

## **Waterway Moorings Rapporteurship Transcript of meeting held on 12 July 2013**

### **Committee Members:**

Jenny Jones (Chair)  
Victoria Borwick

### **Guests:**

Sorwar Ahmed, Canal and River Trust  
Andrew Bailes, London Boaters  
Rita Craddock, Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Simon Robbins, National Association of Boat Owners  
Ian Shacklock, Friends of Regent's Canal  
Clive Wren, Residential Boat Owners Association

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** My name is Jenny Jones. I am an Assembly Member and a member of the Environment Committee. We call this a rapporteurship because it is normally just one person who does all the work but I am very fortunate in having Victoria who is a Conservative Member of the Assembly. I understand that Murad Qureshi is going to come. He is a Labour Member of the Assembly and he is also Chair of the Waterways Commission, so he has an interest in this as well.

I have to declare I am a part boat owner as well as a flat-dweller, so I have a foot in both camps. I am hoping to be incredibly neutral here.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I am a boat owner too.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** OK. I am going to put some questions to the people at the top table and I will come to people, as I say, in the cheap seats but you know what I mean. I will come to you towards the end if you would like to comment on anything. I am going to ask that all the questions and answers are fairly short because we have two hours and I absolutely have to leave at 11.30am.

Would anybody at the top table like to say something before we start? I think you have all put submissions in. You did, yes. Yes, you have all put submissions, so to some extent you can assume I have read them. There were a lot but I did read every single one, so cut short your answers if you possibly can without losing any detail. That would be great.

One of the important things is the powers of the Canal and River Trust and in fact we had a briefing yesterday which talks about guidance for boaters without a home mooring. This actually does suggest that the Canal and River Trust has authority to encourage. I gather a judge ruled that they have authority to move a vessel every 14 days on a 10-mile stretch of

canal or beyond, which does led to the question of how legal the overstaying charges and the 7-day limits are.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Thank you for kicking off with an easy one. Yes, there is clearly some debate about our powers in this respect. What we have tried to set out is the fact that the Acts give us certain powers. We have to try and work with that to manage the waterways effectively, so our interpretation, which has been supported by various court cases to some extent or other, is that we are able to use the overstay charge as a means of managing the stay times at visitor moorings.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** It is legal, then, for you to charge?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Yes. We have taken this through the court as far as we can. We have tested it in certain areas and it has always supported our position on that.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** The seven-day limits that are in place?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** I would refer you back to the answer about the fact that we have the powers to manage the waterways in terms of maintaining navigation and so forth, so those seven-day limits are part of our toolkit, if you like, to maintain access and navigation through the waterway.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** OK. Does anybody want to comment on that? Simon?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Yes. It is a point of detail but I do not believe the overstay has been tested in the courts and I would be interested if you could cite which case. As you know, the National Association of Boat Owners is following the court cases very closely and I am not aware that the overstay charge has been tested in court yet. Is that correct?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** I cannot really comment on that. I would say in my defence that I have been with the Canal and River Trust for two months --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** No, do not feel under pressure.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** -- so I will not have all the answers you need today. I take your point. The point about having an overstay charge or not in a sense is a bit of a red herring because the idea is that although everybody is legally entitled to stay in one place for 14 days, the point is that there are certain places where there is excess demand such as visitor moorings or positions, places where there are water facilities or others. So, in a sense, there is a need as with the highways to manage that demand so that everybody has access and some ability to share that particular limited space fairly. We only use those powers where the need arises, where there is lots of demand at places like visitor moorings.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Could I just ask? For example, if they are there and living there or staying there (I know they say they are not living there) but if they are there for 7 days but

actually they can stay there for 14, they may be under the misapprehension if they know that it is 14 to suddenly find it a bit odd if they are being moved on after 7 days if they do not understand. I could not suddenly pick up your car just because you have parked it without --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** In fact, at Noel Road, where we visited, there is a confusion with notices, so this is about communication.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Exactly. If you were suddenly going to pick up someone's car or pick up someone's anything else and you thought you had it there for 14 days and you went on holiday for 14 days or left it for some other reason, (inaudible) for 14 days and you came back and found it had moved, you would think that was pretty odd if somebody had not tried to get in touch with you.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** It is a point of communication. I think at Noel Road the signs do say seven days, so I am not sure where the confusion arises, but I think we will have to look at that again.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** What I mean is, whether it is 7 days or whether it is 14 or whatever it is, you have to make every effort to make sure that (a) it is clear and (b) you do not do anything without --

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Yes. All I would say is that those restrictions where it is less than 14 days are signed as visitor moorings generally. It is generally visitor moorings only, so in those locations there is a welcome sign identifying stay times, identifying local rules and also giving useful information about what is in this locality to give anybody who comes to the visitor moorings some ideas. We do not randomly move people away.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** I just want to say what the confusion is at Noel Road. On one sign it says seven days per calendar year. On another sign it says seven days at a time. That is a huge confusion (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes, so communication. We might come back to communication at the end. Can I just ask you all: is it your view (I can say it either way) that there are too few moorings or that the canal is overcrowded? Clive?

