

**Minutes of the 111th meeting of the 4/5 River Users Group
on 17th May 2017 at UTMYC**

Present

Andrew Wilbey (RAR & RUBC) (chairman), Ann & Gordon Wicks (CBS/BMF-TVC), Julie Hall (WWC), Bob O'Neill (TRS WADRA) Philip Sachse (UTMYC), Zsuzsi Lindsay (Reading Town Festival), Nick Haskings (The Warren, Caversham), Rob Edmonson (RBCS) and Eddie Insam (TVPR & RTR).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Sophie Smith and Andrew Coxford

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising not covered by the agenda

Nothing extra.

4. Environment Agency Highlights

Andrew Croxford will be provisionally replacing Colin Hounslow at our meetings for the next few months. This is his report:

Staffing (as of 15th May 2017)– Temporary relief lock and weir keepers will return to support the permanent staff this summer. This now includes 8 permanent positions currently advertised on our website. Please feel free to distribute this information in case you know of anyone who would be interested in a career with the Environment Agency in Waterways.

Enforcement: We have regular planned patrols throughout the summer focusing 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 one 'Flag Day' on all our RUG 4/5 reaches – "Getting the navigation ready for the next season" The next one coming up on 18th May.

Waterways Staff have started checking licences on every moored and navigation vessel including dinghies and small boats used to access the islands on the river. Boaters are being caught daily navigating without a 2017 licence. All unregistered vessels are being booked as it is a criminal offence to keep or use a boat on the river without a licence. Failure to pay will result in prosecution which carries a heavy fine and a criminal record on conviction. Vessels with no registered owner will be removed from the river and disposed of by the Environment Agency under Article 16 of the Inland Waterways Order 2010.

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. Andy Croxford

5. Thames Navigation User Forum

Thames Marina Case: EA still awaiting for an outcome from the High Court.

British Marine have recently produced a report exploring the demographics of river users, noting a trend in users moving way from traditional ownership towards leasing which would mean fewer boats and more people. .

A recent BBC4 radio interview reported the increasing number of liveboards on the Thames.

Thames Visitor Moorings: Positive feedback was received on the pilot scheme after three months. The TVM website and interactive maps have now been improved:

www.thamesvisitormoorings.co.uk.

Overgrown trees: It was requested that if members see an area that needs particular attention, inform via the TNUF mailbox

6. Member's Matters

Comments were raised about the lack of public moorings. Bank repairs opposite Piper's Island now nearly finished. Slipway access problems at Moulsoford and New Street (blocked).

Danger sign at Sonning lock backwater not visible enough. Collapsed trees in various parts of the river, e.g. reach above Blue Coats School.

7. River Thames Alliance

No Report

8. Local Authority Matters

No Report

9. ATYC Matters

Nothing to report.

10. Correspondence

Nothing to report

11. AOB

Reading-on-Thames Festival.

Reading CIC, the Economic Development Company for Reading is still looking for ideas for the Festival planned for (Sat 9 & Sat 16 September). The contact is Zsuzsi Lindsay <readingyoc2016@gmail.com>

The meeting was closed at 9:30 pm

Dates of next meetings

4th October 2017 (UTMYC)

18th January 2017, 7.30 pm at University of Reading (+AGM)

2017 river events in RUG 4/5 area, from Cleeve to Marsh locks

4/5 th August	Shiplake and Wargrave Regatta, ≈100/360 m
9 September	Reading-on-Thames Festival Water Event
17 September	Reading-on-Thames Festival Water Event
1 st October	K4 canoe race, a circuit between St Mary's and De Montfort islands
1 st October	UTMYC Sail Past, between Sonning Lock and KennetMouth
7 th October	Reading Small Boats Head of the River Race, Tilehurst to Caversham Bridge, 3 divisions

Summary as at 17th February 2017