

RIVER USERS GROUP

AREA 1 & 2 INGLESHAM to SANDFORD
(1 of 7 GROUPS SET UP FOR COMMUNICATION AND
CO-OPERATION BETWEEN ALL USERS OF THE RIVER THAMES)

CHAIR : Margherita Davidson

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SECRETARY : Greg Wheeler (Minutes - Shirley Wheeler)

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Minutes of River User Groups 1 & 2 Meeting **held on Wednesday 20th June 2018** **West Oxford Democratic Club, Osney**

Present:

Margherita Davidson, Chair RUGs 1&2 (MD)

Shirley Wheeler, Minutes Sec' RUGS 1 & 2 (SW)

Trevor Tate, RTS

Sebastian Cooke, Environment Agency

Alan Hill, SRCC (AH)

Phil Page Medley SC

Greg Wheeler, Secretary RUGs 1&2 (GW)

Mike Shefras, RTA (MS)

Steven Miles, Environment Agency (SM)

Liz Etheridge, Environment Agency (LE)

Dave Hansell, ATYC, SRCC

1. Welcome to Delegates

Margherita opened the Meeting at 7.45pm by welcoming every-one.

2. Apologies for Absence

Received from Robert Heavens, Osney CC (RH), Bob Timms, SRCC/Sea Scouts, Graham Paterson RUG 3, John & Sue Greenford TTBS (SG), Faith Miles (Osney), Alan Graham SRCC.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 22nd November 2017

These were approved with a date amendment.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

None outstanding

5. Finance Update

EA advised this is still being worked on and nothing as yet to report upon.

6. EA Navigation Report

- i) Enforcement/Compliance & Registrations Update
Marina checks have shown improvements Harleyford Marina up from 93 % in previous years to 97 % Sebastian Cooke now Technical Officer & Mark Winks taking his old role. Discussed general issue of enforcement when there is a social issue - possible adverse possession of possible college owned land and how financial help to obtain BSSC can be available for those receiving housing benefit. It is being worked on. The moorings at the ISIS where MD had worked 6 years to get mooring rings are now able to be used as moorings once more since the old landlord left.

MS made interesting point they are registrations rather than licences as registrations do not incur VAT and licences do. Boat at Port meadow is in hand and boat that keeps mooring at entrance to Osney being ticketed whenever it overstays there.

There is an issue of registered boats though having not displaying licences and boats with no name displayed but there is a discrepancy as visiting boats from canals only need to show a number not a name. SM agreed to find out if the EA only got 20% of the licence of visiting boats that actually moor and spend much of the year on The Thames but buy a Gold licence.

ii) Customer Charter and Lock Services to include volunteers

The charter is now out. Volunteers doing an excellent job but there are no summer assistants. St John's Eynsham and Kings are now priority locks. It is thought that lock personnel will be housed at the currently vacant Buscot Lock House once renovated.

iii) Trees, Shoals and Floating Pennywort.

There is gradual improvement in the tree trimming with the Black Pig and Water Witch out doing some trimming. Problem below Tadpole bridge flagged up by AH opposite the buoy marking a shoal that has just been replaced. There are no further shoal updates as there is no budget for tackling them. Pennyworth campaign is up and running but no reports in as yet. Noted to just put on bank if found as it dies, there is an article on Splash regarding this and a dedicated reporting point.

iv) Recent Fluctuating Water Levels

This is down to the unusual weather patterns of late. It is easier to manage the rising than the falling and the hydro scheme does not always help. It's worse to manage in the summer than winter but there are no new action points from this as anything that can be planned for is and it is the recent weather pattern that is the issue.

v) Pre Booking Of Lock site moorings for Club Events

Every-one agreed it would be acceptable, in fact expected, to pay in advance if pre booking moorings for a club event. SM reported that there had been some no shows and when moorings are in high demand this is unfair. There were some teething issues with booking moorings at locks but this has now been resolved.

7) Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Liz Etheridge gave an interesting and detailed presentation on the above scheme. For those unable to attend a copy is to be attached with the minutes. The scheme is to protect road and rail links as well as businesses and houses. The scheme has both private and public funding for 10 years. There are to be environment benefits from the new scheme and it has been tested to cover even the most severe flood eventuality. All were assured there will be no more water affecting downstream as a result of the scheme.

8) RTA Update

Mike Shefras gave an update on the current situation. There has been some internal politics but this is being resolved. The AGM is to be 3/4 September and there will be directors elected and advisors nominated. Advisors would be for example Barry Russell who would be unable to take a directors role. A new business plan is being put in place with a possible role for a paid manager and priority is being focussed on the Waterways plan and in particular Flood Risk. There is a parliamentary meeting in November and Thames funding for the future is the topic.

9) Harbour Master notices, River Closures & Restrictions. To include Boat & River Safety

All online and easy to access now.

10) Reports from Members for Events 2018

Trout Fest is 30th June

100th RAF Anniversary Air Tattoo 2018 is 13-15th July

Red Fest 14/15th July 2018

RT Society at Rose Island 9th July

Fete 21/7 at Sandford

11) Correspondence and any other business

Subject of funding for Royal Wedding EA uniforms was raised. They were funded with a view to being required for more than one event: such as use for further royal ceremonies such as State funerals etc.

St John's Lock pump out has been fixed and replaced. Eynsham is scheduled for Winter and Rushey not planned as yet.

There are new official moorings at Abingdon now and abandoned boats are being served notice.

12) Date of Next Meeting

Scheduled for Wednesday 7th November 2018

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm