

Questions and answers on licencing

1. When will I need to start licencing my vessel to use it on MLC Waters?

Licencing is being introduced from 1st September 2020.

2. I have an EA Anglian Waterways licence; do I need an MLC licence as well?

For this year's licencing period (up to 31st march 2021) if you have a current Anglian EA licence you will not also need a MLC licence. For future years it is expected that for a small additional sum combined licences will be on offer allowing use of both waterways.

3. I have a CRT Gold Licence; do I need an MLC licence as well?

No for this licencing year no additional licence is required and we are currently in discussions with CRT and will be looking to continue this arrangement if we can.

4. Why do I have to have a licence now as I have never needed one before?

In 2018 UK government passed a new Middle Level Act. This Act allows the MLC to charge for the use of its waterways by those with pleasure craft. Before this we could only charge a toll on commercial use due to the outdated nature of the original statutory position.

5. What does my licence pay for?

There are significant costs associated with running the navigational aspects of the MLC system, including the maintenance of the six locks, the employment of lock keepers and weed and reed cutting. The licencing income is unlikely to cover these costs but will help contribute towards them. It will also allow us over time to invest in provision of new and improved facilities. An undertaking has been given to spend at least 25% of annual gross income on provision of facilities on the link route between Stanground and Salters Lode locks until the IWA recommendations for facilities provision has been achieved. We are also working with District, Town and Parish Councils to see what improvements can be made through national bids.

6. How do I apply for a licence and how do I pay?

The licence application form is downloadable from this website or you can request that a paper copy be sent to you if you are not able to print a copy out. Payment can be by cheque, direct debit, credit card or bank transfer. We are currently discouraging cash payments to reduce the risks to staff and public during the pandemic.

7. I note that draft byelaws are provided on the website alongside the existing ones, when will these be active?

We are awaiting approval from government of the new byelaws, but there has been a delay due to the COVID19 situation. As soon as they are approved an announcement will be made. Until that time the existing byelaws apply.

8. Why are the new byelaws needed?

The new byelaws are needed as the old ones, like the Acts of Parliament were written in a time when use of waterways was dominated by commercial non powered craft. Today the picture is very different and the waterways are dominated by pleasure craft use. Our aim in bringing in byelaws is to align ourselves with other navigation bodies which will ensure consistency and fairness for all users.

9. Do I need insurance and a boat safety scheme (BSS) certificate?

You will need insurance to use you boat on Middle Level Waters, however an undertaking was given when the Middle Level Act 2018 was passed to allow boats up to twelve months grace in terms of requiring a certificate to show that the vessel meets construction or equipment standards. This twelve-month period can only start once the byelaws are formally approved by government, hence at this point in time the actual date when a BSS certificate will be required is undefined.

10. I have other questions what should I do?

The MLC now have a dedicated Navigation Officer, Kev Russell. He can be contacted by ringing 07725 134170 or by email using the enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk address.