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** In a way, I think it is not just the canals. Because it is London-based, you should also think of the tidal river. In a way, there is an irony that they feel the canals are overcrowded but the river has hardly anything on it at all. It is a land use planning issue as well as a management issue. There needs to be some positive guidelines on how the waterways as a whole can be better utilised. This is a planning issue and a land use issue as well as a management issue. One way or another, the Canal and River Trust has adequate powers to deal with problems. It is a question of how they do it which everyone can live with. That is obviously what you are mainly concerned with today. I am just trying to put it into a context. You cannot look at the canals in isolation from the main river. In fact, if the issue was looked at overall, it might help resolve the problems.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** If you look at the activity on all locks, the canal is totally underutilised in terms of moving boats in mooring terms. In some parts it is totally chock-a-block, like at Noel Road where you see triple moorings sometimes, and there are other parts where it is deserted. I think we probably need a distribution. One of the reasons why it is deserted in some parts is fear of crime. People have evacuated Victoria Park because there has been a spate of break-ins.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Simon, did you want to say anything?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Would you mind coming back to me? I am just making some notes for you.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** No. Rita, did you want to add anything?

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** The reason I am here is basically to give the perspective of residents in the Borough of Tower Hamlets and it is similar to the complaints that Islington Council has received regarding the use of fuel on moored boats and visiting boats. We found sometimes waste wood and fumes from fuel that is not smokeless. We have received complaints about the excess waste build-up on the canals and sometimes noise as well. We have had some noise problems down by Victoria Park. I know you were saying that people have left there but last year there were a lot of things going on that we were responding to, a lot of noise complaints down that way.

I live quite near to Broadway Market and I have noticed the increase in the moorings on that stretch of the canal also. The visitor moorings seem to be switched around every so often and in some parts it is three across in places. Where we are getting the most complaints is around Sewardstone Road and that is an entire housing association that has complained down there. But this was around February/March time when the weather was really cold. Lately we have not received those kinds of complaints.

But part of it, we need to work with the Canal and River Trust because, again, it is a communication issue. There is no approved fuel page of information for people who are using the canal, so in some ways they may not know what they can and cannot use. There are no signs there to tell them what they can and cannot burn on the canal and nothing there, to my knowledge, about noise nuisance in the area or respect for their neighbours.

The other thing I am concerned about is the waste collections along the canal. I have found that sometimes even just walking to work that there is a significant increase in waste along the towpath.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** We are talking about household waste, not human waste?

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** Absolutely, yes, household waste being deposited there and people moving on, so then we have to follow it up either with the Canal and River Trust and ourselves if it is on Tower Hamlets land as well.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Do you provide places for people to put their waste?

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** We are not in charge of the towpath. This is where we have an enormous conflict. We cannot enforce on people for the smoke nuisance that they cause, even though we are a smoke-free borough. Under the Clean Air Act we cannot enforce because the waterway and the towpath is the Canal and River Trust's responsibility. If we try to serve notice on people on boats, we have to give them an amount of time to abate the nuisance and the person in the boat can either move on or change the fuel. They have abated it, but when somebody else moves into the space the same problem repeats itself.

Again, as I have said earlier, it is mainly down to communication. Some people do not know what they can and cannot do there and I do not think there is enough communication for that. I have a meeting with the Canal and River Trust and I think there are a couple of other boroughs coming along on Monday and we are trying to work together to develop some kind of system, not necessarily of enforcement but even to inform people using this space what they can and cannot do and how we can work together to carry out enforcement if necessary.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I realise this is impossible to answer probably, but if there were fewer boats, if they were not three deep, if it were single, do you think that the situation would be much easier to handle or do you think there would still be ...?

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** There would be issues with people visiting the area who are not aware of what they can and cannot do there. With the proximity of the canal to residential properties, it is so near that the slightest little thing can cause a problem. If they are playing music too loud, there are residents who will complain to us. If they are burning waste and residents are getting this odour of fuel in their homes, they will contact us. If there is excess waste along the towpath, we are contacted if they cannot get through to the Canal and River Trust or if it is not followed up quickly. We are the ones that they are reporting the issues to. We then report it to the Canal and River Trust and try and get the issues resolved but in the interim the boat may have moved on and somebody else has come into the space with the same issues. It is really about getting the message across to them that you have neighbours along the canal and you need to respect them as well as enjoy your time there and give them the information they need in order to do that.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** We would certainly agree there are more boats on the river and on the canals. They are being used differently as well.

