**PRESS RELEASE**

13 February 2015

**CANAL & RIVER TRUST OUTLINES POLICY FOR BOATERS WITHOUT A HOME MOORING**

The Canal & River Trust is today (13 February) outlining its plans to provide greater clarity to those boaters who have stated that they will ‘continuously cruise’, but then don’t move their boat far enough or often enough to meet the Trust’s published ‘Guidance for Boaters without a Home Mooring’ – our understanding of the requirements set out in the BW Act 1995.

The Trust will extend the approach it has been applying for the past year with new continuous cruisers to all boats without a home mooring. This means looking at how far boats have moved over the course of their previous licence to see if it satisfies the requirement for continuous cruising. When this is introduced from 1 May, regular reminders will be sent to all those boaters whose limited movement is causing a concern.

On the expiry of their licence, those that have consistently failed to move in accordance with the Trust’s Guidance will be refused a new licence unless they take a home mooring.

Initially the Trust will focus on those who, having declared they will continuously cruise, move the least, including a number of boats that barely move at all.

For the first few months while boaters are becoming familiar with this policy, the Trust proposes to issue short duration licences to give those boaters concerned a further opportunity to establish an acceptable range of movement.

Richard Parry, chief executive of the Canal & River Trust, comments: “The right for boaters to continuously cruise is enshrined in law, and I welcome this way of boating.  Many such boaters make a fantastic contribution to the waterways, and it’s important that everyone who chooses this option understands and respects the rules.  Our new approach does not change any rules, but it does seek to provide greater encouragement to everyone to comply with our Guidance, and spells out the consequences if they consistently don’t.

“Our message to boaters without a home mooring is that, if you are worried about your range of movement, or want to know more about what else you need to do to comply with our Guidance, please speak to your local enforcement officer (or contact your local Trust office).  In many cases, making some small adjustments to a cruising pattern is enough to meet our Guidance, while in other cases taking up a home mooring may be more appropriate. Ultimately we are trying to help boaters understand our requirements and avoid running into trouble, for the benefit of all boaters.”

This month the Trust will write to anyone with a boat registered as not having a home mooring to advise them of the process and will begin renewing licences on this basis from 1 May 2015.

Denise Yelland, head of enforcement at the Trust, adds:  “While the enforcement team will continue to provide advice and help for boaters, ultimately, when a boat persistently doesn’t move in accordance with our Guidance, we may refuse the owner a new licence to continuously cruise when their existing licence expires.

“Over the last twelve months the Trust has been operating in this way with boaters who are new to continuous cruising.  The approach is now being expanded to all boaters who continuously cruise so that we are treating all boaters fairly and consistently.

“We are continuing to monitor boat movement as we always have done.  What is changing is that we are being more active in telling people when we are concerned about their limited movement pattern, and spelling out what they need to do to meet our requirements.”

Mike Rodd, chairman of the National Association of Boat Owners, comments: “NABO has many continuous cruisers among its members and recognises the significant contribution they make to the wellbeing of our waterways.  For those who are living on their boats as a lifestyle choice, these requirements [to continuously cruise] will not present any problem – NABO’s own survey of continuous cruisers shows just this. Of course some folk who live on their boats may be affected: those who are genuine boaters will welcome the clarity, but a small number will find it difficult to conform. Here we welcome CRT’s new Welfare Officer, Sean Williams, and applaud his work, especially in getting CRT’s existing enforcement officers briefed on the resources available to help those who are in difficulty."

The Association of Continuous Cruisers comments: “ACC are pleased to see that CRT are improving communications to make boaters aware at an early stage of any possible infringement.”

The Residential Boat Owners’ Association comments: “RBOA is broadly supportive of CRT, as it is putting considerable effort into resolving what many see as a problem with boats which do not have a home mooring and which fail to move sufficiently to satisfy CRT’s guidelines.”

Paul Le Blique, chairman Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs, comments: “AWCC welcomes and supports this initiative. To encourage a pattern of cruising in line with the Continuous Cruising Licence, followed by firm enforcement action against those who fail to comply is entirely reasonable and appropriate. AWCC has always supported bona fide Continuous Cruising.”

Les Etheridge, chairman of the Inland Waterways Association, comments: "IWA strongly supports genuine continuous cruisers and hopes that the new enforcement process will quickly address in a fair way the significant issues which have developed in recent years."

**ENDS**

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