

Questions and Answers on Licencing

1. When did licencing start on MLC Waters?

Licencing was introduced from 1st September 2020. Annual licences can be obtained by contacting this office or downloading the form from our website. Weekly and monthly visitor licences can be obtained from there as well or from Stanground or Salters Lode Locks.

2. I have an EA Anglian Waterways Licence – do I need an MLC Licence as well?

Yes, unless you have an Anglian Pass bolt-on. This can be obtained via the Environment Agency web pages.

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

Until 31st December 2021 no additional licence was required. After this date unless you have both a current Anglian Pass and CRT Gold licence you will need an MLC licence. We continue to hold discussions with CRT to see if the Gold licence can be extended to cover our waters, but this arrangement will only work if a mechanism can be found to allow us to recover some of the Gold licence fee.

4. Why do I have to have a Licence now as I didn't before 2020?

In 2018 the 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 Before this we could only charge a toll on commercial use due to the outdated nature of the original statutory position.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.

7. I note that there were new byelaws 2021 – why were they needed?

The new byelaws were 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 these new byelaws is to align ourselves with other navigation bodies which will ensure consistency and fairness for all users.

8. Do I need insurance and a Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) Certificate?

You will need insurance to use your 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 could only start once the byelaws were formally approved by Government, hence the date when a BSS Certificate will be required is 28th May 2022.

9. My vessel is my sole residence, what are the rules on licencing?

A reduced licence fee will only be applicable for a static houseboat which is classified as a dwelling and is located in a marina and will remain solely within that marina in the particular licence year. To apply for this exemption evidence will be required that the vessel is legally classified as a dwelling residing permanently or at least for the time being within the marina. Examples would be a letter from the Council confirming this is the case for the vessel in question or a Council Tax bill in which the vessel is the residential address within the marina.

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.