But what I want to focus on really and the reason I am here and my anxiety is to try and put forward the positives as well as the problems. There is an increase in population density on the canal. There is an increase in population density in London and it is very hard to separate the two off. What is happening on the river and the canals and has been happening for a long time

and has enormous potential and it is an opportunity. It is a change. The canals began as commercial ventures. People were using them to transport stuff. They were almost destroyed and then they became the leisure facility that they have been for a long time. My feeling now is that they are developing a third use as a residential facility and that has to be negotiated but it has an awful lot of potential.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** OK. Do not worry about coming in every time because we are not looking to you to answer all these questions every time.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I personally absolutely support what Andrew has said and if we go back historically it would have been even busier and noisier and all the rest and then of course we all have got used to a quiet time because they were underused. But actually, there are exciting opportunities. There are more people wanting to use the river both as visitors and as people who want to live there more permanently. What we should be doing and could be doing is actually being a bit more positive. OK, these are the people. How do we facilitate, rather than in a way being negative about it and therefore what could we be doing to help people and to make it easier, as you say, communication, and to help people use this fantastic resource. Certainly, as it comes up in some of the submissions, the cost of mooring on the Thames is so prohibitive no wonder nobody moors on it. Actually, they put in one or two fancy temporary marinas where it is zillions to moor every night, so no wonder people try to chance doing something else. Actually, rather like we talk about affordable housing, we should be talking about affordable mooring. I am absolutely saying that this is a resource. We should be making it available to the people.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Sorwar?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Thank you for those comments. Just on what Andrew has mentioned, it is true. The figures we have identified in our report, just on the Regent's Canal since 2011, there has been a doubling in boat numbers of boats without a home mooring. From around 120-odd in 2011, in March this year it reached over 250. That shows that increase in numbers. Clearly, I agree with both these speakers. It is something that we need to look at as an opportunity.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Could we move on to the mooring supply? If we are all agreeing that there is a shortage at least on the canals, can we move on to where we can --

**Male Speaker:** It is on the river as well. There is even more of a problem (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** OK. Fine. Can we discuss how we can increase the moorings?

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** (overspeaking) going back to Simon?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you, Victoria.

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Is there time? I made a number of notes here. I really endorse what Andrew was saying. This in the overall thing is a relatively

small problem. It is significant to the people who are affected by it, particularly the community in Islington around Noel Road where there have been persistent problems for a long time, several years to my certain knowledge. But the vast majority of people who live on boats -- it is important to remember there are some of us who live on boats on long-term moorings as well as those who cruise around, so it is important to remember the diversity of boating activity.

One of the issues is fuel and smokeless fuel. There are small numbers of the community who are on very low incomes who, if you were working in my sector, housing, you would describe as vulnerable. The cost of fuel is an issue. You were saying people are burning things they should not be burning. Absolutely they should not be burning them but they are not in a position necessarily to burn other things that they should be burning or to buy the smokeless fuel, so that is an issue one needs to look at.

In terms of the overall increases, there has been a huge increase in the number of boats nationally on the system over many years but people like me say there has not been a proportionate investment by the Canal and River Trust (CRT) in facilities. Rita was mentioning the lack of refuse facilities and refuse collection on the canal. Another point I was going to make is because access to water points and what we call sanitary stations where people empty their toilet is so limited. That tends to concentrate people closer to those points because sometimes you have to travel quite a long way if you are not in the area. That tends to mean that in some places the problems and the issues become more concentrated.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** We are going to come, actually, to everything that you have just mentioned. So, anyway, there is a problem?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** There is a problem. I think the degree of the problem is overstated.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** OK.

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Could I just say one thing on the affordable moorings? Affordable moorings is a longstanding national issue. At the moment CRT sells mooring vacancies to the highest bidder through an auction system and there is no alternative if you want a directly-managed mooring apart from bidding the most money and that is rather important. That prices people at the lower end of the market completely out of the market in London.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That brings us to how we do create more supply and Victoria's idea that there should be an affordable element in moorings.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I do not know if anyone has looked up the prices of renting in Limehouse overnight.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** All right. Suggestions for increasing moorings?

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** There are planning issues. What tends to happen certainly on the river is that the riparian rights to moor belong to the adjoining landowner. What is happening or has happened is the vast lengths of riverbank have been sterilised by new developments which have been allowed to go ahead without taking into account the river. There is no requirement for them to provide moorings in order to redevelop the land. That has been happening for many years and it continues. So, really, what is happening is that though we are making more use of the land, we are sterilising the river.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Is there not a recommendation on the Blue Ribbon Network to do something --

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** There are recommendations but they do not seem to be followed by the planning authorities and no one seems to enforce it, so it is something which continues to happen in many circumstances. Occasionally provision is made for moorings to be provided, but very often they are restricted to private pleasure use rather than residential use. I do not know quite how you overcome the problem. It is a land ownership issue as well as a planning issue, in a way.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** It is my experience that even if there are boats there when the land is developed, these people with the plans want to get rid of the boats fairly quickly afterwards.

