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NOTES

Title	Notes from meeting to discuss canal issues with Parish Councils
Date	23 September 2014
Venue	Wilcot Village Hall
Attendees	Matthew Symonds (CRT), Cathy Clark (Pewsey PC), Joyce Hale (Stanton St Bernard PC), Wendy Tarver (Stanton St Bernard PC), David Wilson (Wilton and Huish PC), Richard Fleet (Wilton and Huish PC), PC Teresa Herbert (Wiltshire Police), PCSO Joseph Sadd (Wiltshire Police), Chris Bartlett (Wilton and Huish PC), Ann May (Wilton and Huish PC), Nick Fleet (Wilton and Huish PC), Colin Bouch (Wilton and Huish PC), Pamela Smith (Boat Dweller)
Apologies	PC Richard Barratt, Peter Deck, Jane Brown

1. Welcome and Introductions

Matthew Symonds welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave an overview of the work he is involved with including the Towpath Mooring Project (see www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating/mooring/mooring-rules/towpath-mooring-project) for more details) and Kennet and Avon Local Plan between Bath and Foxhangers (see www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating/mooring/mooring-rules/kennet-and-avon-local-plan for more details).

A number of canal issues that has been raised by the Parish Councils were discussed along with possible solutions.

2. Boats overstaying (mooring for longer than 14 days)

MS gave a brief explanation of the requirement for boaters to move to another place every 14 days. Although CRT publishes 'Guidance for boaters without a home mooring' we are not able to specify precisely how far a boater should move every 14 days. This lack of clarity has been unhelpful for boaters. Later this summer CRT will be producing maps showing the whole of the 2000+ miles of CRT managed waterways divided into 'neighbourhoods'. We believe this will help boaters to interpret out guidance. MS reiterated that the maps are only CRTs interpretation of place and that some people may look at them and have different views about the length (each one varies in length but most are approximately 2km) and what they have been called.(each has a name e.g. 'Pewsey'). There will be an opportunity in a years' time for people to give feedback on these, after which CRT will review them.

Action: MS to circulate the details of the new maps when these are published.

The 'neighbourhood' maps are currently on hold as we work with boating

organisation to review their feedbacks and comments.

A build-up of silt in many areas of the K&A was highlighted as problem in reducing the number of places where boats (particularly those with a large draft) could moor. Some dredging is underway between Pewsey and Milkhouse Winter, clarification was sought on when this will be completed and what other plans CRT have for additional dredging on the K&A, particularly between Devizes and Great Bedwyn.

Action: MS to ask Mark Stephens (K&A Waterway Manager) to provide an update on the Pewsey/Milkhouse Winter dredging and future plans for dredging on the east end of the K&A.

Response from Mark Stephens: There is no Pewsey Milkhouse Winter Dredging. Not sure what this refers to. We are doing bank protection works that has involved backfilling with dredged material. This work will be completed imminently. Dredging on the Long Pound remains in the National Dredging programme for 2016/17

There was feedback that people had seen fewer holiday hire boats in the area and concern that this was because they found it difficult to find places to moor. MS reported that colleagues from CRTs business boating team meet regularly with hire boat operators and usually receive feedback about this if there is a problem. CRT does have short-stay 'visitor moorings' in many places where mooring times are restricted (usually 24hr, 48hr or 7 days). These are signed on the towpath. MS said that CRT would consider additional requests for VM locations.

Action: Parish Councils can contact MS if they have specific locations where they believe short-stay VMs should be considered.

Concern was raised that there had been two consultations – one on winter moorings and another on allowing permanent moorings on the towpath at Wilcot – and that the Parish Council had not been consulted. MS explained that CRT sell winter moorings between November and March which allow boaters who continuously cruise to stay moored during the winter months. In the past these have been at specific winter mooring locations but in 2013/14 CRT introduced a 'general towpath winter mooring permit that allowed boaters to moor anywhere on the towpath (with some exceptions, such as not on visitor moorings or near to offline marinas) and at the same time we greatly reduced the number of specific winter mooring locations. The consultation was specifically to gather feedback from boaters who had purchased winter mooring permits to find out what they thought about the new arrangements introduced last year.

MS reported that he was not aware of any plans to introduce permanent moorings on the towpath at Wilcot as CRT has a general policy not to create new permanent towpath mooring.

Action: MS to speak to colleagues who handle permanent moorings to find out if there has been a consultation about moorings at Wilcot.

We're not aware of any consultation on permanent moorings at Wilcot.

3. Noise

Does CRT have any plans to introduce more 'Quiet Zones' like the one introduced at Honeystreet? MS reported that we are working with local residents and Westwood

Parish Council to introduce a Quiet Zone at Avonham. CRT are happy to explore requests for these. MS explained that they are only advisory and CRT does not have any powers to enforce them – however feedback from Honeystreet suggests that have helped reduce disturbance from the minority of noisy boaters who have caused problems in the past. CRT also have signage in lots of places reminding boaters that they should keep noise down in residential areas and not run their engines between 8pm and 8am, we can install these towpath signs in certain areas if the Parish Councils think that this would help.

Action: Parish Councils to consider if new signs or 'Quiet Zones' might help address issues of noise by the canal and to make specific location suggestions to MS.

4. **Litter/Dog fouling**

It was recognised that litter and dog fouling can be caused by any users of the towpath. Many local people (including boaters) are very careful about clearing up after themselves and their dogs and that it is normally a minority who do not. MS explained that CRT had run a consultation earlier this year on use of our towpaths and that the results of this would be available soon. There are many competing demands of the towpaths (walking, angling, boating, wildlife etc.), CRT are intending to produce a code of conduct for use of the towpath to encourage all users to be considerate of each other when using the towpaths.

Action: MS to circulate the towpath consultation report when it is published.

Towpath consultation questionnaire findings;

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/5242.pdf>

The Towpath Mooring Plan consultation – feedback report

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/library/7101-sharing-towpaths-consultation-final-summary-report-august-2014.pdf>

5. MS explained how CRT encourages local communities and groups to help care for their local canals by 'adopting' stretches of canal/towpath. By adopting sections of the canal they help to care for these through things such as litter picks and by being local 'eyes and ears' for CRT – reporting and issues so that these can be addressed. MS suggested that the Parish Councils could consider adopting some sections of the canal. Adopting sections of the canal might also help the Parish Councils to establish better contact with boaters who use the canal.

Action: MS to circulate details about 'adopting a canal'

Details of how to adopt a canal can be found here

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/news/adopt-a-canal>

To find out more about starting a canal adoption contact

volunteer@canalrivertrust.org.uk

6. **Anti-Social behaviour**

Concerns were raised that some boaters are fouling on privately owned land adjacent to the canal. MS explained that this would be an environmental health issue which would fall within the local authorities remit, however if there were specific reports CRT would work with the local authority to investigate these and take the appropriate action as this kind of behaviour would clearly be unacceptable. MS and PC Teresa Herbert reiterated the importance of reporting specific incidents to CRT

and/or the police so that these can be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Action: All to report any specific incidents to CRT (using the customer service number 0303 040 4040) and where appropriate the Police or Wiltshire Council

7. Parking

Concerns were raised about cars belonging to boaters being parked for long periods in certain locations (including at Wilcot on the roadside verge alongside the canal and at Stanton St Bernard near the bridge). MS explained that CRT does not have powers to manage parking on land that is not owned by CRT and that parking control is a local authority responsibility. CRT will work with the local authority to look at specific areas of concern and do encourage boaters to be considerate of local residents concerns, however if there are no parking restrictions in place then any driver may park their car in these locations.

8. Considerate Boating leaflet.

MS distributed copies of a 'considerate boating leaflet that has been produced for the western end of the K&A. The leaflet includes contact details of who to contact to report different issues. MS explained that he will be creating a version of this leaflet for the eastern end of the K&A.

Action: MS will circulate a draft of this leaflet for comment when it is ready.

See draft 'Considerate boating' leaflet for the east end of the K&A circulated.

9. Any other business

A number of concerns were raised about damage or risk of damage to the canal at specific locations:

- At Wilcot to the east of the bridge a tree on private land is overhanging the canal and there is concern that it will damage the bank and could fall into the canal.
- At Wilton there is damage to the bank near Stole Park approximately 200 metre beyond the suspension bridge.
- There is damage to the bank near Ladies Bridge

Action: MS to ask Mark Stephens (K&A Waterway manager to look into these and respond)

Mark Stephens has reported these to the engineers to investigate.

It was suggested that Parish Councils might be able to assist CRT in situations where trees or vegetation on private land is hanging over or at risk of falling into the canal as they often know who the land owner is. If CRT could produce a standard letter asking land owners to maintain their trees/vegetation the Parish Councils could deliver these for CRT where issues arise.

Action: MS to discuss this idea with Mark Stephens and see if a standard letter for this purpose might be developed.

Mark Stephens said that he'll draw this to the attention of our Contracts Manager who is generally tasked with emergency, reactive tree works. He says that he welcomes any assistance in identifying landowners.

It was mentioned that at the last PCAP meeting an offer was made by Wiltshire Fire

and Rescue to carry out a towpath walk offering boaters fire safety checks. TH agreed to follow this up.

Action: TH to follow this offer up.

10.

Next meeting

MS proposed Thursday 2 October as a date for another meeting. A request was made for the meeting to be in the evening so that those who work in the daytime could attend. MS said he would check his calendar and see if that would be possible.

Action: MS to confirm date and venue for the next meeting.