



Campaigning for the use, maintenance, and restoration of Britain's inland waterways

North West Waterways  
Canal & River Trust  
Waterside House  
Waterside Drive  
Wigan  
Greater Manchester  
WN3 5AZ ,

7 January 2015

Dear Sirs

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on changes to your Leeds & Liverpool Canal and Liverpool Link Mooring Sales policy.

The Inland Waterways Association is a registered charity, founded in 1946, which advocates the conservation, use, maintenance, restoration and development of the inland waterways for public benefit. We have 16,000 members including 350 corporate members with a combined membership representing a voice of well over 50,000 people supporting and involved with the inland waterways.

IWA works closely with navigation authorities, national and local authorities, voluntary, private and public sector organisations. We campaign and lobby for support and encourage public participation in the inland waterways. IWA also manages the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation for the public benefit, through its subsidiary Essex Waterways Ltd, having stepped in to prevent its closure in 2005.

IWA actively supports waterway restoration, and is a source of technical advice and practical support through its Restoration Committee and its waterways restoration volunteering organisation, Waterway Recovery Group.

Our comments on the consultation are set out in the attached appendix.

Yours faithfully

Mike Carter  
**Deputy Chairman, Navigation Committee**

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## Canal & River Trust

### Leeds & Liverpool Canal / Liverpool Link Access - Consultation

#### Overall Comments

Given the importance of these policy changes IWA would normally expect the consultation period to be longer than three weeks. We strongly object to this very short notice period which encompasses the Christmas & New Year holiday which effectively limits the scope of such a consultation process. These changes do not just impact the boating community but should be seen in the wider context of a waterways in the community. With such a short consultation period Canal & River Trust has now lost the opportunity to inform and encourage the wider community to take notice and become involved in developments concerning the waterway that runs through their area.

It is the view of the Inland Waterways Association that access to the Leeds & Liverpool canal for boaters and other canal users should be open and unrestricted throughout its entire length. The proposal to remove the existing restrictions and allow freedom of movements for all boats from Hancock's bridge 6 to the Liverpool terminus at Eldonian Village is a welcome policy change supported by IWA.

IWA believes that allowing boats to have free open access to this stretch of waterway will greatly contribute to the appeal of this area and, with continuing community involvement, will ultimately transform the canal corridor through this urban area making it a pleasant and healthy environment for all to appreciate.

The revised plans to start and finish Liverpool Link transits at Stanley Locks is also a welcome development as we believe that this historic canal feature will become a popular attraction for the area with boaters and community volunteers working together to highlight the value of this previously under-appreciated waterways landmark.

IWA will actively support development of short and longer term moorings at Eldonian Village and Vauxhall Canalside Park, which combined with an improved winding facility at the canal terminus will greatly enhance the area. IWA suggests a partnership approach involving the Eldonian and Riverside Housing Associations as a good way forward to establish the commercial viability of such an urban marina development.

IWA believes that increasing the capacity for boats wishing to visit Liverpool Salthouse Dock is important. The current situation with three 'incoming' days and three 'outgoing' days effectively limits the capacity to 30 boats transits per week. This has led to many disappointed boaters unable to make the journey during peak periods. The new proposal, if extended to 6 operational days supporting both 'incoming' and 'outgoing' periods will increase the link transit capacity to 36 boats per week which is good news.

We are aware of the width limitations over the link and recognise the need for one way operation. However there still remains potential issues for boats arriving at Princes lock and Stanley lock which do not have lock landing stages.

Overall, the revised proposals to the Leeds & Liverpool Canal access and Liverpool Link booking policy are welcomed by IWA with some specific issues as detailed below.