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** That is the case, yes.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** It makes sense to have a commercial use of the buildings instead of purely residential. Every new building seems to have residential. There is no problem with people mooring outside offices. You would never get too many complaints about those but you would about residential, so could there not be some sort of precedent set and some restrictions so you can redress the balance?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** As in Bow Wharf, for example.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Yes. Another point just quickly is Simon was saying that people moor in clusters near water points, et cetera. If we had more water points, we could spread that. If there were fewer vandalism events, then the gaps would not be so wide. I have heard several stories about a water point being vandalised maybe on a Friday and it is not attended to perhaps until the Monday, so that is going to cause that polarisation.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I will come to this issue of crime in a minute, actually.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** That is not just crime. That is facilities (overspeaking) and investment in them.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Did you want to add anything?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Just a quick point which I have written a lot about in my submission when it is published if people are interested. It is



important to say on the CRT that the CRT is also in most cases the riparian owner, so they have a very different degree of control over moorings compared to the river. That is very significant because they can choose or veto what use is made of a lot, not all, of the land next to the canal.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you. That is a very good point. Andrew, did you want to come in?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** I suppose the thing that I am thinking about is the different types of mooring. The idea of affordable moorings is very encouraging. It is nice to think that people might have somewhere to go. But that means one boat in one place indefinitely, whereas the pattern of use that we have at the moment with the regular 14-day movement limits creates a kind of community that deserves to be preserved. I speak to a lot of boaters when I say that I enjoy my movement and I would not want to be obliged to stay in one particular place. Again, although it may begin as an affordable mooring the prices will increase and gradually that would prevent a lot of people from taking advantage.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I know that there are a lot of places where boats moored in the past that have been concreted over. That was in several submissions, in fact. Removing the concrete on some of the --

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Do you mean the grass verges have become concrete and they have lost the mooring rings, for example?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Is that to do with the development for cyclists? Is that a conflict of use there, perhaps?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** This is a direct result and an unexpected result from Transport for London's (TfL) support for increasing and building facilities for cycling along canals. It has been very controversial with other users and actually it has been controversial with some cyclists. The issue is not so much the improvements because a lot of us with boats and cycle on the towpaths, funnily enough. The issue is that where you put a hard surface, one way that people tie their boats up is by putting a big metal spike into the ground at the front and the back and tying to that. Clearly, if you put a hard surface over it and you do not put mooring rings or bollards or something like that in at the same time, that effectively prevents people from mooring. That has happened in a lot of places, particularly towards the east of London where it is a hard surface right up to the canal edge and that has effectively --

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** (overspeaking) that, frankly.

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** It has been raised in the Waterways Commission and directly with British Waterways and TfL. There is a learning.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes, that is a recommendation for TfL, is it not? Keep your paws off the waterways. Yes?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** First of all, if I pick up on the cycling issue first, in general we are obviously working closely with TfL and we give design advice as well as working with them to engage people in that whole debate about using the towpath safety to look after other people's interests on the towpath. We do not generally support concreting over the grass verge, so that is certainly not a policy that comes from us. It may be that it has happened in certain areas but I cannot really comment on whether it was a general approach. Certainly we ensure that the grass verge remains whenever there is improvement of a towpath.

Secondly, on the planning issue, we do actively comment on planning applications. We are a statutory consultee and our policy is to encourage the provision of mooring space within new developments along the canal-side. In general, we are supportive of that. It is just that obviously a lot of developers may be more or less willing to entertain that and obviously there are issues about how those moorings are managed. We are very supportive and we would work with people to ensure that we can bring people to those moorings and perhaps even offer partners who want to run those on an affordable basis. As long as the developers feel that those moorings can be efficiently run, generally they are quite supportive.

On affordable moorings generally, again, we are supportive of that. Where we own land, we are actually going through a process at the moment where we have had lots of representations from various parties including the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) regarding particular sites which could be made available for more community moorings or simply to improve the capacity for mooring. We are working to look at which of those sites are unfeasible because of the profile of the canal or because it needs additional dredging or some other issue. Those that are actually quite feasible would not necessarily be commercial for a commercial developer to develop. We will pull together the map and work with the local community partners as well to say, "Here is a site and we would be happy to support you bringing forward community and affordable mooring proposals".

