaboard boaters, who use more of the network, all year round and should therefore pay a premium.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, arguing against the point that wide-beams can access only part of the network, participants said that this came down to choice, and that boaters would have been aware of this when they purchased their vessel. In Milton Keynes, where there was general support for licensing by area, participants noted buying a 70 ft long boat would also limit cruising range and that you “*choose your boat*”. Here, however, participants emphasised the importance of tolerance, arguing that it is reasonable to own a wide beam boat, focusing in particular on their value to people who otherwise could not access the canals, for example people with disabilities.<sup>12</sup> In Birmingham, a few participants argued that, in general, wide beam boats are for liveaboard use and are thus essentially houseboats, and that they should therefore pay more for services. Some participants in Devizes suggested that rental wide-beams should have to pay a premium.

### Arguments against licensing by area (length x beam)

Participants who rejected licensing by area of boat made a number of arguments. The most frequent was that wide beam boats have limited access to the waterways and should not have to pay for a system that they cannot use in its entirety. These participants argued - in line with a theme that ran throughout the workshops as a whole - that the problems perceived as associated with wide-beam boats are better addressed through the mooring system, rather than through licensing. Area-based charging was seen as an arbitrary mechanism by which to increase licence fees in general, with some participants saying that this is happening already in some marinas. This point was countered by some participants - in London, for example - with the argument that people had made a personal choice to buy a boat with limited access to some areas. Some London participants felt as well that wide beam boats are not currently a major issue outside London, or perhaps even outside Little Venice, but that the Trust might want to address their growth in some way. However, they did not think that the licensing system was the means by which to do this.

Some participants argued against the specific points made by those in favour of area-based

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<sup>11</sup> This point links to a point raised occasionally in several workshops, but not resolved, about whether the extent of use of the navigation should be a factor in licensing: see also p23.

<sup>12</sup> See also discounts for charity boats, in chapter 5 on Discounts.

licensing, saying that the problems are overstated and that wide-beams do not, of necessity cause more damage than narrow boats: it is, they suggested - particularly in Devizes - the boater, not the boat that is the problem.

### **A single licence fee (regardless of length or width of boat)**

This idea was suggested in the first stage of the project and the Trust felt it would be valuable to explore it further with boaters involved in the second stage. Support for a single flat fee for all boats, regardless of size, was limited. The arguments made in favour of it were that the size of a boat has no impact on its cost to the Trust and that varying the cost of a licence by the size of a boat is a form of unwarranted taxation. Those who argued against the single fee felt primarily that it was unfair, and would penalise people with smaller boats and entry level boats, so inhibiting demographic change. They suggested too that it could promote the use of larger boats, encouraging people to buy boats that they could not manage. They noted that people will have budgeted already for the length of boat they own (an argument which has application to the licensing debate more widely) and suggested that it would not raise any additional funds for the Trust. In London, for example, there was no support for a flat licence fee for all boats, even amongst boaters with larger boats who calculated that their licence costs would probably decrease.

### **Other suggestions for the basic licensing mechanism**

Boaters were asked to suggest other ways in which the basic licensing mechanisms might work or, for ways in which the three ideas discussed above might be modified or improved.

There were a number of discussions about the increments by which the licence fee is increased. At present, there are 18 different price points for a 12 month private pleasure boat, starting at £523.39 (undiscounted) for a boat up to 5.49m long with the highest cost being £1138.08 for a boat between 21.50m – 22.49m. Some participants suggested increasing the width of the bands, which are currently at 0.99m (e.g., 14.50m – 15.49m is one price point, 15.50m-16.49m another and 16.50m-17.49m another, and so on), and decreasing their number. One suggestion was for six foot increments (currently, they are at approximately three foot). Those who disagreed with this view argued that wider bands would penalise those on the thresholds, or make boats just over a threshold essentially worthless, or that online renewal processes mitigate any apparent complexity with the current banding. Other arguments were that the current increments are straightforward and that most boaters would lose if this idea were implemented. In Milton Keynes, some participants suggested that charging bands no longer make sense, as electronic systems can account for the true length (or width) of a boat, so any system could just be based on cost per square metre.

In discussions about licensing by the area of a boat, and primarily in considering how best to make a this approach simple to both implement and enforce, participants explored a number of potential variations on a straightforward length x beam. Some suggested licensing by deck space or floorspace, others by cabin space, others by number of berths: these ideas were, in general, discarded on the grounds of complexity or straightforward unworkability. One participant sought to mediate the difference between licensing by length and licensing by area, suggesting licensing by length, but introducing a multiplier for boats in excess of a certain width. Participants in Gloucester suggested a “*tempered length x beam*” approach, which looked at a multiple uplift factor for boats of different widths, which would allow for the reduced cruising range: for example, a boat twice the width of a standard narrow boat might be charged 1.5 times as much as at present, with a sliding scale of increases, depending on width.

A few participants suggested licensing by the value of a boat, arguing the cost of the build and the size of a boat are related. However, others challenged this, saying that the value of a boat can vary

according to a number of different factors, including its age, condition and fit out; where you sell and who does the valuation. These participants suggested too that enforcement of such a system would be very difficult.

A further suggestion was for a separate licence for continuous cruisers. This idea received very little support and was rejected primarily on the grounds that this would create a “*them and us*” culture on the waterways and that those people who are already evading payment or not abiding by the terms and conditions of their licence would find ways around such a system - for example, by registering “*ghost*” moorings.

Licensing by use or by the day were further suggestions, which again were broadly rejected: participants felt that one-day licences could mean that some people would pay considerably more than they do at present and that they could generate conflict between continuous cruisers and weekend or leisure boaters. This point relates to the argument that the waterways are always there for people who wish to use them, even if they choose to use them infrequently, and that the licence cost needs to reflect this availability: this argument was used against the suggestion that infrequent leisure users should pay much less continuous cruisers. Licensing by the day or by use would also, it was suggested, impact disproportionately on poorer or more disadvantaged communities who are on the water all year round.

One suggestion was for licensing by navigable area - that is, the proportion of the network to which a boat has access. This view was largely rejected on the grounds of choice: that is, the purchaser would have known at the time of purchase that they were buying a boat which could not access the entirety of the network.

Other suggestions raised but rejected include:

- Licensing by income: rejected on the basis that a boaters’ income is none of the Trust’s business;
- Increases for continuous cruisers, on the grounds that they use more resources: rejected on the basis that travelling or not is a choice and that continuous cruisers contribute to maintenance by alerting the Trust to problems before they worsen;
- Licensing by number of occupants, on the grounds that the cost of facilities is proportional to number of occupants: rejected on the grounds that it would be very hard to measure.

Other suggestions were made but not discussed in any depth (see Appendix 5 for a summary of comments on licensing mechanisms, by location).

