

Sarina Young

From:

Sent: 15 September 2009 20:43

To: Sally Ash; ; Simon Salem;

Subject: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10th SEPTEMBER, 2009

Attachments: MINUTES OF MEETING - 10.09.2009.doc

Attached, please find Minutes of the meeting held in Bathampton Village Hall on 10th September, 2009.
Many thanks.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN BATHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL
THURSDAY, 10th SEPTEMBER, 2009 @ 11.00 a.m.**

Present:-

Richard Wright - Claverton Parish Council
Dave Batho - Claverton Parish Council
Lyn Alvis - Monkton Combe Parish Council
George Malcolm - Bathampton canal-side resident
Keith Rossiter - Bathampton Parish Council

Apologies:-

Ian Muir - Bathampton canal-side resident

INTRODUCTION

The meeting was called to discuss the proposed British Waterways (BW) 'Volunteer Boat Recorders Scheme', details of which were handed to Parish Council representatives at a meeting with BW on 28th August, 2009.

At that meeting, it was agreed that Parish Council representatives from Bathampton & Claverton, together with George Malcolm & Ian Muir, should meet to agree a coordinated response to BW. Although Monkton Combe PC has not been involved in our previous meetings with BW, Lyn Alvis attended this meeting to represent Monkton Combe PC.

RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED 'VOLUNTEER BOAT RECORDERS SCHEME'

The meeting was unanimous in considering the proposed scheme unworkable. In reaching this view, the meeting focused on three main areas:-

1. PARISH COUNCILS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE KENNET & AVON CANAL.
2. THE PROPOSED 'VOLUNTEER BOAT RECORDERS SCHEME'.
3. HOW PARISH COUNCILS CAN SUPPORT BRITISH WATERWAYS.

1. PARISH COUNCILS' PERSPECTIVE ON CANAL ISSUES

- For all three parishes, the Kennet & Avon canal is an enormously valuable attraction, which offers much pleasure to local residents and visitors.
- We support the objectives of the K&A Canal Trust and it is useful to remind ourselves of two of these objectives:-
 - *To promote the Canal as a magnificent national amenity that is freely available for the enjoyment of all.*
 - *To protect the restored Canal from neglect, abuse and inappropriate development.*
- The three parish councils strongly believe that the responsibility for ensuring that these objectives are met lies with BW and Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES).

- The Parish Councils welcome the recent opportunity to engage with BW and are encouraged by the commitment of BW staff. We are optimistic that the proposed reorganisation of mooring zones will provide an improved distribution of mooring facilities. However, to achieve the objective of a canal *'freely available for the enjoyment of all'* we will need to see a more focused approach to the enforcement of licence conditions and better management of canal surroundings.
- The popular western end of the canal from Bath to Bradford-on-Avon, has suffered *'neglect, abuse and inappropriate development'*, principally from a minority of 'liveaboard' boaters, who by default, have come to believe that they have a right to:-
 - 'liveaboard' without a residential licence, planning permission or the payment of local council tax.
 - moor long-term in one location; or 'bridge hop' in an attempt to masquerade as continuous cruisers.
 - treat the towpath and adjacent land as their own back garden, workshop or farmyard.
 - freely dispose of human waste and every other manner of trash in whatever location they choose.
 - threaten anyone who chooses to call attention to the situation.
- There is particular concern about the untidy and ever expanding development on the western bank of the canal near Claverton - Watership Farm ("Digger Smith's" property).
- B&NES seem to take only a superficial interest in the canal. With the welcome support of Cllr. Ian Dewey, the parish councils have been able to coordinate their approach to BW; but as yet we have not seen any active support or commitment from B&NES officers.
- We watch with frustration as B&NES and BW play 'ping-pong' with the problem of 'liveaboards'. B&NES believe it is for BW to enforce licence conditions; BW says that it is a planning issue to be dealt with by B&NES. Net result – nothing gets done and the 'liveaboards' continue to locate their residence wherever they choose and presumably free of council tax.
- The environmental consequences of people living long term in locations with no adequate sewerage disposal facilities is completely ignored by B&NES. Whenever environmental health issues are raised by parish councils, B&NES environmental health officers ask for 'direct evidence', without being prepared themselves to take the time and energy to observe what is actually happening.
- Overall, the Parish Councils and local residents consider that it is paramount that the two bodies with the power and responsibility to take action - BW and B&NES - work closely together and are prepared to commit additional resources. Only then will we have any reasonable chance of achieving success in terms of a canal free from *'neglect, abuse and inappropriate development.'*

