

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR LICENCE HOLDERS MARCH 2012 (issued Jan 2012)****LICENCE FEES**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 licence fees increased by 5.1% and a small extra charge now applies for payments by credit card. This is because BW faces significant charges itself for handling this type of payment. You can avoid the £7.50 fee by using a debit card instead of credit card.

**LICENCE FEES FROM APRIL 2012**

All boat licence fees will increase by 6.4% from April 2012. This is in line with our announcement published in November 2010 which indicated that for the following three years, an increase of 2% above the prevailing consumer prices index would apply. BW's board approved the increase based on the Government's July 2011 consumer price index which showed inflation running at 4.4%.

**CUSTOMER SERVICES OPENING HOURS**

Opening hours are Mon - Fri 0800 – 1800. Contact them on: 01923 201120, by e-mail enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk or by post: British Waterways Customer Services, 64 Clarendon Road, Watford WD17 1DA. You may also find the answer to your question within the FAQ's on our newly developed Customer Services contact page here <http://www.waterscape.com/about-us/customer-services>

**SAVE TIME WITH INTERNET RENEWAL (receive your disks within 5 days)**

Go to [www.waterscape.com/renewal](http://www.waterscape.com/renewal). It's quick and simple providing that you've kept us posted with any changes to your details, including boat safety and insurance details. You'll need your renewal number which is printed on the enclosed renewal notice. Sorry, the service is not yet available for first time applications, business boat licences, mooring permits or renewals for people currently paying by Direct Debit.

**Please allow up to 15 working days to renew by post.** BW Boat Licensing, PO Box 162, Leeds LS9 1AX.

**DON'T LOSE OUT ON YOUR PROMPT PAYMENT DISCOUNT!**

Our customer services team often receives calls from disappointed boaters who've missed the deadline to qualify for the prompt payment rate. The rule is very simple – to qualify, we must have your full payment and application **correctly** completed **before** the start date of the licence. If we are unable to process it before this date, you will still receive the discount. Sorry, the discount doesn't apply if you pay in instalments.

**UNPAID OR CANCELLED DIRECT DEBITS**

Paying by Direct Debit instalment is a convenience that many boaters take advantage of. BUT, be warned: from April 2011, if we are unable to collect an instalment that's due – either because you've cancelled your DD without telling us in time, or there are insufficient funds in your account – a charge of £30 will be made. This is less than what it costs us to unravel the problem.

**PAY AND DISPLAY**

When you receive your licence, please make sure that you display it. This shows other boaters that you contribute towards the cost of maintaining the waterways and means that the efforts of our patrol teams are not diverted away from cracking down on licence evaders. If you need new licence holders, contact customer services and we will be happy to post you a pair of these free of charge. **Remember too that you must ensure that the boat's index number is ALWAYS visible** – if you cover your boat during the winter, please mark the number clearly on the cover. If the boat checkers can't see the number, they must record it as unidentified which triggers more work.

**COLOUR DOESN'T MATTER!**

Because our enforcement team rely on index numbers and their hand held computers to check boat licences, the colour of the disk you display no longer matters. Your disk may be green, purple, red, blue or black, but the colour no longer has any significance. You shouldn't worry therefore if the one you receive is not the colour you expect.

**BOAT SAFETY EXEMPTION FORM**

Does your boat qualify for exemption? If so, then we need a new form submitted each year with your renewal. You can download this form from [www.britishwaterways.co.uk/BSSExemption.pdf](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/BSSExemption.pdf) or call Customer Service on 01923 201120 and we can post you one.

## **LATE PAYMENT CHARGE – Q&As**

BW relies on boat licence income to maintain and repair the waterways – for every £1000 we spend on this, we need about £140 from licence sales. Every expired licence that we have to chase up represents a cost to the boating community. This is because we have to spend scarce cash on chasing payment – cash that we would much prefer to spend on keeping the locks, towpaths and facilities in a better state of repair.

The charge therefore is intended as an incentive to all boaters to renew their licence promptly. The income that we raise from those who don't do this will be used to cover our enforcement costs.

### **How is it applied?**

If you have not renewed your licence by the end of the month when it was due (e.g. if it expired on 31<sup>st</sup> December and you have not renewed by 31<sup>st</sup> January), you will receive a revised renewal notice which will include the additional fee. If you renew using the original quotation, we will invoice you for the outstanding £150. If you do not pay this within 30 days, we will take court action which could affect your credit rating.

### **What if my boat safety certificate has expired?**

It is your responsibility to keep this up to date. It will not be an acceptable excuse for not renewing on time. Remember you can renew your BSC 2 months before it expires without losing out.

### **What if I'm selling my boat or removing it from BW waters?**

Tell us as soon as you do this so that we can update our records. If you have not told us, we will assume that the boat still needs a licence in your name. The boat must be covered by a licence even if you have it up for sale.

### **What if my application is held up in the post?**

Our system will automatically apply the charge once the critical date has been reached. If you have left it to the last minute, we strongly recommend that you obtain a proof of posting – or renew by telephone or online at [www.waterscape.com/renewal](http://www.waterscape.com/renewal).

## **BOATERS HANDBOOK**

Licence condition 7.2 says "you must ensure that when the boat is under way, there is always an adequate and competent crew in attendance". Is your copy of the Boaters Handbook always on board where you can find it to brief visiting crew – or even refresh your own knowledge? If not, call customer services on 01923 201120 for a free copy. It's also now available on line at [www.waterscape.com/boatershandbook](http://www.waterscape.com/boatershandbook) along with its companion DVD which you can download from [www.waterscape.com/watch](http://www.waterscape.com/watch)

## **CHANGES TO BOAT LICENCE CONDITIONS**

A few minor changes to licence conditions take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011 which were subject to public consultation at the end of 2010. Go to [www.britishwaterways.co.uk/licensing](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/licensing) to download a new copy and summary of what's changed, or contact Customer Services for a paper copy by post.

## **JOIN THE OLYMPIC BOATING PARTY, LONDON 2012**

If you're considering taking your boat to London for the Olympics, there's a wealth of important information published on [www.waterscape.com/londonboats2012](http://www.waterscape.com/londonboats2012) including details of a big choice of bookable visitor moorings throughout the capital. Special navigation arrangements will apply in London and boat licences valid during July and August 2012 will be subject to a few extra conditions. These will be published on [www.waterscape.com/londonboats2012](http://www.waterscape.com/londonboats2012) very shortly, or call customer services for a copy.

## **ELECTRICITY AND PUMP-OUT CARDS**

BW like everyone else is facing significantly higher energy costs. When we sell electricity to boaters, we do not mark up the price of the units – this would be unlawful. Since 2007, the price has been fixed at about 8 pence per kwh and if you monitor your household electricity bills, you'll know that this has been quite a bargain. Sadly, all good things come to an end eventually, and from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011, the new price via electricity meters and prepayment cards at mooring sites will be just under 12 pence. We have also reviewed the costs for use of our pump-out machines. The charge for this has been the same since 2007, but from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011 is £14.75. For more detail see [www.waterscape.com/boatersupdates](http://www.waterscape.com/boatersupdates) (October 2011 edition) or ask for a copy from customer services.

## **CANAL & RIVER TRUST TAKES OVER**

Find out more about the new waterways charity for England and Wales at <http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/charity>

Stay up to date with our monthly boaters update at [www.waterscape.com/boatersupdate](http://www.waterscape.com/boatersupdate)