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## Boaters hit by 12 per cent rise

### Boaters hit by 12 per cent rise

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BOATERS have been left with a sinking feeling after a jump in their registration fees.

Using the Cam will cost more from April when the navigation authority implements a 12 per cent annual rise for motorised boats, and a 3 per cent increase for non-motorised vessels, include rowing boats and punts.

The yearly registration fee for a punt is now £69.64, but will cost just over £2 more a year from April. A houseboat fee is now £520.83, but with the 12 per cent increase, it will be £583.33.

The River Cam Conservancy has agreed the percentage increase will be enforced each year for the next three years, and some boat owners fear it will force people off the river.

Luther Phillips, who represents the river community on the Cam Conservators board, said the authority has been "opportunistic" in raising rates in line with the Environment Agency, which has implemented a 12 per cent increase to all boaters on the waterways it is responsible for.

He said: "I think such a large increase is unfair because we only have 12 miles of river to navigate, and to increase the fee in line with the agency is a bit cheeky.

"I am not happy about the increase, but as a Cam Conservator representative, I realise there needs to be a rise from a business point of view - however, this is too much.

"The way residential boaters have lived their lives over the years is a rather simplified one and so it has become more attractive.

"But this (increase) has resulted in more of a cost to that way of life and it will stop some people being able to afford it, which is a shame.

"If the 12 per cent rise is needed it should be applied to all, including the rowing fraternity and punting companies."

Prof Michael Chisholm, chairman of Cam Conservators, said the authority received no public funding, adding: "In the late 80s, we were practically bankrupt and sold a piece of land which saved us. Now we need to keep an operating surplus not dependent on interest.

"We hope to be here for another 100 years and so it is important that one doesn't sell off all the household silverware, but leave a proper set for the next generation."

Published: 13/01/2007 12:04:00

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