2. THE PROPOSED VOLUNTEER BOAT RECORDERS SCHEME

- The meeting was unanimous in rejecting the proposed scheme as unworkable.
- The principal concerns are:
 - Daily recording is unworkable and probably unnecessary. The short term 24 and 72 hour zones will require closer monitoring than say 14 day or permanent mooring zones.
 - Ensuring continuity of volunteers.
 - It would be extremely difficult to arrange for frequent regular walks of two people.

- Potential confrontation with boat owners, e.g. using abusive language or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- *'Punishment'* for making more than three reporting errors seems rather harsh, particularly when talking about volunteers. Perhaps a discussion on why these errors are being made and an element of retraining would be more 'user-friendly'.
- It is not clear how a volunteer scheme would solve the environmental and social problems. A clear understanding of what problems we are trying to solve and a linked action plan need to be agreed with BW and B&NES.
- There is a strong sense that BW is attempting to shift responsibility for recording of boat data on to Parish Councils and local volunteers. Phrases like *'..... BW does not have the resources to monitor use of each site frequently enough to achieve full compliance everywhere'* caused a great deal of concern.
- As clearly stated in Section 1, we strongly believe that BW must do more to fulfill their management responsibilities and where it needs help, or there is an overlap in interests such as with the case of 'liveaboards', it should be seeking help from the local authority – in our case B&NES.
- Local volunteers would be a bonus. However, they cannot be a substitute for fully employed professional "warden (s)" patrolling the canal on a regular basis.
- Parish Councils do neither have the resources or the legal authority to manage volunteers, nor can they become involved in the enforcement of BW mooring licence conditions.
- Volunteers must report to and be managed by BW. BW must be responsible for recruitment, training, supervision, communication, data recording procedures, discipline, insurance, health & safety and termination.

3. HOW PARISH COUNCILS CAN SUPPORT BRITISH WATERWAYS

- The Parish Councils and many local residents take enormous interest and pride in the Kennet & Avon Canal and its surroundings. Their desire for improved management of the canal and its environs is manifest in the fact that this series of meetings with BW was initiated following pressure at parish council and local resident level.
- However, parish councils have limited power and resources. These are some of the things that parish councils can do:-
 - Feed-back local concerns and problems to BW and B&NES; something which is already done on a regular basis.
 - Nominate one or more parish councilors to act as a link with British Waterways.
 - Communicate via parish council notice boards, newsletters and websites any relevant BW publicity material regarding any volunteer scheme, e.g. recruitment notices.
 - Ensure that a parish council representative attends regular meetings with BW to feed-back parish reaction to zoning plans, volunteer scheme and other matters related to the good management of the Kennet & Avon canal.
 - Publicise boat checking systems, such as the link which appears in WATERSCAPE.

4. CONCLUSION

We continue to support this extremely useful series of meetings. We look forward to a larger meeting late September/early October to review progress to date, including BW's views on the Parish Council amendments to the mooring zone proposals, and plan for the future. We trust that Cllr. Ian Dewey will ensure that senior officers from relevant departments in B&NES also attend.