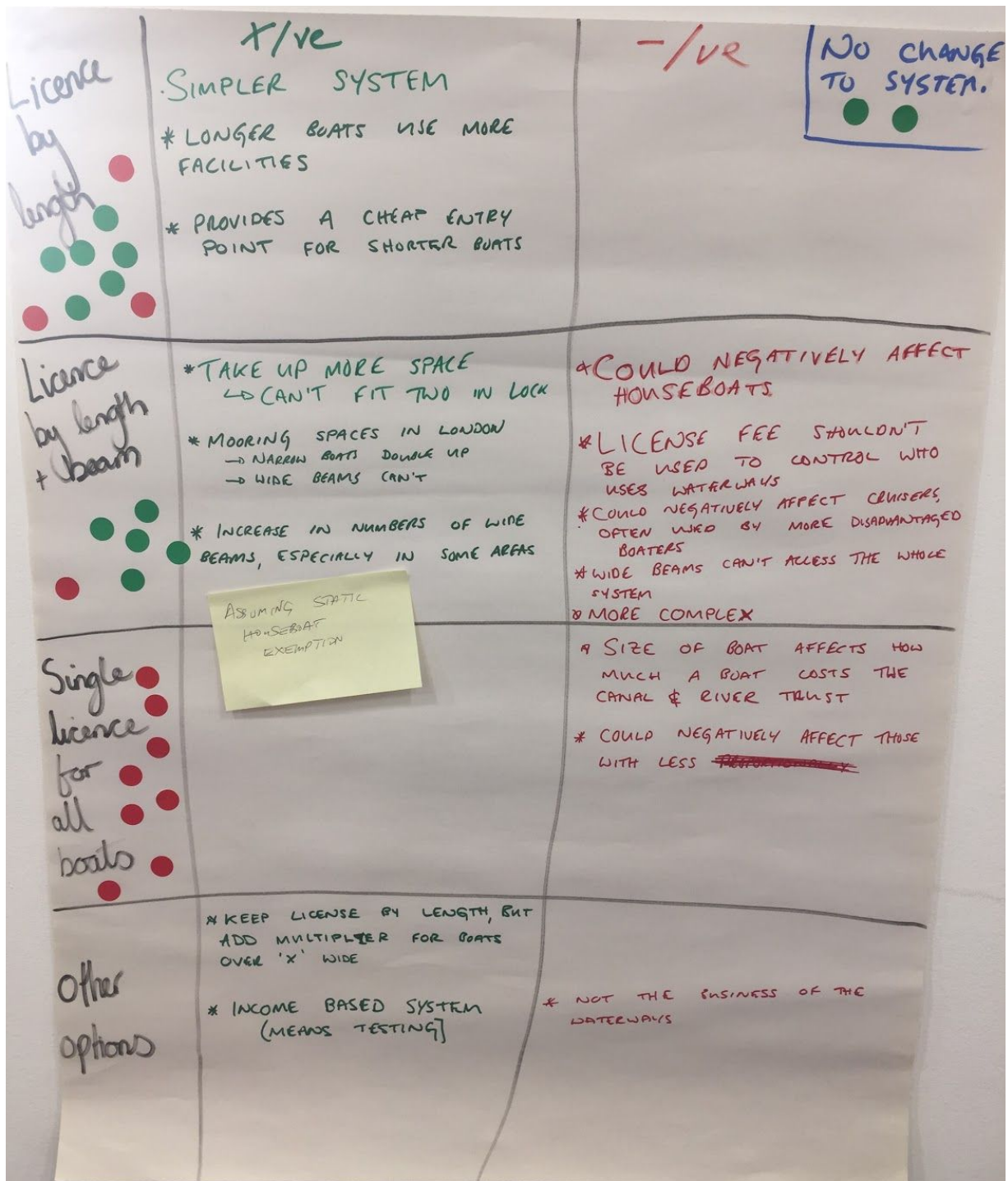


Figure 5. London: the basic licensing mechanism

# Chapter 4. Other factors important to licensing

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## Summary

In addition to the size of a vessel, participants discussed three main factors that they felt had relevance to the licensing system. These were regional pricing or zoning; the use of technology; the level of use of a boat. There was no widespread support for these options. Other themes included the duration of a licence.

Discussion of business licensing was limited, as private boaters felt their knowledge of the business licensing system was not sufficient for them to make any substantive comments.

## Regional pricing / zoning

Regional pricing was discussed in most of the workshops, often in the context of how to manage different levels of congestion across the network. It was broadly rejected, though a few participants did see arguments for some form of pricing mechanism - for example, congestion charging - to manage what they saw as a problem that is spreading beyond London: one boater in Birmingham felt that congestion problems were reaching Milton Keynes.

Participants saw congestion as a mooring issue, rather than one of licensing, and this view formed the basis of many of the arguments against regional or zoned licensing. They differentiated between congestion in front of you (e.g., speed of travel, busy locks), which was seen as a much lesser concern, and mooring congestion - i.e., not being able to find anywhere to moor. For example, a participant in Birmingham said there is “*nowhere to stop from Kensal Green to Hackney Wick*” and that “*you can’t even stop for a cup of tea*”. They diagnosed mooring congestion as a problem of failure to enforce the current system, and argued strongly against solutions to local problems being applied to the whole navigation.

In addition to arguing that congestion is a mooring issue, participants made a number of other points against regional or zoned licensing:

- It would be administratively burdensome and difficult to manage: this would run counter to the Trust’s stated aim of wishing to reduce complexity;
- It would impact negatively on boaters, affecting their enjoyment of the waterways and their right to navigate at will: they would need always to be mindful of the area in which they were cruising;
- Current enforcement is seen both as very poor and inconsistently applied, and many boaters questioned the enforceability of a regional or zoned licensing system;
- To work effectively, it would require some form of GPS boat tracking: this was explicitly rejected by many, primarily because they felt that this technology is not appropriate on the waterways;<sup>13</sup>
- It could lead to tolling on busy sections of the canal or be used as a mechanism for more

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<sup>13</sup> See the section on technology later in this chapter for more views on its use on the waterways.



general phasing in of increased charges;

- Where boaters choose to cruise is not a matter for the licensing system to address: for example, boaters in Birmingham argued that everyone should have the right to visit London.

In Milton Keynes, boaters questioned how you could license a continuous cruiser, with one commenting that “zoning by geographic area can’t fly”. However, one suggested that it might be a good idea within the M25 ring.

Participants in Devizes suggested that the beginnings of a zoning system were already in place, with the disconnected waterways discount. However, they felt that any such system would be very complicated and that boaters do not, in general, want to be stuck on one part of the canal only.

One participant in Newark suggested that a licence based on geographic area could work, but with no variation in cost by area. They felt that this might help to address what they felt was a current debate between continuous cruisers and those with a residential or long-term mooring. The licence could include a permit for residential mooring in a particular area, the suggestion being that this would help to control the number of people who are felt to block mooring places for long periods, and give continuous cruisers and leisure cruisers better access to busy areas. This suggestion did not receive widespread support, with participants arguing that it was based on the debatable assumption that people are not moving, whilst others said they do not have any problems finding somewhere to moor.