On the point that prices will always rise, it depends on the social model. In social housing you have a model whereby, if you take out the profit element, then the whole thing becomes a lot more affordable. That is where we are supporting community partners to come up with ideas where essentially we would charge them in terms of a connection fee, as we would with any organisation wanting to use the waterway, but if they then have low costs they pass those low costs onto their members, as it were. I think it is a model that is available.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** You are working on this at the moment, are you? When is that going to be published?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** We are working with one particular group that has had an idea so we are looking over how that model works. It is all quite a new area for us, I would say. As a charity, we have been around for one year now and it is a slightly different approach that we are taking to engaging with lots of partners in a different way and looking to work with partners to actually make all the provision of services that we have been talking

about. CRT as a charity is quite stretched on resources, so we do have to work with partners. One of the processes we are going through is groups discussing pilot initiatives with different groups. When that model is finalised, we can then obviously share that or use that to discuss further.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I am very sympathetic to the shortage of money for CRT and it was true with British Waterways. They are always kept short of money. It meant they made some disastrous development decisions because they had to direct funds. Is there anything councils can do? Do you sometimes have land close to the canal that you allow to be developed? Could you argue for moorings?

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** Yes, we do. We probably could but it would be through planning. Environmental Health can really comment on environmental health issues, noise, air quality, how the build would affect other people around. We are always thinking of public health when we comment on planning applications, so those are the things that we would deal with. But somebody from planning would be better to advise you on that.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you. Could we move on to the issue of facilities? Of course, if there were more facilities, the boats would spread out more. Would that be generally true?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Yes, I think it probably would be true. As the sign says, I represent the National Association of Boat Owners and facilities, as long as I have been involved, for visiting boats has been a source of complaint. We appreciate that British Waterways and now the Canal and River Trust have limited funds, but this to me is just basic stuff. Any boat, whether you live on it or not, needs access to water, access to domestic refuse and access to sanitary facilities to empty toilets. As far as I am concerned, it should be a basic part of the boat licence and one would definitely look for more and wider facilities. The IWA and other associations have consistently said the same thing and there is just not the investment proportional to the amount of increase in the numbers of licenced craft over the last 20 years, I could say with certainty, and it is a huge problem. It is quite a small investment relative to the overall thing. The boat licence is on average £650 or £700 a year through 30,000 boats registered nationally, so at least some of that money should be going back into the facilities.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Could I just ask a point of clarification? You explained to me that the towpath is owned by the CRT, so therefore if they put rubbish bins on it they would have a contract with you to empty them? Sorry, I say you in that area.

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** That is with the local authority currently. Tower Hamlets has a contract with Veolia with regard to (overspeaking)

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** So presumably then subcontract it. But what I am trying to work out is whether something has to be done about each borough. Would that be done by yourselves or

would it be done by each of the boroughs? I see at the moment this is all falling between two stools, so to speak, as usual, unless there is some clear path.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Sorwar?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** To clarify, yes, we own the water space and we own the towpath and generally not a great deal more than the towpath, but around certain points on the canal we do have more space where we put our facilities, toilet facilities and so on. Basically, if there are refuse facilities on the towpath it is generally ours and we have contracts with private contractors to empty those.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** You do not liaise with the (overspeaking)

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** We do liaise but one of the issues we are having, City Road lock, for instance, has been an issue where it is a very popular space and there is a problem with refuse at the moment. Be it boaters or be it others, those bins are getting full. It may be that some boaters are using those but technically they should be using other facilities or they should be taking their refuse away with them. We need to find a way to work with boaters, identify where the need for those refuse facilities are and work with our local authority partners to say what we can do on land that is just off the towpath. Perhaps there is a way of providing recycling facilities and other refuse facilities that means it takes the problem off the towpath and keeps the towpath clean but also provides a service to boaters.

It is early days, in a sense. On Monday we are having a meeting around environmental health and antisocial behaviour but that will then provide us a link to talk about other things.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** If the bins are getting full, surely that is because they are needed. Why should people not then use them?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** If we took away bins, there would not be a litter problem. Technically, people have to take their litter away with them.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** No, if you had no bins, you would have a litter problem. We need more bins and recycling facilities. Andrew?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** If I were cynical I might have seen the actual decline in the facilities in London as a deliberately managed decline of the culture in British Waterways. They felt that boaters were taking advantage of them in a way and that providing more water points they would encourage more boaters. There was an active --

**Male Speaker:** I am not sure that is true.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** It is. There are documents.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I am sure it is not true anymore.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** There was an active desire to prevent that and that is why we are working with Sorwar.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** This is why Sorwar's post is incredibly important, actually, and we must not attack him here for all of British Waterways' blunders.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** I was trying to speak historically using the correct acronyms.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Simon?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** I was just going to make another point that actually some of the waste on the waterways does not come from boaters. A lot of other people use the towpaths and so forth. Certainly where I am in west London the canal corridor is effectively one of the green spaces, so a lot of people come and fish there. A lot of people come and picnic and bring barbeques there, so it is not just the boaters. That was one point.

