

MINUTES OF MIDDLE LEVEL NAVIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10th FEBRUARY 2020 AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICES

Present

J Brown	-	Middle Level Commissioners
D C Thomas	-	" " "
L McShane	-	" " "
K Russell	-	" " "
C Howes	-	Inland Waterways Association
R Sexton	-	East Anglian Waterways Association
A Wildman	-	Residential Boat Owners' Association
N Arnold	-	Environment Agency
K Jerrom	-	Environment Agency – Fisheries Team
P Syred	-	Fox Narrowboats Ltd

1. Apologies for absence

Messrs M Heading and S Whittome (Middle Level Commissioners) and P Hughes (Fenland District Council)

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Navigation Advisory Committee held on the 13th January 2020 were approved.

Kye Jerrom suggested that Kelvin Allen be invited as an angler's representative to the meeting. It was agreed that an invitation to the Waterways Users Group would be more appropriate and that this be actioned

3. Byelaws

Lorna McShane gave an update on the position with the Byelaws in view of the amendment that had been previously agreed by the Committee. The Byelaws would have to be formally amended and would need to be approved by the Middle Level Commissioners' board. Once that had been completed she would be able to submit the Byelaws for confirmation by Defra and she had already made contact with the appropriate Officer at Defra to discuss the matter.

4. Update on Registration/Charging/Reciprocal arrangements

David Thomas updated the Committee on the arrangements for registration. He advised that a letter had been prepared which was to be hand delivered to all boats on the system by the Navigation Officer. Letters would also be provided to marina owners to pass on to boat owners in their marinas. Paula Syred confirmed that she would post a copy of the letter in the office.

A query was raised about the Freedom of Information Act and whether there was any statutory exemption for disclosure for enforcement purposes.

ACTION

- Lorna McShane to action.

David Thomas outlined the proposals for numbering of boats. Boats who had been registered elsewhere and already had a number would be allowed to keep that number and boats without a number would have to apply to the Middle Level Commissioners for a new number. David Thomas confirmed that the letter to be sent to boaters had been approved by the Anglian Waterways Association meeting and the Well Creek Trust had been advised about the proposals at their meeting.

5. Timescales

David Thomas advised that the letter would be finalised and would be sent out for hand delivery from the week commencing 17th February 2020.

6. Facility provision

David Thomas advised the Committee that three locations were being considered for future facility provision – Stanground, Whittlesey and Salters Lode. 25% of gross income is to be set aside and ring fenced and reported in the accounts for the upgrading and provision of extra facilities. However, until any income was received, no progress could be made with this matter at the current time. The additional facilities being considered were toilets, rubbish, recycling provision, water supply and elsan disposal.

The matter of waste oil was raised. It was agreed that some notices should be provided as to where boaters could dispose of oil. The Navigation Officer was already doing some investigation regarding the proposals for additional facilities.

David Thomas outlined the aspirations of Ramsey Town Council in their market towns bid and a meeting had taken place at Ramsey High Lode. The land at Ramsey was owned by Argent and was being allocated for housing development and that consideration could possibly be given to the local authority asking Developers to make some provision to provide facilities as part of a 106 agreement for future development.

7. Other user interest – fishing/recreation/tourism

There was no update apart from details of fishing matches due to take place on the 22nd February 2020. These competitions were at High Lode, March town centre and Benwick. The fishing matches were pre-organised with Fenland District Council and occurred approximately 6-8 times per annum. There was no Tourism Officer currently employed by Fenland District Council and there was a query whether the Middle Level Commissioners could advertise these dates on its' website.

David Thomas advised the Committee that he had attended a meeting at Skylark Garden Centre about the provision of moorings on the Sixteen Foot River for fishing and for boaters

8. Any other business

David Thomas advised on the further discussions with the Middle Level Watermen's Club with regards to their proposed rally in May. The event was to be organised by the Club. However, he had agreed to make moorings and car parking available at the Middle Level Offices.

There was some discussion about the length of time that it should be permissible to moor. The Canal and River Trust allowed 14 day moorings and then you were required to move on on the navigation. Alan Wildman stated that in his opinion the standard permissible stay should be no more than 7 days.

It was agreed that future consideration should be given to winter moorings. Currently the moorings in March are for a period of no longer than 48 hours per stay. However, in quieter times when the moorings are not used by visitors, consideration could possibly be given to allowing a longer stay on these moorings over the winter period.

It was suggested that an elected member from Fenland District Council or March Town Council should be invited to be a member of the Committee.

9. Date of next meeting

23rd March 2020.

.....
Chairman