



Camboaters Community Association
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16th January 2008

Dear Councillors,

We understand that you will be reviewing the Council's river mooring policy at the forthcoming meeting of the Community Services scrutiny committee. We welcome the consultation that has taken place with boaters over the last few months regarding the policy, and we are very pleased to see the proposals for improved recycling and bank improvements made in the report.

We wish however to raise a number of concerns on behalf of the boating community:

1. Large increase in licence fee for single people

The removal of the single occupancy discount for boaters would result in a 33% fee increase for the majority of licence holders. The single occupancy discount reflects the lower cost of services such as refuse collection for single people. It is universally regarded as fair. Many of the single people living on the river are on low incomes and would be hit very hard by the proposed increase.

The removal of the discount is justified in the report on the basis that a majority of respondents to the mooring licence survey replied in the negative to a survey question asking whether the licence fee should depend on the number of people living on a boat. However, due to the way the question was phrased, respondents believed that it was asking whether families with more than two people living aboard should pay a higher fee. It would be misleading and unfair if it was used to justify the removal of the single occupancy discount, which an overwhelming majority of boaters support.

While we support the principle that the income generated by the licence scheme should cover the costs of the services provided to boaters under the scheme, we believe that our needs can be more than met within the current budget. We do not believe there is any need to abolish the single occupancy discount.

2. Administration of the waiting list

The proposed changes to the administration of the waiting list are welcome, and we are in favour of moving to a simple scheme that is based solely on the date of an application. We are worried, however, that three months would be too short a period to buy a new boat and move onto the river. We have offered to work with Active Communities in drawing up an appropriate set of guidelines for administering the waiting list, and would very much like to

agree a reasonable set of rules with the Council.

3. Fee link to Council Tax Band A

We do not believe the link to Council Tax Band A should be broken. Although we realise that the mooring licence fee is not a Council Tax, the link is valuable because it provides equity between what other Council residents pay for services, and what boaters pay for services. It also provides a cap above which fees cannot rise; the Council stated that there was no intention to impose a charge greater than Council Tax Band A on any boater moored under the scheme when it set up the mooring licence scheme. If the intention by the Council is to introduce an inflationary increase in the licence fee, we would like more details on how this would be measured and an assurance that this wouldn't lead to much greater fee increases.

4. Yearly reviews

The current fee structure is widely accepted by boaters, and as we stated in the December meeting we believe there is no need to change it. We would like to move to a system of five-yearly reviews of the moorings policy rather than annual reviews. The uncertainty of not knowing how the fee structure will change from year to year is unsettling for boaters, creates unnecessary tension with the Council and we believe is not an efficient use of Council resources.

The existing mooring licence policy was brought in with the support of the boating community. It is widely regarded as fair. We would very much like any changes to also have the support of those living on the river. We propose that the existing fee structure is retained for the coming year, and decisions on the fee structure beyond that point are postponed until further discussions can take place, to reach a solution that all parties are in agreement with.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Rankin (Narrowboat *Coroskier*, Camboaters Chair)
Helen Wright (Narrowboat *Roe*, Camboaters Secretary)
Roz Conyngham (Butty *Speck*, Camboaters Treasurer)
Rob King (Narrowboat *Hornblower*, Camboaters Committee member)
Rod Downie (Narrowboat *Friendly Fox*, Camboaters Committee member)
Zoe Trent (Narrowboat *Kewstoke*, Camboaters Committee member)
Mark Rogers (Narrowboat *Lee*, Camboaters Committee member)
Ewan Wakefield (Narrowboat *Midnight Moth*, Camboaters Committee member)
Liz White (Narrowboat *Rayner*, Camboaters Committee member)
Mike and Vicky Hobbs (Narrowboat *Guinevere*)
Robin Cocker (Narrowboat *Uisce*)
Simon Coggins (Dutch Barge *Kosmos*)
Craig Abraham (Narrowboat *Maya*)
Alixandrea Finlow (Narrowboat *Helena Neaglfari*)
Lisa Bonetti (Widebeam *Stanley Barham*)
Peter King (Narrowboat *Hornblower*)
Luther Phillips (Dutch Barge *ZZ11*)
Rhian Salmon (Narrowboat *Nooksak*)
Paul and Kate Mennell (Narrowboat *Merchant*)
Ruth Collins (Narrowboat *Duty Free*)
Helen Baggaley (Butty *Speck*)
Erik Finlow-Bates (Narrowboat *Helena Neaglfari*)
Dave Orton (Dutch Barge *Henri*)
Tom Lynn (Narrowboat *Roe*)
Clare Roscornes (Narrowboat *Nancy Yvonne*)
Simon Gallaway (Widebeam *Engracadinha*)

Stephanie Clare (Narrowboat *AWOL*)
Mike Prior-Jones (Narrowboat *Innocent*)
Hannah Critchlow (Tug *Pyewacket*)
Charlotte Synge (MFV *Felicity*)
Sally (Dutch Barge *Ritchie*)
Jacinth Quick (Narrowboat *Corn Dolly*)