The other thing I was going to say is really to add to what Sorwar is saying. Certainly where I am in west London there is a very good partnership between CRT, the local residents and the council. So, for instance, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has done various planning gain deals which mean that some of the maintenance of the towpath near me is actually done by the council but through effectively a planning gain deal with people who have developed land next to the canal. For instance, the council contractors clean the bins outside, Sainsbury Superstore cleans the frontage at their place and there is a lot of scope to try and do more deals like that because --

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** (overspeaking) the Kensington and Chelsea Council.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. We can give you some credit for this wonderful relationship.

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** That is really all I wanted to say. There are more ways of partnership working but the role of the local authority is very important because they have more push than a lot of us. Let us put it that way.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** It is an important point, Sorwar.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Are you sure?

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Of course I am. I have worked through the (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That would be lovely, thank you. Sorwar, are you aware of good practice between the CRT and boroughs?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** We are aware of some of it. We do not know enough about it, to be honest, and I would like to pick that up with Simon. But we do obviously work with private partners as well as local authorities on various different schemes. There is an argument to say we should actually be much more corporate in the way we do that and use those links we have to address the whole issue of boating generally and the whole relationship between neighbourhoods and the canal, so certainly I would like to pick up on some of those good practices.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That is great.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** I have a couple of things. We should review the decline in facilities over the last 20 years.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Do you think there has been a decline?

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** I am sure there has. I cannot give you specific examples but I know that boatyards have been lost. You just have to look at the development that has happened at the places that would be ideal for wharves or access points. Some of these buildings I see in Hackney, for example, the Haggerston area, I have been photographing them all and you can see that they are looking derelict. I am worried that they will become luxury flats when they are absolutely ideal. They have hoists outside. That could be a recycling point. It is off the towpath. It is on the other side. Why do we not try to protect those? Let us find out what is causing the decline and see what we can do to reverse it.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** What about waste facilities and water facilities?

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** That could be a waste facility.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Do you think those have been declining as well?

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Even if it is the same number as before, we have twice as many boats, so that equates to a decline in my view.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** There is in the simple numbers a decline in the number of water points.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** And vandalism of them, too.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Yes, vandalism and then failure to replace and also the loss of a shower block in west London quite recently. Quite often facilities that are attached to residential moorings are seen as belonging more to the residents of the moorings than the boaters who might pass by and there has been a movement to provide them more for those and to close them for passing boaters.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** OK, another example: Bowtree Warf, not Bow Wharf but Bowtree Wharf. I have spoken to the coal boat deliverers for propane gas and

they do coal and various other facilities. They float up and down the canal but they have to load and unload at certain points. The number of places they can load and unload their supplies is diminishing. Bowtree Wharf is under threat because there is a development being planned there. Even if the landing point is still going to exist, there will be neighbours complaining, so they will restrict the number of hours that they can load and unload. That is going to cause the coal operators to travel further distances. That is going to put the price up and so on. That is a real worry and it is going to fall under people's radar, so we should follow that one up.

Another point I wanted to make: there seems to be a preoccupation with using the road for waste. I get the impression that where there are these access points, it is made easy for lorries and vans to collect. Why can we not use boats? That is what the canal is for. Service boats shared between the boroughs. I know we are not going to solve this overnight. I have had feedback from Islington Council and it is not in their budget for the next few years to use boats because they have invested in lorries. So, maybe looking forward 10 or 20 years, we ought to be going in that direction.

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** Could I make a more general point? Blue Ribbon Network policies are good but they do not have enough force behind them and there is a need for more specific strategic planning. The local authority dealing with a planning application does not see it in a wider context necessarily. Unless it is spelled out what part a particular facility is playing, it will not necessarily be understood by that local authority, so there is a need for stronger strategic guidance on how to deal with planning applications so that these facilities are protected.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Can I offer another point of view? A lot of these things can be pioneered by boaters. We are terribly difficult to organise but we have a lot of really good ambitions about at least collecting our own waste by water and moving our own waste by water, about recycling it, about helping people with solar panels which would reduce some of the air pollution problems. There are a lot of things that it is possible for boaters to lead on in the same way that they lead on opening up bits of towpath that are notorious for crime and vandalism and turning those into residential areas, albeit temporarily, and raising that profile and making them accessible to the rest of the community. In the same way, the kind of thing that Ian is talking about might be pioneered by boaters and then adopted by councils.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That is an excellent idea.

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** Can I just ask? As a collective, have you made comments on planning applications close to the waterways at all?

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** The ones that come my way like Rosemary Works, but I do not spend my life going through planning applications, only the controversial ones and the canal-side ones. Yes, it is one of the first things I comment on. Can you guarantee that you will be bringing your supplies for construction by water? You are on the waterside. You ought to. What is your excuse for not doing that? Also, when it is operational

and people are living there, why do their bins have to be on the roadside? Why can they not have recycling bins that get loaded onto boats?

