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# RIVER AVON USERS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

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Secretary
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Notes from the meeting held on 11th July 2017 at Saltford Rowing Centre

Present:

David Fearn, K & A Canal Trust
Rick Staples, Bristol Avon Sailing Club (acting chair)
Richard Patrick, Bathampton Angling Association
Graham Hockley, Avon County Rowing Club
Phil Harding, Saltford Parish Council
Liz Pulman, boater
Paul Fudge, river frontage land owner
Hugh Vickers, South Avon Canoe Club
Geoff Brown, IWA
Gordon Williams, North Avon Canoe Club
Craig Marshall, NLBC, liveaboard boater
Jonathan Marriott, liveaboard boater
Jo Donoghue, Saltford Marina
John Roberts, Bristol & West Federation of Anglers
Neil Oakley, liveaboard boater
Philippa Sondheimer, Avon County Rowing Club
Paula Spiers, Avon Frome Partnership (secretary)

1. Apologies

Sheila Hall, Local Environment
Cleo Newcombe-Jones, Bath & North East Somerset Council
John Treasure, Bristol & West Anglers Federation
Elmer Sheppard

PS informed the group that long term member Sheila Hall has decided to retire from RAUCC. Graham Hockley also announced his retirement. His place on RAUCC will be taken over by Philippa Sondheimer. Group members expressed their grateful thanks and appreciation to both Sheila and Graham for their time and support to RAUCC over many years.

2. Notes of the last meeting

No comments.

3. Matters arising (not listed as agenda items)

There were no matters arising.

4. WaterSpace Study Update (provided by Cleo Newcombe-Jones)

- The study was formally launched at the West of England Nature Partnership on 22nd June 2017
- The consultation period has now ended and the responses are being collated
- The consultation responses are being used to make the final amendments to the plan
- A final draft is due to be published on 31st July 2017
- An action and funding plan for the projects in the study is now being produced and should be ready by 31st August 2017
- The reference to the café and boat hire facilities at The Shallows in Saltford is being removed as there was no local support for it. Otherwise only minor amendments are needed
- A canoeing section is being added, following CN-J's meeting with HV, GW, Bath Canoe Club and British Canoeing
- All current RAUCC members are on the WaterSpace Study mailing list and so will receive all the updates

Some group members noted that they had not received an update on the WaterSpace Study since November 2016, and wondered then the next one was due.

CM asked how the Community Score used to assess projects (high, medium and low community involvement) was measured.

Action: PS to refer the above questions to CN-J

5. Angling project / possible funding

CN-J and PS are planning an angling project to help deliver some of the actions in the WaterSpace Study. They are considering running a consultation workshop to help inform the project and are seeking advice from RAUCC members on who to invite and how to encourage anglers to attend. They are also proposing to submit a funding bid to the Angling Trust, who will be announcing the themes for their next round of funding shortly.

Action: PS to discuss with angling members separately to this meeting.

6. Mead Lane mooring trial update

To date, B&NES Council has received 10 detailed responses from a mix of walkers, residents and boaters. The responses so far show that there has been a high level of compliance, with just a small number of boaters appearing to exceed mooring limits. There has been a positive reaction to the mooring information posts – both in terms of their siting and their appearance.

B&NES is investigating the issue of the section of river bank currently cordoned off with canoes and chains, and claims that some of the land is privately owned.

The trial will be formally reviewed in October.

GB expressed concerns about the safety of mooring at this location due to the presence of submerged rocks.

NO commented that it is quite difficult to access the bank from the 48 hour moorings, and that people often expect easier access at short term moorings.

PH said that the local Neighbourhood Watch group produced a report on the mooring trial at the end of June for submission to the council in response to the consultation. The report states that there has been 15% non-compliance at the western end of the 14 day section, and good compliance at the 48 hour section.

The following questions were raised:

- There has been some double mooring of boats, which reduces the available width of the river for other activities. Is this good practice?
- How is rubbish from moored boats going to be dealt with?
- People are currently mooring to parking bollards. Are better posts going to be provided in the longer term?

Action: PS to refer these questions back to B&NES Council.

7. Work boat update

The work boat 'Vale of Pewsey' has been brought down to assist with maintenance on the river over the summer. C&RT volunteers are currently seeking funding to obtain another boat to work on the river on a more permanent basis.

CM commented that the work boat on the K & A has been really useful in opening up areas of river bank for mooring. He agreed it would be good to have a boat on the river too, which could be used to benefit all user groups.

PSo asked what the mechanism is to book the boat. She had volunteers ready to work on a session with the workboat but it was unfortunately cancelled.

Could the Heritage Lottery Fund possibly fund the boat?

Action: add a note for the agenda next time on how to identify landowners (to approach them regarding the removal of fallen trees etc).

8. Long term mooring on the river

There have been reports of growing numbers of boats being moored long term on the river, and that more people are coming down on to the river from the canal. However, the WaterSpace boater survey found that liveaboard numbers overall haven't increased between 2012 and 2016. And many people decide not to moor on the river in winter for safety reasons.

An update was requested on the current situation with the Pulteney Moorings? **Action: PS to request any further news.**

9. User group updates

PSo shared the following rowing event dates:

- Sat 14th Oct Monkton Small Boats Head
- Sat 18th Nov Avon Autumn Head
- Sat 2nd Dec UBBC Head
- Sat 24th Feb 2018 Avon Spring Head

PH reminded the group about an email he had previously circulated from a project called Paddle Pickup, a group kayaking from Bristol to London to raise awareness of plastic pollution and picking up rubbish along the way. They are looking for overnight accommodation on the 2nd September, if anyone can offer this.

CM suggested that a centralised web page could be created for events, along with noticeboards placed at either end of the river section to advertise events, and thus help boaters avoid getting mixed up with organised activities. (The Sailing Club communicates on Channel 6 and would be happy to escort boaters if necessary).

JM said he is a new boater (uses a wide beam boat), but is unclear about mooring availability and facilities on the river. He likes the Mead Lane moorings.

JD commented that it is brilliant to have some boaters at the meeting.

RP noted that the section of river bank alongside the Duchy land has 'no mooring' signs because it is paid for by fishing rights. He commented that trees on the upper Avon are currently not removed as the work is too expensive for landowners to afford.

NO commented that he would love to bring his boat down on to the river more often but there aren't enough moorings.

DF: K&A Trust volunteers have been clearing away Himalayan balsam on the canal, and maintaining the bridge abutments at Sydney Gardens, which have tree saplings growing on them.

GW asked if boaters were aware that there is an extension planned to the canal at Semington. The response was yes, most were.

10. Any other business

CM suggested that RAUCC could hold a social event later in the year. RS offered the use of the sailing club as a possible venue.

11. Date of next meeting

10th October 2017, 7.30pm at Bristol Avon Sailing Club
David Fearn volunteered to chair the meeting.