## What are CRT proposing?

### What happens' now

- Boaters wanting to go to Liverpool South Dock book a passage by contacting the CRT office Wigan, this passage starts at Hancock's Swing Bridge in Aintree.
- No other boats can pass this point. Passages can be booked into the Dock on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. CRT can accommodate a maximum of 10 boats per day.
- Staff open Hancock's bridge at 9am and let boaters through, then follow on operating Netherton Swing Bridge. Boats arrive at Stanley Lock at approx. 1pm Staff operate the locks for boaters to pass through and on to Princes lock, and then into Liverpool Dock. The passage from Hancock's to the Dock can take up to 6 hours in total.
- Boaters can book passages to leave the Dock on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. Boats leave the dock at 9am with staff operating locks at Princes and Stanley and then opening Netherton Swing Bridge and Hancock's between 2-3pm.
- Licensed boats can visit the dock for 14 days without charge. Additional nights are charged at £20. A £20 charge is made for cancelling a booking within 72 hours of the passage or for a 'no show'.
- Booking is opened in early January for that year and an updated skippers' guide is sent out to those booking.
- Some events at the Dock limit the ability of boats to move within the dock on a limited number of weekends so boats may be held back on occasion or passages cancelled or not made available.
- There is considerable demand during the peak season with many boaters being disappointed.

### Summary of proposed changes

- The area between Hancock's and Stanley Top Lock will have freedom of movement for all boats wishing to visit
- Staff and volunteers will continue to operate Hancock's bridge and Netherton Bridge. Hancock's bridge will continue be opened between 9-10am and 2-3pm as the agreement with the local authority
- Liverpool Link Passages will start from Stanley Top Lock (rather than Hancock's bridge)
- Boats booking a passage into the dock will be able to enter and leave on **any** operational day subject to a pontoon being available
- Pontoon bookings will be available for 7 nights without charge, additional nights will be charged at £20
- Booking on line should be available from April 2015 and will be for the next 3 seasons so boaters can book in advance
- A limit will be put on block bookings (6 boats), parties with more than 6 boats will need to contact the office for authorisation
- No shows or cancellations within 5 days of travel will be charged at £20
- CRT seek feedback on the non-operational day(s) this could remain as Tuesday, **or** move to Saturday **or** be Saturday and Sunday

## Answers to specific questions in the consultation

<p>Would you welcome freedom of movement between Hancock's swing bridge and Stanley top locks?</p>	<p>IWA supports this policy, assuming that opening times for Hancock's swing bridge are available 7 days per week and clearly advertised to boaters . i.e. 9-10am and 2-3pm. Mon-Sunday. It is assumed that Netherton and the new Litherland swing bridges will be boater operated and unrestricted. In addition we assume that moorings will extend to the canal terminus at Eldonian Village, where boats up to 45ft may wind. IWA further recommends that the winding area at Eldonian village is extended to allow 72ft. boats to wind.</p>
<p>Would you support passages into and out of the dock each operational day?</p>	<p>IWA supports this policy to allow both ingoing Liverpool Link transits (between Stanley Locks and Salthouse Dock), and outgoing transits (between Salthouse Dock and Stanley Locks) on the same operational day. IWA further recommends that a lock landing-stage (pontoon) is provided at Princes Lock to facilitate boater safety. In addition it is recommended that the existing pontoons at Stanley Dock (opp. the Titanic hotel) are also used to facilitate boater safety.</p>
<p>Would you use an on-line booking system when introduced?</p>	<p>IWA supports to use of an online booking system with the following caveats. Any personal data collected is handled in accordance with the UK Data Protection Acts. The system must be protected from misuse and hacking using appropriate internet security technology. As a minimum the system must utilise strong input validation and CAPTCHA technology and be subjected to independent penetration testing. CRT may consider utilising 'MyTrust' user ids to authenticate users.</p>
<p>Do you think that moving to 3 years for bookings is better than just 1 season?</p>	<p>IWA supports a 3 year booking policy.</p>
<p>Would you support us charging £5 for telephone bookings for those not wanting to use the on-line system?</p>	<p>Given the very short notice period allowed for this consultation we have not been able to canvas our membership for comment on this proposal. As a matter of principal IWA will not support changes that increase the cost of boating above the prevailing inflation rate. Thus as a default stance, IWA will not support the imposition of such charges.</p>
<p>We are proposing to take a structured approach to bookings from January to March until the on line system is available with bookings being processed in January for April, in February for May, and March for June.</p>	<p>IWA suggests that a simple first come first served basis may be more effective. This rather complex booking schedule may be subject to complaint from boaters wishing to book more than 1 month in advance and may further cause issues with potentially high volumes of telephone bookings on the day that the monthly bookings window open. Most boaters recognise how a first come first served system works and may be less inclined to complain if the process is simple.</p>
<p>We propose reducing the free moorings for 14 days to 7 days to maximise the number of boats visiting. Do you support this?</p>	<p>IWA does not support the reduction to the free mooring period at Salthouse Dock to 7 days. However, it is suggested that a non-return policy is considered to avoid potential issues with non-compliant continuous cruisers who may seek to oscillate between L&amp;L main line and Salthouse Dock.</p>