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** That is a reasonable suggestion, absolutely. But unfortunately, like Simon said, there are other people using the canals and the towpaths. On sunny days and warm days, the build-up of waste that is overflowing from the small bins that are there for everyone's use is unbelievable. It is not just there. It is not confined to just there. Victoria Park has the same problem. There needs to be larger bins and better waste facilities because there is increased use. People do not have gardens. People want to make the most of all these leisure facilities, the waterways, the parks, but all these things need to be in place for everybody to use them. That could be something maybe on Monday we could discuss, a system of waste removal on the towpath and, again, it would be about information to everybody using it that that facility is available, if we can try and organise it.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I want to come on to air and noise pollution, actually.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Could I just ask one question? Does anyone know the service level agreement with the bin collectors? There was a suggestion once that they were judged by the rate of emptying bins, so it was not in the contractor's interest to have too many bins because it affected their turnaround time.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I am sure that sort of thing is negotiated.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** I would like to know.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Can we move on to noise and air pollution? It is obvious that in some places there are problems. Do you know of particular places apart from Noel Road and Victoria Park?

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** In the King's Cross area near Battlebridge Basin between Thornhill Bridge and Caledonian Road or between Caledonian Road and --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** There is residential on one side. It is offices and residential.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** It is offices on the offside and residential on the towpath side and it was probably a failed experiment at that stretch.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That is a pity.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** We have people in the audience here who live there and they know better than I do. I am sure we will come to that.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Does anybody else want to comment on where? It seems to me it is focused in small places but then it has a big impact.



**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** Yes. The area that I live in, Victoria Park, that stretch of Regent's Canal, Broadway Market and down around there, it is very popular. It is very busy and those issues are the things that come up all the time. Andrew said earlier about the crime and the antisocial behaviour (ASB) on the canal. Is there lighting where you are moored at the moment?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** It is patchy.

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** That is another factor as well. I remember staying near to it and I heard a girl being pulled off her bike into the canal. Some guy was trying to take her bag. It is not very well lit in places. That encourages that kind of antisocial behaviour as well and the noise as well from people just congregating on it. People do not do that in areas that are well-lit. They will slope off to darker places. Maybe we could look at that.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Lighting is a CRT responsibility, generally.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** There is not a lot of space on the towpath to install lighting, to be fair. It is very limited. Our general policy (and we have had a lot of feedback from boaters as well and cyclists in fact) is that lighting is not necessarily a good thing if you are a cyclist because you are going through dark areas and then you are going through suddenly very bright areas. Clearly there is a conflict with security. Generally, we have difficulties in installing lighting and there is a debate to be had with our local authorities and local communities about whether it is wanted in those particular problem areas.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I hate staying there, personally. Would Victoria Park be a safer place if there were more lighting or is it a matter that actually if there were more boats it would be safer?

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** Generally speaking (and I have had experiences of this all over the country), where there are boats moored, when they are residential or when they are occupied, people feel safer having people around, so if anything the use actually helps create that safer space.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Sure.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** On your point, Jenny, about whether smoke and pollution issues are localised, the discussion here shows it is very few places where actually the smoke and noise are themselves the only problem. There are many more places where there is antisocial behaviour, which is not down to boaters, actually, most of it. A lot of it is people coming onto the towpath because they feel there is not good surveillance or there is not good patrolling or informal surveillance through people overlooking it. It is a combination of things. The issue of smoke and pollution from boats is something we can deal with. We talked before about communication, making sure that boaters, especially new boaters, understand the rules about using clean fuels where possible, not using smoky fuels and burning things like rubbish.

Some people actually burn rubbish because maybe the facilities are not there nearby. It is a combination of things we need to look at.

We need to ensure that the communication is going to boaters at the same time as providing facilities, as well as looking at particular hotspots where we may need stricter rules because the profile of the cut there means that smoke may actually just hang in the valley as opposed to being dispersed. We need to have a range of solutions to this.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** One of the submissions (or possibly more) from residents said that when they had sometimes approached boaters to say to them, “Could you turn the music down”, or, “The smoke is very disturbing”, they have actually been abused. We do not have any residents on the panel today and I think we did ask them.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** We are looking at very isolated cases here, are we not, the one boater who burns rubbish?

**Audience Member:** No, two or three times a week.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** OK, it might be (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Can you say where you live?

**Audience Member:** We live between the Caledonian Road bridge and the York Way bridge. We live at the bottom of Treaty Street. Fortunately, because somebody very kindly at the Canal and River Trust had mooring rings removed, we actually since March/April have not had smoke coming directly onto our windows. All the way through the winter, my partner has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and we have had the smoke actually coming onto our sitting room window and filling our room to such an extent we could not be in there. Go into the bedroom and the same thing is happening from the other side from the window overlooking the canal. Go to the back of the block of flats and the car park is full of smoke. Where do we go? We are not the only people that live on there.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Did you speak to boaters about this?