## Business licensing

Business licensing was not discussed in every workshop: its occurrence as a topic depended on the participants in the room. Leisure boaters were largely unwilling to make specific points about business licences, on the grounds that they are not familiar with the details. However, they value the presence of commercial operators and roving traders on the waterways, seeing them as attracting



visitors and diversifying use, adding to the colourful nature of the canals. For example, in Northwich, where some participants felt that business licences were too costly, there was general agreement that businesses and roving traders add character and should not be priced off the waterways. In some of the workshops where business licensing was discussed - Hatton and Leeds, for example - participants’ debate was often framed in terms of a trade-off between these benefits and the perception that hire boats generate more traffic and “knock the system about”.

Figure 6. Birmingham: business licences

Some participants in both Leeds and Northwich questioned the logic of higher fees for commercial boats, arguing that this could deter businesses and act as a barrier to entry, particularly for small businesses and roving traders: the latter, participants said, bear their own administrative expenses and hence do not cost the C&RT any more than a private boater. However, there was

some feeling in Leeds that holiday hire and passenger boats are more likely to incur additional administrative costs to the Trust, which needs to ensure that these operators adhere to relevant safety requirements. Others argued that “a boat’s a boat” and it makes no difference to the Trust

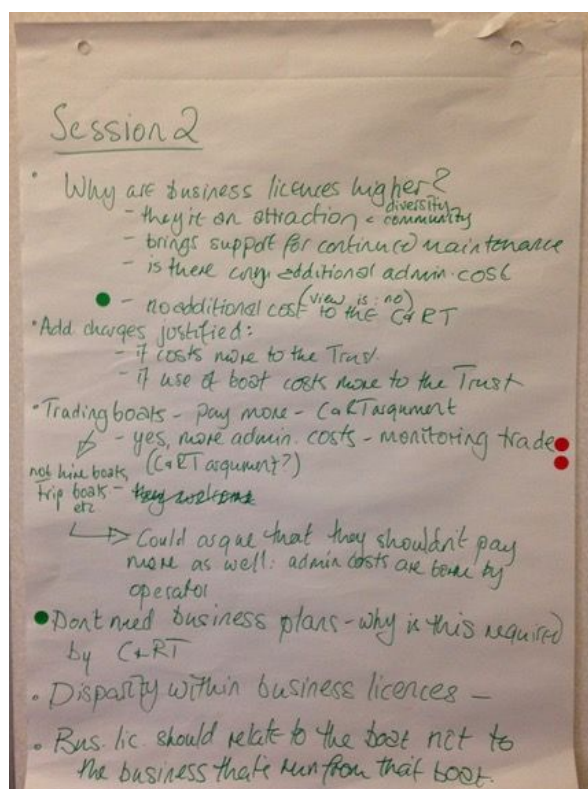
how any particular boat is used (i.e., for commercial or private use), and that the licensing system should reflect this. One or two Leeds participants questioned why the Trust needed business plans from would-be commercial boaters.

Participants in Devizes took a different view: one ex-commercial boater said they would have been happy to pay more and argued that hire boat licences should be much more expensive, particularly wide-beamers, on the grounds that they cause a lot of damage to the canals. A roving trader at the workshop said they would be happy to pay a bit more for their licence, saying it cost only £50 more than a leisure licence. Participants in Devizes and elsewhere also urged the Trust to move faster in getting business licensing online.

Participants in Leeds and Birmingham alike felt that the business licensing system is over-complex and the rationale behind price differentials between different types of business is unclear. Indeed, in Birmingham, participants suggested that the Trust should look at business licences separately, as the issues are so complex. In Birmingham, participants also raised concerns about the impact on business boats and roving traders of growing congestion, which they said is restricting commercial traders ability to travel, and called for the Trust to find a solution to address this and prevent its spread.

In Hatton, participants raised the issue of commercial share companies benefitting from commercially managed shared ownership boats, without paying a commercial or business licence fee: they felt that this was both unfair and raised safety issues. These participants felt that the Trust should ensure these boats are commercially licensed, and that this could bring in additional monies.

In all workshops where business licensing was discussed, the idea - suggested by a participant - of determining the licence fee on the basis of turnover was dismissed.



## Technology

Many participants rejected the use of technology in the licensing system or on the waterways in general. They see it as open to abuse, by either the person with the technology or the Trust and see it as neither practically feasible nor accountable, arguing that it would lead to continual and resource-demanding challenges from people who dispute its accuracy. Whilst a few participants - in Northwich, for example - argued that enforcement is difficult without increased use of technology, others felt that its introduction could lead to tolling on busy sections of the canals or to paying by distance travelled, which were not supported.

*"It's bad enough already that you're tracked every 5 minutes of your life...you go on boats to get away from things." (Gloucester)*

In Birmingham and Milton Keynes, participants were more willing to consider technological solutions to existing problems - though notably, in Birmingham in particular, many participants used the phrase "*in theory*" in their discussions.

In Birmingham, whilst most participants felt that "*people use the canals because they want to stay off grid*", they did discuss how technology might play a greater role. They felt that its acceptance would be conditional upon absolute assurances of anonymity and being offered a discounted licence fee: this, they felt, was justified on the grounds that the Trust's enforcement and sighting costs would be reduced. It would also need to be an opt-in, rather than opt-out system. They noted that the technology could not be through the mobile phone system, as this was unreliable - though there was also a point about the arrival of 5G technology and reference to smart motorways, platooning and autonomous vehicles: the participant raising these points suggested there was a "*cultural fit*" between these and the introduction of technology on the waterways.

Those participants in Birmingham who were willing to entertain or supported the idea of using more technology on the waterways felt that automated data collection is the best means of monitoring adherence to licence conditions. They felt in particular that it would be useful for commercial craft - for example, data logging for pay as you use, so that you pay only when you move - and for marinas, though they questioned who would pay for installing the kit on a boat.

In Milton Keynes, some participants suggested that every boat should be barcoded or have an electronic tag that sighters can use to log boats, making it easier to find boats that are evading licensing. Others saw this suggestion as "*big brother*" and cautioned against moving in this direction:

*"The bulk of boaters - be they continuous cruisers or home moorers - do play the game. It [use of technology] creates a civil liberties problem for the bulk of people who never offend."*  
[Milton Keynes]

In Devizes, some participants felt that information collected using technology such as barcoding might be more accurate, and were willing to entertain the idea of a self-reporting system: they suggested an app might work, with a chip in your licence which could log where you were, when you move and where you moor. However, this idea did not get unanimous support and most

concerns lay with data oversight and how the C&RT would use this information as part of enforcement.<sup>14</sup>

## License by use

The idea of patterns of use of the waterways playing a role in determining the cost of licensing was widely discussed. Most participants conceived of this in terms of increased use leading to higher licence fees.

