



by David Lowe

BW User Group Meeting 13 October 2009

I attended wearing my CBOA, HNBOC (and Humber Barges) hats!

Laurence Morgan opened the meeting by explaining the new structure. He said that the new arrangement would enable him to concentrate fully on the operational issues without being sidetracked by estates and other matters.

There is to be a three month (national) consultation on residential moorings, then a pilot on the K&A/north SUC.

From April 2010 all licences will be available on line, with the discounts. From April 2010 the first of the new Operators Licences will be issued for Hire boat operators - a 10% decrease in cost has been negotiated for them. Other licences (eg for cargo carrying, retail, workboats) are still to be finalised. In Yorkshire the evasion rate was low, 2.6% (nationally is 5%).

Late posting of stoppages on Waterscape was noted - why was this? Need to improve Waterscape access eg. for stoppages. Could text messaging work for getting info out on emergency stoppages?

November/December will see start of consultation on revised Bye-Laws.

There is to be an internet site for BW residential property sales.

Engineering Work:

The three week Castleford Stoppage went well, it finished two days early and work went on 24/7 to accommodate freight operators. (Nigel Stevens [Shire Cruisers] said the various emergency stoppages had not been well publicised eg. at locks, and waterway junctions, resulting in great inconvenience for some users.)

Dredging: Fruitful and friendly discussions with EA had resulted in a more relaxed approach from EA, and tips were now being re-opened with 50,000 cu metre capacity available at Long Sandall. 10,000 tonnes had been dredged from the SYN, and from next week a further 15000 tonnes is to be taken from the navigation between Barnby Dun and Doncaster cut end. L&L Canal to be dredged between 3 and 7 km, from Rodley to Field Locks (except for known leakage areas). Lock ladders on the L&L would be completed this year. Major works planned for the HNC with several pairs of new lock gates.

Towpath improvements along L&L, C&H and HNC although some think now 'too neat'

Stuart McKenzie has been confirmed as continuing as freight Champion and there is a new BW 'Head of Freight' - Mark Benstead - as part of his role.

John Branford raised the question of reducing air draft on the A&CN (a safety issue), bollards at Whitley Lock, and the absence of a wharf in Leeds. (LM said it was not BW policy to provide freight wharves). JB praised BW for various improvements made.

Paul Grange asked why the emergency phones (to BW Emergency Canalphone) on the SYN locks were out of action still? LM said they had been disconnected 'as not needed, everyone has a mobile phone' (PG: no signal at Sprotborough!).

Discussion on what is correct VHF channel at various points eg. Trent Falls.

Leeds Waterfront Festival: 17/18 July 2010.

Pinch points discussed: LM said it was their policy to try and remove them over a period of time as circumstances (eg planned work) allowed.

Comments from BW handout '.....boating and freight is the primary activity on the inland waterways that relates to British Waterways statutory function and absorbs all British Waterways funding.....'