

IWA Policy on Continuous Cruising

This policy statement sets out The Inland Waterways Association's views on 'continuous cruising'.

Some boaters do not have a home mooring but are designated as continuous cruisers, with many of them travelling widely across the network in a progressive journey. For many years there were no significant issues associated with this but in recent years there has been an increase in the numbers of people living on boats without a home mooring, and sometimes staying within a small geographic area. When coupled with the general increase in boating and a historic lack of enforcement of mooring rules this has caused difficulties at designated visitor moorings in some areas.

IWA supports the rights of boaters to cruise the system without being required to have a home mooring, and indeed supported and promoted the 'continuous cruising' concept when it was introduced. IWA recognises the benefits that continuous cruising can bring to the inland waterways, for instance by encouraging boaters to cruise to lesser used waterways and to cruise out of the main holiday season.

IWA recognises the difficulties created when large numbers of boaters wish, for whatever reason, to stay within a small area, putting pressure on services generally provided for occasional navigating boaters. In such cases it is necessary to limit the length of stays within such areas.

The solution requires a clear definition of the rules and strong enforcement action. IWA believes that difficulties in some areas have been exacerbated by a lack of enforcement by navigation authorities and that those who have enjoyed this way of life without interference need to be treated sensibly and considerately in any tightening and enforcement of the rules.

IWA is concerned that in areas where there is not yet a problem, monitoring should be carried out and enforcement instigated in advance of congestion occurring. IWA supports a proactive approach by navigation authorities to provide a range of affordable moorings for those who would prefer to take this option up.

Mooring rules are usually covered in the licence conditions and associated guidance notes set out by each navigation authority. Enforcement of these rules has to be carried out by the navigation authority and/or relevant landowner. IWA welcomes the progress that Canal & River Trust has made to restate and enforce their licencing rules in a sensible and sensitive way for the benefit of all waterways users. IWA will continue to support this policy and encourage it to be progressively extended.

IWA supports a progressive increase to the distance that continuous cruisers are expected to travel annually to one that it considers more appropriate to that lifestyle. Applying for a Continuous Cruising licence provides a substantial reduction in annual costs relating to provision of a 'home' mooring, in return for which boaters are expected to meet the statutory criteria on movement. This in effect prevents using a continuously cruising licence for a residential boat which remains in one place or fails to make a progressive journey throughout the period of the licence.

IWA suggests that within seasonal and canal maintenance limitations a significant distance per annum (300 miles is suggested as an indicative figure) over a range, start to maximum distance from start during the period of the licence, (100 miles is suggested as an indicative figure) with a minimum distance travelled per quarter (60 miles is suggested as an indicative figure), should ultimately apply to licences issued on the basis of Continuous Cruising.

However, given that there is clarity around 'home moorings' and around the criteria 'continuous cruisers' need to agree to undertake, there is at present a clear and growing group of boaters in between these definitions, who wish to adopt the residential boating lifestyle, but are unwilling or unable to take on a residential mooring. IWA want to see innovative options for providing reduced price facilities for these boaters, in parallel with continued enforcement of those not boating within the current rules. IWA is prepared to consider options which might be workable ideally within current statutes and/ or byelaws.

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