There were two particular views. First, some participants felt that those who use the waterways infrequently - for example, on holiday or the occasional weekend - pay disproportionately: in Northwich, a day-fee for mooring and a day-fee for cruising was suggested, an idea which did not gain much support and was strongly opposed by some participants. A similar discussion was had in Milton Keynes, where a participant asked:

*"Why is a moorer paying the same as a continuous cruiser when the former also pays a mooring fee?" [Milton Keynes]*

This point was debated hotly and the idea of a separate or increased licence fee for continuous cruisers received very little support. However, there was a suggestion that rather than using "sticks", a "carrot" approach might be developed that incentivises use, on the grounds that this would help to ease congestion. This theme arose in Northwich too, where participants generally agreed that paying for mooring was a choice that people make: they felt that boaters who choose to keep their boat in an off-grid marina should still be liable for the full licence fee, as they are paying for access to a network that needs year-round maintenance. These participants thought that the Trust would lose income if those using the canal infrequently were to pay less.

## Other themes

In some workshops, participants discussed topics not raised elsewhere. For example, in Milton Keynes, boaters discussed the value or otherwise of a longer licence term - for example, three years. They could not see a point in this, arguing that annual renewal is straightforward anyway. They did suggest that there is a case for small boats (less than 5m) not needing a licence at all, suggesting this might encourage younger people onto the waterways.

In Devizes, participants discussed the general cost of a licence. Some felt that it is "*far too cheap - compared to living in a house*" whilst others argued that it can cost more than land living, once ongoing maintenance and other costs are included. In general, participants saw the licence fee as broadly the equivalent of council tax, which they felt was "*about right*" - though they did note there is substantial regional variations in council tax rates.

One participant, who travelled considerable distances, suggested it is worth paying more for a licence, though those participants who tend to stay on the Kennet and Avon disagreed. Another suggested that many of the people who live on the canals cannot afford to live elsewhere, and, highlighting the value of diversity, added: "*I don't want to live with a load of toffs*".

This discussion led to a conversation about whether another category of licence was needed, for people who want to stay longer in a particular area, perhaps for a couple of months. There was broad support for this and participants suggested that, if priced appropriately, it would minimise the

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<sup>14</sup> Enforcement is discussed in chapter 6.

problems that a few boaters might cause by not moving. This idea was floated briefly in one other workshop too, and considered favourably.

In Northwich, as part of a broad discussion about boats that cause damage to the canals, one participant suggested a mechanism to promote boats that don't "churn up the canals" or produce a lot of wash, perhaps through increased charges. This participant felt this could be introduced through "type approval" of new boats and could lead to design improvements. However, as in other workshops, there was general agreement that "the person on the throttle" has a greater impact on the damage a boat might cause and that multiple factors affect the impact of a boat on a canal and on other boaters. Nonetheless, if this were possible, participants did feel it would be good system.

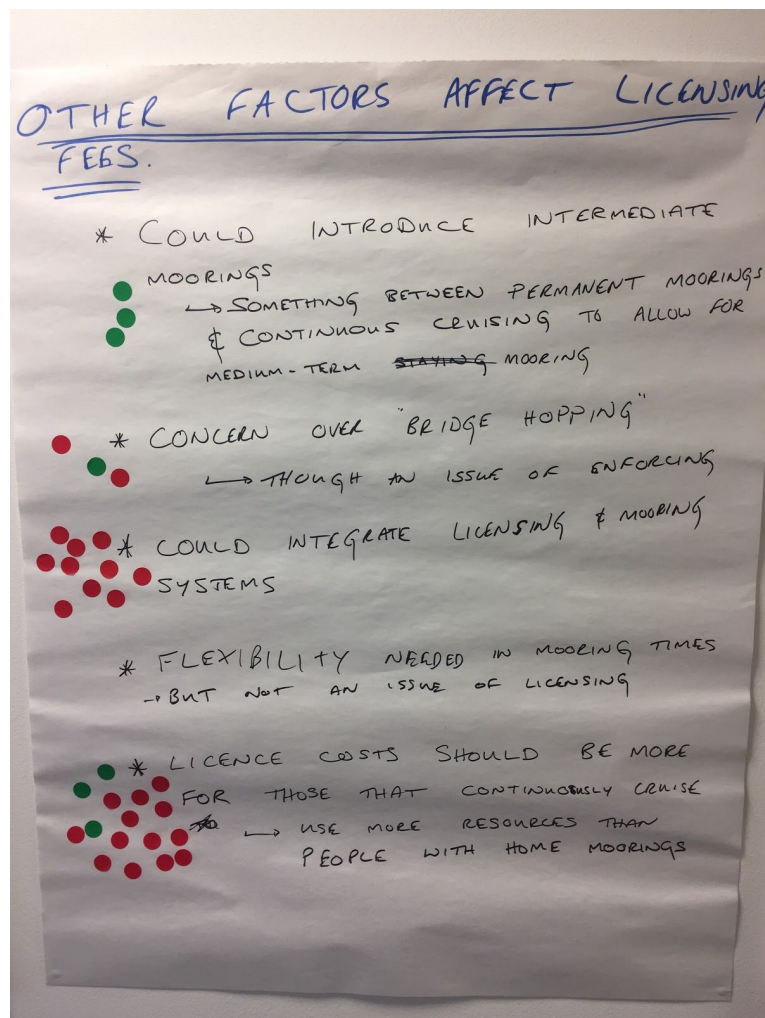


Figure 8. Milton Keynes: other factors relevant to licensing

# Chapter 5. Discounts<sup>15</sup>

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## Summary

With the exception of the prompt payment discount, responses to the different discounts were moderated by information on the small number of boats claiming each one.

Most discounts received some support, though the rationale for some was questioned. The charity boat discount was widely supported and participants felt it should be increased. The electric boat discount was discussed at most length and many participants felt it should be removed.

## General views on discounting

For the most part, and with the exception of the prompt payment discount, responses to the different discounts were moderated by information on the small number of boats claiming each one.

<b>Discounts</b>	<b>No. of licences applied to.</b>
<i>Prompt Payment</i>	22,861
<i>Historic</i>	266
<i>Disconnected Waterway</i>	401
<i>Electric</i>	88
<i>Avon</i>	11
<i>Witham Sailing Club</i>	9
<i>Historic Unpowered Butty</i>	51
<i>Portable Powered Boat</i>	88

Table 4. Number of licences to which different discounts applied.

Across the workshops as a whole, many boaters saw some rationale for the various discounts and felt that they should be either raised or lowered slightly, but overall the view was that the financial impact of changing or removing discounts would be very minimal. However, this view did not hold in the case of electric boats: many participants could not see the reason for this discount and felt it should be removed. Some participants were unaware of the different types of discount and thought that information on these should be more easily accessible. Participants in Leeds argued that different types of boat do not represent different costs to the Trust and that boat type should be disconnected entirely from licence fee discounts.

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<sup>15</sup> For detailed points on discounts, see Appendix 6.

