

Report on National Navigation Users Forum meeting

London 21 April 2009

Present

EA,

User groups IWA, RBOA, TUGn, BCU, DBA, AWCC, IWAC, NABO.

Trade BMF

Agenda

Craft Registrations

Navigation Charging Plan 2009/10

National Funding Strategy

Climate Change Adaptation

Water Framework Directive

Update on Transport and Works Act Order

Lock keepers update

Craft Registrations

Paper presented with much data within it. Historic peak on registrations was 34000 but now 31000 and stabilised. The evasion rate is 1%. Thames sees 1000 new registrations per year for powered craft, and there is a similar loss. EA keen to increase registrations and are working with trade to achieve this. They had planned for 14% drop over the last years, but they have not seen this.

BCU members have a block arrangement for their craft, so these are not included unpowered in the numbers.

Navigation Charging Plan 2009/10

Paper presented with data within it. This is work in progress, and the completed documents will go to the harmonisation forum for final consultation.

Current cost inflation is governed by the Construction RPI which is 4.8%. This is expected to drop as the construction industry is competitive due to shortage of work. NABO complained that the user's cost of living was much higher than this, and they would not understand such high figures. EA should provide some reduction. Supported by TUGn. IWA said that they did not wish to see further increases in registration cost targeted at specific improvements. (I assume no trust after the great betrayal of the early 90's).

Harmonisation of registration fee across Thames, Medway, and Anglian. (Not considering BW at this time.) Each area has historic basis for fees, and not the same. EA need to have common basis. Does not mean that it cost the same in each region, just that there is clear structure. Differentials are getting worse, and administration is costing a lot. Many errors in calculation.

Agreed that EA should work up a standard calculation for size of boat and apply factors for differentiators like connectivity, service levels and extent of waterways. Then make progressive adjustments over several years to even things out. Some losers (Medway) and some winners (Anglian). Table of fees prepared and available on NABO web site..

National Funding Strategy and updates

Thames:

Paper prepared in April and sent to Board and approved.

Includes some commercial development issues.

Currently 36 business partners involved.

Craft registration is stable, some growth expected in hire craft, 125 and going up by 12

Sales of off river houses planned.

Anglian

Paper to regional management at last Christmas

Shortfall in boater's facilities noted and way forward including funding has been identified.

Includes some commercial development issues, notable is Becketts Park marina in Northampton

Survey in progress to identify leisure business.

Supporting of Bedford and MK link.

Boston Lock opened.

Medway

Getting on with tasks, but strategy not yet written up. Due in a month.

Awaiting consultant's report on commercial activities.

Allington castle development ongoing as opportunity for moorings.

Climate Change Adaptation

Working on plans now

Main issues are extremes of weather like peak summer flows and strong stream interruptions, and drought conditions with bank collapse. Some opportunities for alignment with flood risk management teams and works.

Planning demand increase due to avoidance of international travels.

Reviewing asset inspections and HSE implications for all conditions.

EA web site has useful content on flooding and the Thames Barrier under

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/104695.aspx>

IWAC are working on a climate change document that will be out in May.

Water Framework Directive

This is in consultation at this time, with a lot of information on the web. BW has made good input and this is work reading before doing anything else. IWAC also and John Edmunds suggested to utilise their input for consideration and go byes.

There is web site

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33106.aspx>

Recommendation is to look at B and C issues.

Deadline for input is 22 June 09

Update on Transport and Works Act Order

Legislation required updating registration rules. Currently held up by DEFRA lawyers. Already 14 years in the drafting.

Covers need for craft to be registered, clarifies interpretation of ability to charge, and applicability to adjacent waters.

Lock keepers update

Still in the middle of negotiations.

Some difficulties with standby rotas and work patterns between winter and summer staffing.

Taken a lot of flack over Easter because of gaps in manning and EA not please either.

Issue of tenure of lock cottages after employment of termination of retirement.

D Fletcher

24 April 09