<p>We are considering limiting on-line block bookings to 6 boats in any party. Would you support this?</p>	<p>IWA supports this policy with the following caveats. There must be at least 6 operational days and CRT will consider increasing the number of operational days to 7 after further consultation in the 2016 season.</p>
<p>Do you feel that more moorings are required on the canal – and where would you locate them?</p>	<p>Moorings sites, both long and short term, must be provided as demand develops. Moorings will be initially required at Eldonian Village, Litherland and Stanley Locks it is expected that demand will emerge at Carolina Wharf, Canalside Park and Aintree. In addition it is desirable for the existing moorings between bridge 10 and 11 at Melling to be improved by providing permanent rings.</p>
<p>Options for operating are: Monday – Friday, or Sunday to Friday, or Wednesday to Monday. Which would you prefer?.</p>	<p>IWA supports a minimum of 6 operational days with the option of increasing this to 7 days in 2016. Sunday to Friday or Wednesday to Monday are acceptable depending upon CRTs assessment of demand. IWA will not support Monday-Friday operational days.</p>
<p>Other Comments:</p>	<p><b>Boater Security :</b>  It is accepted that given the urban nature of the canal corridor from Aintree to Bootle that some boaters may experience issues if attempting to moor in some areas. It is recommended that these policy changes are discussed in depth with police and emergency services to ensure that appropriate responses can be maintained. Furthermore it is recommended that the local communities along the route are involved in the consultation process to ensure that boaters are made welcome. The establishment of secure moorings at Litherland and Eldonian Village should be seen as a priority.</p> <p><b>Swing Bridges :</b>  It is assumed that Netherton and the new Litherland swing bridges will be boater operated and unrestricted. CRT must further negotiate with stakeholders on improving safety and ultimately extending the opening hours of Hancock's swing bridge beyond 9-10am and 2-3pm. It is recognised that this traffic route (Wango Lane) is a potential hot spot. Given the existing traffic calming measures installed in the area, as a result of concerns from local residents, it is felt that effective co-operation between the local authority and emergency services will ultimately drive improved pedestrian safety and extended operating hours in this area.</p> <p><b>Liverpool Link Safety:</b>  Particular emphasis must be given to boaters safety in the area above Princes Lock, here the current practice of setting and holding the gates open for incoming boat arrivals sometimes does not happen due to transport delays for lock keepers from Stanley locks or due to wind/water flows which cause the gates to close. This area is often subjected to gusting cross winds making it very difficult to navigate a low speeds awaiting the arrival of lock keepers. We are aware of several near miss reports in this area as boats are blown across the dock which has many overhanging collision hazards. Ultimately as some</p>

	<p>boaters may attempt to disembark across the bow, we strongly recommend the provision of a floating landing stage in this area.</p> <p>In addition, it is recommended that CRT consider using the new floating pontoons (Titanic Hotel) at Stanley Dock to facilitate boats waiting for outgoing transit of Great Howard St. bridge at the bottom of Stanley locks. This capability will require improved communication between boaters and lock keepers with perhaps a simple red/green light system installed here.</p>
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