

River Users Group

Area 3 – Sandford to Cleeve

One of 9 Groups set up for communication and co-operation between all users of the River Thames
Sponsored by the Environment Agency

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday the 15th June, 2017 at Benson Parish Hall, Benson

Present: Alan Dawe (Chairman), Rodney Davis (UTMYC and Secretary), Simon Broadbent (Dorchester Parish Council), Margherita Davidson (Chair RUGs 1 and 2), Robert Heavens (Osney Marina), Christy Job (Wallingford Rowing Club), Adrian Lloyd (Wallingford Town Council), David Mannering ((Crowmarsh Gifford Parish Council), Graham Paterson (NABO) and Trevor Tate (River Thames Society),

Apologies for Absence:, Pete Eldridge, Philip Sache, Sophie Smith, Russell Robson, Barbara Wilson, Susan and John Greenford and Greg and Shirley Wheeler

12.17: Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on the 23rd February, 2017

The minutes were approved.

13.17: Matters Arising

- **23.16 and 2.17** No decision has been reached on the application for gravel extraction between Appleford and Clifton Hampden
- **25.16 and 2.17** Similarly, no decision has yet been reached on the application to improve a mooring at Long Wittenham.
- **28.16 and 2.17** Small flood defence wall at St Helen's Mill Abingdon now due for completion in July.
- **10.17(i)** The moorings above Days Lock can be used but a fee is being charged. There is no pedestrian access to Dorchester. Portage at the lock is difficult.
- **10.17(ii)** It was reported that the trees have not yet been removed
- **10.17(iv)** Wallingford Council are endeavouring to increase the moorings in Wallingford upstream of the existing ones, although there may still be an issue over the ownership of the river bank. However, there are signs that Oxfordshire County Council may claim ownership and so the Town Council have offered to buy the land for £1.00.

14.17 : EA Navigation Reports

A message has been received from Sophie Smith (Environment Agency) as follows:

Unfortunately myself and Russell Robson will have to make our apologies as we will not be able to attend as we are still in a pre-election period, as government have not yet lifted our

restrictions on communications. Given that some of the issues that are raised at RUG meetings can be politically sensitive, we have decided that, just this once, we should not attend.

I can give you some highlights:

- *Staffing – 15th May 2017 temporary relief lock and weir keepers returned to support the permanent staff this summer. We are also currently interviewing for 8 permanent relief lock and weir keeper vacancies.*
- *Enforcement - We have regular planned patrols throughout the summer focussing on Trespass, Speed & Wash, and registration offences and ongoing investigations including accommodations and mooring offences. We have ongoing enforcement on all reaches, regular multi-agency operations working with the Police and other partner agencies carrying on from successful enforcement actions throughout 2016. We have already had three 'Flag Days' where we have as many patrol launches on the river as possible promoting a key issue. The three so far have been Getting the Navigation ready for the new season, Talk to the Trade and Fire and Carbon Monoxide Safety.*
- *Waterways staff have started checking licences on every moored and navigating vessel including dinghies and small boats used to access the islands on the river. All unregistered vessels are being booked as it is a criminal offence to keep or use a boat on the river without a valid licence. Failure to pay will result in prosecution which carries a heavy fine and a criminal record on conviction.*

All our Waterways staff's hard work and dedication are aiming at making 2017 a wonderful and successful year on the River Thames. I look forward to seeing you out there as we move into summer.

It was reported that the owner of an unlicensed boat moored above Days Lock had been fined a total of £1,219.01.

The Hon. Secretary will circulate a recent note from the Environment Agency about new Quick Dial numbers.

15.17: Planning Proposals in RUG 3 Reaches

The Chairman advised that he was not aware of any new applications affecting the river.

16.17 Thames Visitor Moorings

It was noted that an initial meeting of the new RTA Moorings Group had taken place on the 9th May; Graham Paterson is the representative of RUG 3 but was unable to attend. He will attend a further meeting the 16th June. It is understood that this meeting will concentrate on identifying (i) existing moorings that have become impractical to use and (ii) new locations worthy of investigation as potential new mooring sites (the Chairman handed Graham a list of suggestions).

The chairman reported that the District Council is planning to restrict overnight mooring at Abingdon from 5 to 3 nights.'

17.17 Abingdon Flood Schemes

The Chairman reported that a review was taking place of flooding from the River Ock. There is no indication of timescales.

7.17: Thames Path

Dick Mayon-White is no longer responsible for managing the Thames Path Wardens. He has reported that any wooden gates on the towpath that have rotted are now being replaced by metal ones.

18.17 Harbourmaster's Notices

None affecting the RUG3 reaches.

19.17: River Events

- Benson to Cleeve Swim – final date still awaited.

20.17: Reports from Group Members

(i) Christy Job reported on the following events being organised by Wallingford Rowing Club:

- 30th September- long distance sculls
- 26th November – regatta for covered boats

Boats will gather near Sheridan Marine and the events will start upstream of Cholsey Railway Bridge.

(ii) Electric Boat hire has recommenced at The Boathouse in Wallingford.

11.17: Date of Next Meeting

The next RUG 3 meeting will be held on Thursday, the 19th October, 2017 in Benson Parish Hall, commencing at 7.30 p.m..