## Views on specific discounts<sup>16</sup>

### Prompt payment discount

10% discount on the standard fee, if payment and application received by the Canal and River Trust before the start date of the licence. Only available for full advance payment (i.e., not applicable to licences paid over instalments).

There was broad support for the prompt payment (PP) discount in every workshop, with many noting that it helps the Trust to have money “up front”.. The main discussion points - again, recurrent across workshops - were:

- The potential for this to disadvantage people who cannot afford to pay for their licence in a lump sum: many participants suggested it should also apply to direct debit payers
  - In Devizes, there was one suggestion that it might apply to direct debits only;
- The discount should remain available to people who do not renew online.

Other points raised about this discount include:

- Make a Gift Aid option available, so that boaters can choose to donate part or all of the discount to the Trust: associate with the Friends of C&RT initiative (Birmingham);
- Reduce it to 5%, on the grounds that it is costly to the Trust (Devizes);
- Remove it: this was based on the view that its historical rationale would have been to encourage boaters to get a licence and now that now most boats are licensed it could be phased out or removed. The cost of the discount to the Trust was also seen as a factor;
- Extend to business users (Birmingham) or to all “good payers” (Leeds).

In some locations, boaters discussed alternatives to PP discounts. In Newark, participants raised the idea of raising the penalties for late or non-payment, rather than discounting prompt payment, though there was no strong feeling either way on these alternatives. In Birmingham and Devizes, boaters also discussed whether a late payment charge would be preferable to the PP discount.

### Historic boats

10% discount on the standard fee, if boat meets the requirements specified by the Trust for features such as age, structural condition.

The historic boat discount was widely, though not unanimously supported by workshop participants and in some workshops - for example Devizes - opinion was split, with some feeling it is “*nice, but not necessary*” and could be removed. Feelings on the discount were not strong, either in support of or against it, with many people referring to the small number of claimants and hence its relatively low cost to the Trust. Those who defended it did so primarily on the grounds that it helps to keep the heritage and history of the waterways alive and to encourage the upkeep of old boats in an

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<sup>16</sup> The summaries of each discount provided in boxes before the discussion are taken from the C&RT website.

original condition. A participant in Birmingham said “*if it was on the road, it would be free*”. As with other discounts, some boaters wanted to understand the rationale for the discount. The main points raised in relation to the discount were:

- The licensing system is likely to be the most efficient and effective way of promoting the upkeep of historic boats (e.g., rather than subsidies or grants) (Newark);
- Increase the discount: historic boats are a key part of the network and bring people to the canal. A sliding scale could be developed, working with the Historic Narrow Boat Association: fully original boats should receive a free licence (Birmingham).
- An increase in the discount was also supported by some participants in Milton Keynes, who suggested 25%, though this was not a unanimous view, with some suggesting it should apply to working boats only;
- Administration is very poor, with regulations and criteria unclear (Milton Keynes).

## Unpowered butty

50% discount for a butty boat more than 50 ft long that never travels separately from its motor boat. The motor boat must be licensed and licences for motor and butty must be concurrent with the same start and end date.

The unpowered butty discount had broad support from participants, though again, there were no very strongly expressed views from either those who supported it or those who raised questions. Some participants questioned the discount, comparing a butty paired with a powered boat to a wide-beam and arguing that, if width were to be included in the licensing system, then the discount should not continue: they felt if area (length x beam) charging were introduced, more boaters might start to use unpowered butties (Birmingham and Milton Keynes). Others emphasised the importance of ensuring a butty is only ever one of a pair (London).

Other points raised were:

- Scrapping or keeping the discount will have little effect on C&RT finances, though those who receive the discount may well need both it and the additional space - for example, travelling families (Newark);
- Should apply to historic butties only and remain at 50% (Milton Keynes);
- The logic of restricting the discount to butties longer than 50 feet was questioned (Birmingham and Devizes);
- There is some argument for applying the discount to exact replicas if the butty discount is changed to apply to historic butties only (Milton Keynes)
- Should be removed: supported by participants who also reject the historic boat discount (Devizes).



## Electric boat

25% discount if the Boat has an electric motor as its sole means of propulsion.

Discussions about the electric boat discount were generally longer than they were for other discounts, and feelings were expressed more strongly. Many participants queried the rationale for the discount, suggesting it was “*arbitrary*” and too high, adding that boaters would need to run diesel powered generators even if their engines were fuelled sustainably. Some argued that it does not necessarily promote the use of more environmentally friendly boats and nor does it contribute to reducing emissions more widely, with pollution merely displaced elsewhere, though one participant in London noted that electric boats reduce fuel pollution in the water itself. In Milton Keynes, a participant noted that electric boats use the same facilities and displace the same volume of water and therefore should not qualify for a discount.

In Newark, Milton Keynes and Devizes, participants who felt that environmentally friendly boats should be encouraged, or who were willing to explore the idea, suggested a “*green*” discount for boats using any sustainable alternative to diesel, including wind, solar and hydrogen, as well as developing battery technologies. In Devizes, participants felt it would administratively difficult to define an “*environmentally friendly*” boat.

In Newark, participants argued that, in addition to having a positive benefit for the waterways themselves, sustainably powered boats would improve air quality for boaters, as there would be fewer idling engines or running generators on moored boats. They felt the environmental standard of a boat could be assessed as part of the Boat Safety Scheme Certificate. However, they did caution that if the number of boats claiming either the electric or any replacement “*green*” discount began to rise, it should be reviewed. The latter point was made in London too.

Other points raised in workshops include:

- The level of the discount: some participants felt it is too high (Newark);
- Green grants for electric boats are available from other sources, and therefore C&RT does not need to provide this discount (Milton Keynes);
- There are costs associated with changing to electric power and the discount helps with this cost (Milton Keynes);
- Hybrid motors should be discounted as well (Milton Keynes).

## Disconnected waterways

25% discount if the Boat has a long term mooring, and will remain exclusively on one of the following Waterways: Bridgwater & Taunton, Monmouth & Brecon, stretches of the Montgomery Canal not connected to the main network, River Tees.

Many boaters were unfamiliar with the disconnected waterways discount and discussion of this was limited. The general view was that it is “*reasonable*”. In some workshops, participants considered the discount in relation to other topics of discussion. Some suggested that, as with wide-beams, the boater had made a choice to limit their travel - in this case, by keeping their boat on a disconnected waterway, and that this type of choice did not warrant a discount (Birmingham). Others questioned whether the discount should also be given to wide-beam boats, if its logic was about limited access

to the waterways. This latter point was used to argue against licensing by boat area and in favour of the status quo (Newark).

Other points included:

- Reduce the discount to 10% (Milton Keynes);
- Removing the discount (if that is done) would need to be managed carefully as it could lead to people taking boats off the waterways and hence reduce income for the Trust (Milton Keynes).

## Charity discount

60% discount off business licence fee, provided the boat meets the requirements specified by the Trust for purpose of use, users and charges.