KWR
15 Sep. 09

Sarina Young

From:

Sent: 01 September 2009 12:13

To:

Subject: MINUTES OF MEETING ON 28 AUG. 2009

Attachments: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT BATHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL ON 28 AUGUST.doc

Gentlemen,

Please find minutes of our meeting on 28th August. Thanks.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT
BATHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL
ON FRIDAY, 28th AUGUST, 2009**

Local Representatives

Ian Dewey - BANES Councillor – Chairman
George Malcolm - Bathampton canal-side resident
Ian Muir - Bathampton canal-side resident
Richard Wright - Claverton Parish Council
David Batho - Claverton Parish Council
Keith Rossiter - Bathampton Parish Council

British Waterways

Damian Kemp - Project Manager

Kennet & Avon Canal Trust

Roy Smedley - Chairman – Bristol & Bath Branch

1. INTRODUCTION

Ian Dewey (Chairman) welcomed Ian Muir, David Batho and Roy Smedley to their first meeting of this group. Ian D. anticipated that this meeting would focus principally on 'technical' issues concerning:-

- BW's draft zoning plans for mooring on the K&A canal between Folly Foot & Dundas, resulting from the walk undertaken by Damian together with Richard, David, George and Keith on Monday, 17th August.
- BW's initial proposals for a local volunteer scheme designed to involve local community volunteers – via Parish Councils – in the monitoring of boat movements.

Following our last meeting with BW on 17th August, Ian D. had been able to brief BANES planning and environmental officers and secured their commitment to attending our next full meeting at the end of September/beginning of October. He thought that by that time we will have made sufficient progress to engage with BANES officers at a senior level.

Ian D. stressed that he still saw this process as very much a 'template', that if successful, could be used elsewhere on the BW network. To ensure that all 'stakeholders' were fully committed it was important to involve senior local authority officers.

Roy Smedley introduced himself as Chairman of the local K&A Branch (Bristol & Bath). He stressed that he was representing the General Manager of the K&A Trust – Mike Rodd - and would be briefing him and local colleagues on issues discussed at these meetings.

He was aware of the need for action to regulate mooring on our stretch of the canal and to reduce the number of 'liveaboards' in this area. He said that the Trust's objective in reducing unauthorised long term mooring was to open up the canal to greater leisure cruising.

He briefed the meeting on wider issues concerning Claverton Pumping Station and plans for the provision of a car park. It was agreed that he should talk separately with Claverton Parish Council members on this issue.

2. DRAFT ZONING PROPOSALS

Damian Kemp circulated maps containing BW's first proposals for revised mooring zones on the K&A canal in Bathampton and Claverton parishes. He said that he had taken into account the various comments made during our walk of the 17th August, but emphasized that these plans must be discussed with all other interested parties, both within BW and externally, before they could be confirmed.

The plans were welcomed by all representatives at the meeting, with the provisos listed below under each section.

FOLLY FOOT ... to ... CANDY'S BRIDGE (Bathampton)

- 14 day mooring zone - (currently 14 days).
 - Roy asked if there should be a 'no return within
- The meeting thought that it was sufficient for BW to enforce its existing rule insisting that continuous cruisers make a 'progressive' journey on the canal network.
- Keith asked BW to clarify its ruling on the fencing of private land that bordered the canal. There was a particular section immediately east of Folly Foot bridge, owned by a private individual and purchased from BW, that was unfenced and used as a boat storage/barbecue/rough sleeping area. BANES planning officials had recently investigated and will continue to monitor its use.
- George asked Ian D. to clarify the use of an abandoned brick building adjacent to the northern bank of Folly Foot Bridge, which he thought was possibly being used by homeless people as an overnight shelter.

CANDY'S BRIDGE ... to ... ACCESS GATE ADJACENT TO KENNET SIDE HOUSE (Bathampton)

- 72 hours mooring zone – (currently 14 days, 48 hours & 24 hours).
 - Café boat will stay, although Ian D. reminded the meeting that local authority had initially granted planning permission for a 3 years period.
 - Keith asked that following a discussion at Bathampton Parish Council (already communicated to BW and BANES) that there should be no enlargement of the existing refuse area adjacent to Bathampton Bridge. Damian said he would follow-up this point.

