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Boat owners fight for city life

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Narrow boat owners claim they are being forced out of a city to allow rowers from the university greater access.



The boats will have to move between October and March

Cambridge's navigation authority has reviewed its mooring policy for the banks of the River Cam.

New rules adopted earlier in July require owners to move from Midsummer Common between October and March as the area is considered "too congested".

Boat owners plan to fight the changes which they feel encourage rowers at the expense of other river users.

A report by the Conservators of the River Cam suggests the Midsummer stretch of the river is too congested to allow a rowing eight to pass safely - at times they need a width of water of up to eight metres.

'Navigation for everybody'

Prof Michael Chisholm, from the group, said: "The river is narrow and is so congested there is a potential for accidents.

"It's really like a congested road at times."

The authority's solution is to provide long-term moorings further along the river and move the narrow boats during the majority of the academic year.

But boat owners feel rowers are being given priority over other river users and claim the authority has not provided enough new moorings to allow all of them to remain in the city.

Amanda Walker, who uses the Midsummer moorings, said: "They are only talking about navigation for rowers on the river when they should be talking about navigation for everybody.

"They need to look at how it affects fishermen and how it affects boat people."

Owners are now fighting the scheme in the hope of remaining at Midsummer Common.

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