All participants supported the charity discount and much of the discussion focused on how it might be improved. Some felt it should be increased - to 80% of the full business licence, or set at 60% of the leisure boat licence cost - whilst many thought that if the charity were properly vetted and providing a genuine charitable service, the licence should be free. The most frequently raised question was why charity boats needed to be licensed as business boats and then discounted.

## Multiple discounts

If more than one discount applies, the value of each one is calculated on the declining net balance.

Views on multiple discounts were mixed. Some participants felt they are legitimate - often on learning of the small number of people who claim them. Others argued that boaters should receive the largest discount only, and should not be permitted to “*pile up discounts*”, though they excluded the prompt payment discount from this. This suggestion, from Birmingham, was explored further, with the idea that analysis on who is claiming discounts should be done as part of a general review to look for opportunities to simplify the system and if, for example, it was found that all those claiming the butty discount were also claiming an historic boat discount, the two could be amalgamated.

## Other discounts

In some workshops, participants suggested other discounts that might be offered:

- The disconnected waterway discount could be applied to trail boats: there was disagreement about this, on the grounds that these boats have access to more of the network (Devizes);
- Older person’s discount: this was discussed but most agreed that “*there are too many older people already*” (Devizes). In one workshop a participant quipped that everyone would register their boat in a grandparent’s name if this were introduced. Participants in

Birmingham suggested a discount for boaters over age 75;

- Discount for commitment to the waterways (e.g., boaters who volunteer): some participants suggested that the Trust has been successful in motivating volunteers through altruistic appeals, so a discount was not necessary (Milton Keynes);
- Discount for “long service” - for boaters who had been licensed for more than 40 years (Birmingham);
- The rivers-only discount was discussed briefly in Birmingham and Leeds, where participants felt it was not justified, but that its statutory nature meant changing it would be difficult;
- Discount for laid-up commercial craft, to help them reduce their overheads and still function on the small amount of work available (Birmingham);
- If longer term permits were introduced (e.g., 3 years), a discount could enable and encourage people to pay up-front, which would benefit the Trust (London).

Prompt payment 10%	OK. Uncontroversial. If online only then some boaters would be disadvantaged. Normal practice; helps people pay in time
Disconnected Waterway (leisure only) 25% (subject to criteria)	Reasonable. For larger boats, perhaps? Balances out with regard to their footprint.
Historic boat 10% (subject to criteria)	Question about the rationale. Attractiveness of old boats - looking good - attracting visitors. Fine, because only 10%. There is an admin cost involved.
Butty discount 50% (subject to criteria)	C&RT are enforcing a limit on tenders. Important it stays - helps families Financial importance of it is limited. Butty & boat are eff. one unit
Electric discount 25% False green solution? El. generation instead?	Less polluting. Health & Safety risk? ↳ justified as green contribution. ↳ El. generation still generates emissions But when numbers go up - review / cap? Flawed presumption - not so green?
Charity discount (business only) 60%	Cancel out the higher fee for businesses. ↳ just stop charities paying business rates. Give charities discount on basic rates.
Boating club 5%	

Figure 9. Newark: discounts

# Chapter 6. Congestion, mooring and enforcement

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## Summary

Congestion on the waterways was raised frequently during workshops and participants defined it as a problem for both mooring and navigation, as well as a safety concern. Congestion is seen as localised but spreading.

There was a strongly and widely held view that congestion is a problem of mooring and enforcement, and not something for the licensing system to resolve, though there were a few voices who did note a role for licensing in managing capacity.

Enforcement is seen as important but poorly managed. Some boaters feel it is applied unfairly or aggressively.

## Defining congestion

Asked to define their use of the word 'congestion', workshop participants offered a range of features or situations covered by the term:

- Primarily a mooring issue, with competition for mooring space;
- judged on time taken to travel, based on experience;
- A safety issue: many moored boats along a particular stretch narrow the channel, raising the risk of collision;
- A localised problem in some areas only;
- A limiting factor affecting where boaters choose to cruise: participants said that congestion leads boaters to avoid locations including London, Oxford, Bath and Cambridge;
- Not being able to move;
- A navigational and a mooring issue.

Whilst the predominant view was that congestion is a real problem, and one likely to grow and spread, it is at present seen as localised. One or two participants disagreed that there is congestion at all, saying that they never had problems finding somewhere to moor or experienced difficulties with navigational congestion, including one in London.

## Managing congestion

Workshop participants suggested a wide range of possible approaches to managing congestion. Some saw the problem as urgent, emphasising that it is spreading. These suggestions included:

- Charging boaters who go frequently to a particular location (e.g., twice a week): suggested in Northwich, this idea was seen as difficult and expensive to enforce since it would require a count of the number of times a boat is in a specific location;
- Strengthening enforcement to reduce “*continuous mooring*”;

- Legalise currently illegal moorings and charge fees in line with the area, reserving specific moorings for passing traffic (Birmingham);
- Increase the number of mooring rings;
- Increase the number of bookable moorings: participants felt that it is very to get a reservation;
- Introduce an ‘*affordable moorings*’ rate - e.g., offside mooring with no facilities.
  - The idea of affordable mooring - perhaps with permitted longer stays in areas that are not congested, at a low rate, received considerable support in those workshops where it was suggested (e.g., Milton Keynes, Devizes, Birmingham);
  - Participants felt people who will pay a reasonable amount to stay in a particular place but can’t afford high marina fees are not currently being catered for, and that they are likely to be the future of boating;
- Allow continuous cruisers to stay for longer than 14 days in areas where there are few boats and no congestion;
- Limit mooring times (e.g., to 48 hours), with charging for over-staying: there was some concern that this could be poorly applied, be extended across less busy areas or price people (particularly roving traders) off the water;
- Make use of “*parking wardens*”: one participant said that the Environment Agency has employed a car parking company on the Thames to monitor mooring;
- Allow people to pay by the day for a temporary mooring (£5/day was suggested), adding the cost to the licence fee for the following year.

In addition to these specific suggestions, participants raised a number of broader issues. For example, some participants in the London workshop felt that local residents did not want more mooring rings installed and this was inhibiting any increase or leading to their removal. Here, participants also suggested that some boaters are treating visitor moorings as temporary moorings and not moving on, with one commenting “*some areas of London are becoming like an estate, really*”.

## Mooring fees

The cost of mooring was raised in a number of workshops. For example, in Leeds, there was a suggestion that mooring fees could be linked to the popularity of an area, but views on this idea were split: some participants felt that the current 14 day rule for continuous gives all cruisers an opportunity to get a mooring in a popular “*honey pot*” site and that increasing costs in line with demand would preclude this. Others suggested that holiday boaters would be penalised if mooring costs increase and permitted stays were time limited in popular areas.

Participants in Northwich suggested that higher mooring fees may act as a “*gentrifying factor*” which pushes more people into continuous cruising, as they can’t afford the high permanent mooring fees in areas like London and the Kennet and Avon. In discussion, a potential solution was suggested, in the form of increased numbers of linear moorings. However, some participants felt this could create further problems, increasing mooring congestion and limiting the speed of navigation.

## Enforcement

Overall, participants felt that strong enforcement is both necessary and important for managing congestion, infraction of licence terms and conditions and for dealing with rubbish. Discussions on enforcement were often framed by the idea of fairness. Many participants suggested that fairness rests as much in the application of the rules as it does in the basic licensing mechanisms and that *“how much trouble you are having implementing [the current system] is indicative of the system being unfair”*. Some suggested that when boaters discuss fairness, they are talking primarily about the implementation of existing rules and the attitude they feel that the Trust adopts towards them.<sup>17</sup>

Across all of the workshops, many participants attributed congestion and *“continuous mooring”* to what they feel is inadequate, inconsistent or generally poor enforcement, though many pointed as well to an increase in the number of boats, particularly wide-beams, on the waterways. Asked if the existing terms and conditions were properly enforced, this would solve the problems they had identified in London, many of the Birmingham boaters felt that it would, *“but you’d have to start lifting boats”*. However, others questioned why you would enforce against people in London who are *“taking the mick”* when you wouldn’t do this elsewhere. In discussing congestion, participants in Birmingham said that some possible approaches - for example a form of congestion charging - could not be introduced because of high levels of inaccuracy in spotting and enforcement.

*“The level of enforcement that is currently applied is so erratic that the potential for mistakes is as great as the potential for accuracy.”* (Milton Keynes)

Some participants who had experienced enforcement action described it as “harsh” or “draconian”, and some described the Trust’s approach to enforcement as “policing rather than supporting”, whilst others had no complaints about their experience. Some wanted information about the cost of enforcement and the proportion of their licence fees spent on enforcement.

*“Enforcement costs money and we’ve got to be willing to pay for it.”* (Milton Keynes)

## Technology and enforcement

In discussions about the use of technology in enforcement, boaters in Devizes in particular explored issues of data protection and access. Whilst there was some agreement that a system such as barcoding could enable boat sighters to gather more information, and more accurate information, they were concerned about how data gathered would be used by C&RT and who would have oversight. There was some support for a self-reporting system, such as an app on which you could store data about your licence, your movements and location and other relevant: participants felt this could play a role in enforcement and would be straightforward and easy to use. However, they were concerned about where responsibility would lie if a technology failed or provided inaccurate data and what the associated penalties might be.

## What is continuous cruising?

Across many of the workshops, participants talked about continuous cruising in their discussions of congestion, mooring and enforcement. As noted elsewhere in this report, many participants raised concerns about continuous cruisers being blamed as a whole for the activities of a smaller group of boaters - so-called *“continuous moorers”* - who are seen as generating problems for all boaters and the waterways more generally. There was widespread resistance to eliding the distinction between

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<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 6 for a discussion of communication.

continuous cruisers and continuous moorers and to taking steps that might contribute to antipathy between boaters with a home mooring and continuous cruisers.

Many participants felt unclear about the extent of movement required for *bona fide*<sup>18</sup> navigation and, within workshops, participants disagreed on the clarity or otherwise of the law with respect to this topic. In Northwich, Milton Keynes and Devizes, participants felt they did not have a clear definition of sufficient cruising range, and in Devizes, some felt that lack of clarity led to unfair and inconsistent enforcement.

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<sup>18</sup> See [British Waterways Act 1995](#), Section 17.

# Chapter 7. Communication and information

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## Summary

The quality of the Trust's communication and information provision was raised in a number of workshops and many participants felt there was room for improvement. Some participants felt that the Trust could be more transparent and open and some suggested that they might work with the Trust, particularly on improvements to the website.

## Communication and information

Many participants suggested that improvements to communication between the Trust and boaters would be welcome. Some described it as “*difficult*”, whilst others perceived an “*aggressive administrative tone*” in communications. At times, participants suggested that this, together with what they saw as poor information provision, lay behind many of their wider concerns. Others had no complaints.

Much of the focus in participants' discussions on information - which were smattered throughout discussion of other topics - related to the view that there was insufficient transparency and willingness to provide information on the part of the Trust. We have mentioned previously boaters' wish to have easy and accessible information on the logic that underpins the licensing system and on how and where their licence fees are spent. A few suggested that freedom of information requests are at times the only means by which to gain access to the information they seek. In London, participants said they would like to understand better how the system applies to different types of boater, how money is collected from different stakeholders and, overall, gain a more holistic view of the system and the use of monies raised.

Some felt that what the boater sees as poor communication and information provision is a consequence of administrative inefficiencies, whilst others felt it was more wilful. A few boaters said that they can have difficulty in using the website because of limited internet access or data limits.

Boaters in Devizes suggested that the Trust could make more use of the skills amongst the boating community. Commenting on the website, which they - as well as participants in other locations - felt was difficult to navigate, they suggested boaters might be involved in helping the Trust to improve it, through user testing, for example. This, they felt, would send a strong positive message about the Trust's appetite for engaging boaters in a productive manner. Boaters in Birmingham felt that the Trust should encourage boaters to become friends of the Trust and incentivise them to recruit other friends.



# Chapter 8. Boaters' comments to the Canal and River Trust

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## Summary

In evaluation questionnaires<sup>19</sup> completed at the end of workshops, boaters were asked:

*“What three points do you think it is most important for C&RT to consider in this licence review?”*

Participants raised a wide range of topics, including fairness and the importance of acknowledging and responding to change on the navigation. Many of the comments reiterated and reinforced themes discussed during the workshop and covered elsewhere in the report.

## General points

### Fairness

Many people focused on fairness. Some people wrote just “fairness” whilst others added further information: for example *“fairness in charges”*, *“fairness perception and enforcement”*, *“make any change fair and transparent”* or *“fair licensing categories”* and *“Maintaining absolute fairness in the cost of the licence considering all aspects of boating - not just size etc of the vessel”*. One comment related to the distribution of income through licence fees, stating *“fair distribution of expenditure of licence fee”*. One was more specific about what fairness would look like in application: *“Do not disenfranchise the occasional boater who pays full licence for relatively little usage”*.

### The changing face of boating

In addition to points about fairness, a number of boaters' comments reflect the diversity of the boating population, how the population has and continues to change and the importance of not fomenting division. For example *“Not to divide boaters into groups with competing views”*, *“not to penalise one group of boaters for changing usage patterns”* and *“some people (more and more) choose to live afloat. Encourage and manage it, don't seek to prevent it.”* Participants noted that boats are homes to many of them and in some cases, support their income and their families.

## Comments on licensing

As in discussions, workshop participants' comments show different views on whether licensing should take the area of a boat, or length alone, into account when determining licence fees. Many comments were in support of licensing by area, for example: *“length x beam = fairness”* and *“wide beam pay for square metre”*. Some simply stated: *“limit number of wide beam boats”*.

