Mark Evans,

Regional Director,

CRT Wales and South West region

Sent by email only to enquiries.walessouthwest@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Dear Mr Evans,

It has recently come to my attention that Canal & River Trust may be considering restricted operation hours for the Caen Hill locks Flight at Devizes, Kennet&Avon canal all year round on a permanent basis should no objections be raised.

I vehemently object to year round restricted opening hours for the Caen Hill Flight.

I understand there has been ongoing issues with the flight and that restrictions have been used in the past to conserve water, and maintain water levels. However, this should be a temporary measure while repairs are underway, not a permanent solution to the continued mismanagment and poor maintenance of the flight which has led to such disrepair.

These restrictions all year round would certainly negatively impact many in the boating community.

Summer time at Caen Hill Flight is exceptionally busy. There are at least six hire boat companies in close proximity to Caen Hill, the majority of these tourists choose to navigate the flight, endorsed and encouraged by yourselves. It is the gateway to the rest of the network, and is used by a large number of boaters with a home mooring who holiday further afield during the summer. Boaters without a home mooring in this area are also obliged to navigate Caen Hill at least once a year in relation to their licence, although it is not stipulated, because the required distance cannot often be navigated without the use of Caen Hill.

I am concerned that permanent restricted opening hours would result in many boaters without a home mooring being unable to fulfil the terms of their licence within the allocated time (10 months- not actually a year at all). Many boaters without a home mooring have a very small window of time in relation to their licence period to navigate the flight, due to prior commitments such as children in education, employment or other family and caring responsibilities. These restricted opening hours, particularly during the summer months, with the continuing popularity of the flight with leisure and holiday hire boaters, would certainly increase the risk of many boaters without a home mooring being unable to uphold the terms of their licence.

Obviously the retention of the longer summer opening hours would benefit all boaters whether they live aboard, are on holiday, go boating as their hobby, and whether or not they have a home mooring. I look forward to hearing from you that the Caen Hill opening hours will remain open between 8am to 8pm, last locking 5pm, from 1st April to 30th September.

Yours sincerely,

A. Boater