ACCESS GATE ADJACENT TO KENNET SIDE HOUSE ... to ... WINDING HOLE (Bathampton)

- Permanent mooring zone – (currently permanent).
 - Damian said that this section currently contained 12 permanently licenced boats v. a capacity of 18 boats. BW would not increase this number beyond 12 and – after consultation with boat owners and other interested parties – intend to reduce the length of this permanent mooring stretch by approximately one third at the Kennet Side house end. This section would be converted to 72 hours. Damian thought this would take at least 6 months.
 - The exception might be the permanent mooring adjacent to Kennet Side house, which could remain in position even if the 72 hour section is extended.

WINDING HOLE ... to ... HARDING'S BRIDGE (Bathampton/Claverton parish boundary is just east of Sluice gate).

- 14 day mooring zone – (currently 14 days).
 - No comments on this section.
 - Damian confirmed that private moorings on south side of canal adjacent to swing bridge and water/pumping-out facilities on north side were owned by the Knill family.

HARDING'S BRIDGE ... to ... NARROWING IN CANAL (Claverton)

- 72 hour mooring zone – (currently 24 hours).
 - No comments on this section, but see below.

NARROWING IN CANAL ... to ... 300 METRES SOUTH OF NARROWING (Claverton)

- Permanent mooring zone – (currently permanent)
 - Claverton Parish Council members and Roy Smedley suggested that this section be divided in two parts. '72 hours' at the Ferry Lane end; and 'Permanent' mooring for the second portion. It was considered that having permanent moorings so close to Ferry Lane Bridge would make the parking situation in Ferry Lane even more difficult than at present. Damian agreed to consider this point.

END OF PERMANENT MOORINGS ABOVE ... to ... 500 METRES FROM DUNDAS BRIDGE (Claverton)

- 14 day mooring zone – (currently 14 days).
 - No comment on this section.
 - BW is likely to reach a formal agreement for the 'private' moorings on the offside, either side of the swing bridge. Ian D. said that land usage planning issues were still a concern to BANES and 'discussion' continues with the owner.

END OF 14 DAY ZONE ABOVE ... to ... DUNDAS BRIDGE (Claverton)

- 24 hour mooring zone – (currently 14 days).
 - This replaces a 14 day mooring zone and a small section of 48 hours.
 - David queried why it should be 24 hours and not 72 hours as at Bathampton. Damian replied that this was an area of extreme pressure on the canal and BW considered that this section plus a further section east of Dundas Aqueduct should be classified at 24 hours.
 - This discussion prompted the meeting to agree that Monkton Combe parish council should be invited to our meetings. Richard/David agreed to brief their contacts on Monkton Combe PC and invite them to future meetings. This would also allow BW to discuss zoning issues through to the boundary of Bath & North East Somerset Council area, which was thought to be the B3108 Bridge leading to Winsley.

3. LOCAL VOLUNTEER SCHEME

Damian circulated BW's initial proposals on this scheme. He emphasized the importance of Parish Council commitment, whilst accepting that these were BW volunteers.

It was agreed that the meeting needed more time to study these proposals and decided that the Parish Council representatives, together with George Malcolm and Ian Muir, should meet separately and feed back an agreed response to Damian. A representative from Monkton Combe PC will also be invited to attend this meeting.

Claverton and Bathampton parish council representatives will ensure that the scheme is discussed at full parish council meetings, with a view to it being formally adopted. This can not be done until we have an agreed and detailed scheme to present.

4. SUMMARY

Ian Dewey thanked everybody for their contribution. He thought that the meeting had made useful progress and noted the intention of the parish council representatives, George and Ian M. to feed back a single coordinated response on the volunteer scheme directly to Damian.

He thought the next full meeting should take place late September/early October. Senior officers from BANES planning and environmental departments will be invited. Date and venue to be announced.

KWR
28 Aug. 09