Other participants noted that wide beam boats do not have access to the whole of the network: *“wide beams come in all shapes and can't access most of the network”*.

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<sup>19</sup> A table of verbatim comments in response to this question can be found in Appendix 8.

Some commenters noted that licensing could be used as a means by which to promote boating, and focused on particular types of boater: *“Make licences more affordable for entry level, non-residential boats, to encourage younger boaters (proper cruising boats, not residents)”*.

## Discounts and categories of discounted boats

Fewer participants commented on discounts than on other topics. However, those who did tended to express support for discounts for historic boats, for example: *“free for historic”* and *“historic craft should be encouraged to be on the water”*. A number of comments suggested the discount system needed to be reviewed and one participant commented that discounts should be scrapped entirely: *“Why give a discount at all - are you a charity - if so, why are you throwing charitable money away?”*. Finally, one commenter suggested that discounts might be removed as a penalty for non-compliance with licence terms and conditions, rather than removing licences entirely.

## Licensing and mooring

Most of the comments on mooring and licensing expressed the view that these are separate topics, for example: *“A lot of the problems are mooring behaviour which cannot be addressed by altering the licensing system”*, *“Mooring issues should not 'fog' licensing”* and *“separate licensing & moorings - then do something about mooring control & charging”*. One commenter suggested integrated licensing and mooring systems and one felt that every boat should have a home mooring. Finally, one participant suggested making mooring for continuous cruisers: *“Winter/summer/short term moorings available for cc-ers - pay more but still affordable”*.

## Licensing and enforcement

As with mooring, boaters saw licensing and enforcement as separate topics: a number of comments emphasised this, for example, *“Don't use licensing as an enforcement tool to try (and fail to) deal with boaters who don't move”*, *“licence should not be used for enforcement purposes”* and *“Issues that demand better enforcement aren't solved by changing licensing”*.

Some participants focused on the adequacy of enforcement in the context of any changes to the licensing system: *“any changes must be enforceable & enforced, or no point”*. Others commented that enforcement should be strong and that more enforcement is needed.

## Changes to the licensing system

A number of participants questioned the need for the review, commenting, for example *“don't change a system that works pretty well”* and *“don't change what isn't broken”*. Others noted that if changes were introduced, this should be done thoughtfully, writing, for example: *“any transition must be managed with care”* and *“if change considered needed then do it slowly”*. Two participants focused on the future: *“Identify long term objectives and issues”* and *“Must look ahead to how boating will look in 5-10 years”*. Others focused on the importance of consistency, simplicity, using carrots, not sticks and showing compassion for boaters who are struggling.

## Cost impact of any changes to licensing

Comments addressing the cost impact of any changes to the licensing system tended to emphasise affordability, for example: *“Consider affordability - boaters can't keep absorbing high increases & this includes traders and businesses”*, *“Consider affordability - easy to price boats off the system”* and *“Realise that whatever happens, people generally don't want to see massive increases”*.

## Continuous cruising

A number of comments mentioned continuous cruising specifically. Most of these raised concerns about the licensing system changing in a way that has a detrimental impact on boaters without a home mooring, for example: *“Look at accepting and appropriately licensing the non-mooring ‘continuous cruisers’”, “Not to use this as a means of removing liveaboard & CC’rs from the system”, “do not treat people unfairly. Continuous cruisers usually have a lower income” and “do not try and solve problems in London & K&A through cc licence”.*

Some of those commenting on continuous cruisers focused on control, for example *“Extra fees above basic licence for continuous cruisers”* and *“controlling continuous cruising”*. Others suggested continuous cruisers need more clarity: *“Giving set, clear rules about distance of cruise for CC”*.

## Commercial and trading licensing

Few comments were made about commercial or trading licences. The issues raised by participants who did comment on this include licensing shared ownership boats as commercial boats and lowering the cost of business boat licences and keeping trade licences in mind. For example, *“Please do not deregulate trading & keep roving traders licence as is”, “Shared ownership boat should have business licence”* and *“trade review/overhaul”*.

One participant commented on charity boats: *“Charities need to raise money to run, through donations - should not be seen as competitors with private sector”*.

## Other topics

### Information and communication

Many workshop participants emphasised the importance of communication in their comments about what the Trust should consider. Points include ensuring information is available offline as well as online: explaining the reasoning behind any changes clearly and in advance of implementing them and making sure that any new system is easily understandable. For example, *“licensing should be fair and easily understood & clearly explained (and not only via the website)”*.

Some comments addressed the quality of communication, for example: *“transparency through the whole process on the CRT Facebook etc”* and *“Be open and transparent about the reasons why each decision is taken. Make them wide and true”*. A few felt that communication at present is sub-optimal, for example: *“cease confrontational communication”, “Stop bullying us and causing stress”* and *“We are customers and should be treated fairly and respectfully”*.

### Wider financial issues

Some of the comments made by boaters raised wider financial issues. These include increased transparency about how and where licence fees are spent by the Trust, noting the small proportion of C&RT income raised from licence fees, cutting the Trust’s overheads and looking for revenue from sources other than boaters. For example, *“To show boaters where the licence fee gets spent”, “Insufficient funds are being given to maintenance - too much for salaries”* and *“Stop wasting money, reduce executive staffing, make salaries reflect funding”*. One commenter suggested that *“Guaranteed money via direct debits should be encouraged”*.

## Consultation and engagement

Many comments focused on consultation and engagement. Many commented on the importance of the Trust learning from the workshops and the consultation as a whole, for example: *“Listen to the views,” “To do what BOATERS want and not what C&RT and the politicians want”* and *“To learn from this 'exercise' that divide & conquer tactics don't work”*. Some participants questioned the cost of the consultation process, and raised broader issues too: *“Whilst I agree review is overdue, not sure these workshops are correct way...at what cost! Think licensing is low priority for C&RT. Need to address increasing issue of waterways being used as social housing”*.

Other comments focused on differences between boating constituencies, for example: *“Separate licensing workshops between leisure groups and commercial groups, as needs are very different (and as a leisure boater I don't feel qualified to comment on the commercial licences)”* and *“Ensure critical stakeholders can give feedback”*.

Some participants addressed the quality of the engagement process, for example *“better involvement and consultation is needed”*, *“Well run by great people, although find it hard to see what CRT will take from it apart from people don't know what they want”* and *“thoroughly enjoyable”*.<sup>20</sup>

## Congestion

Few comments addressed congestion specifically. Those that did related to spreading congestion and issues of capacity, for example: *“the problems in London etc are coming to a canal near you - deal with them now”* and *“Understand that problems rarely get smaller!”*. One commenter suggested measures focused on particular types of boater: *“CRT should seek changes to its statute to control the number of new liveaboard boaters to sustainable levels”*. Another suggested a potential solution to congestion in some areas: *“consider adding congested areas, London & K&A to Gold licence”*.

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 7 for evaluation feedback on the workshops.