**Audience Member:** Yes, on many occasions.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** And ...?

**Audience Member:** Occasionally you would have somebody very kindly say, “Yes, I understand all that. Yes, we will move a bit further along”, but, no, generally speaking, “Sorry, get on with it”, kind of thing.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Andrew?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** I cannot speak for everybody. Again, I feel that awkward neighbours are in awkward places. Some neighbours burn rubbish in their back gardens. Some people who live on land are equally awkward.

**Audience Member:** Yes, but we have a right to clean air and we were not getting that.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Indeed. I cannot speak on your particular case, obviously.

**Audience Member:** No, but that is why we are here (overspeaking)

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** The problem we seem to encounter is smokeless coal is not cheap, especially if you burn the good stuff. It burns at a lower calorific value, so again it is harder to heat one's boat that way. I would love to think of some kind of scheme which would identify those people who were living on the margins and would help them to afford to burn the good coal. It would be better for them and better for the neighbours. It becomes very difficult when there are those marginal areas.

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** There is an issue in that whereas people who are on low incomes can get help to insulate their homes and to provide proper forms of heating, the same is not available for people living on boats. There is an issue and they are not treated in the same way, so that does help to create the problem.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Again, boaters are hard to reach and quite a lot of them selectively so, so the approaches have to be quite -- the community organisation that London Boaters sometimes tries to be would love to be able to make those approaches to people, but it is a very tentative process.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Maybe redistributing where boats -- this may sound simplistic, but that place in the Battlebridge area, the towpath is right next to the homes. It is the most severely affected I know of.

**Audience Member:** (overspeaking) far away.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** You go further down the canal and the homes are 50 yards away or they are offices. So, if someone cannot afford the smokeless fuel, perhaps give priority for them in the other stretches. Maybe just swap moorings.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Just enabling more stretches. That takes us back to that point again, does it not? The problem may be there but it will move away.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Yes, a bit of granularity.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I will come to you. Yes, Simon?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** I was just going to give an example from the Kennet and Avon Canal in Wiltshire. There are undoubtedly some boaters,

like in any group in society, who are really more interested in themselves than their neighbours but that is an example where there is a generator-free stretch in a similar place where there are some homes next to the canal. That has been agreed by the local boaters and it is enforced by the local boaters. If you turn up there and start running your generator and belching smoke, it will not be the police or the local authority but it will be a couple of local boaters who will come and bang on your door and say, "You had better move".

There are some positives and one has to look very specifically at different locations. Noel Road is one where it is in a cut and it is very close where you are. You are literally next to the towpath. There are other places where it is not a problem. One of the things I fear is that people will apply blanket solutions where there is something that is actually very specific and very local, so I have a lot of sympathy with your situation.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Actually, if a development were not allowed right up to the towpath as we are seeing at Bow Wharf, for example, but pushed back, then that would make life better. Are you a resident or a boater?

**Audience Member:** I have interests in both. I am also extremely concerned about the public health issues of burning fuel. Diesel is the most polluting fuel and we have to remember that smokeless fuel cuts down damaging pollutants by at least 60%, so that leaves 40% even with smokeless fuel. I am interested to know about the Simon Robbins report that there has been an area which has been designated as no diesel because I think that might very well solve that problem for areas where there are gullies. What about the smoke in that area? Is the use of fuel covered?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** I am not aware that it is. It was very specifically about noise and fumes right next to a property.

If I could make one general point, a big issue (and it is something certainly our association and other associations try to promote) is also the maintenance of stoves and the maintenance of diesel appliances. A properly maintained and efficient diesel appliance or a properly maintained and properly installed stove running on the right fuel is very efficient. It actually complies with the smokeless regulations. Exactly the same stove that has not been maintained properly or is using slightly the wrong fuel can be a problem, so there are some subtleties in there. Again, there is that issue. The people who observe those subtleties and are conscientious about that are not the problem. The people who do not observe that are the people who are most difficult to reach and to educate about better ways of dealing with those problems. I do not have an easy answer to that.

**Audience Member:** The legislation at the moment does not allow smoke-free zone limits to be enforced as a legal entity on the towpath. A lot of people are rather hoping that that will be addressed.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** We might comment on it in the report but we cannot initiate Government legislation, I am afraid, not even secondary legislation.

**Audience Member:** Can the London Assembly make a smoke-free zone for the canal going through different boroughs?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** They certainly cannot. This report will be making recommendations to the Mayor, to local authorities, to CRT and to boating organisations as well and to the Government, but we have no direct power, definitely not over the Mayor or Government. Andrew and then Sorwar?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Simon mentioned Noel Road in Islington which is the focus for a lot of what has been going on here. One of the proposals that one of the boaters came up with, in fact largely to do with the prevention of crime (and there are gates at either end of that mooring area), was that we would establish a rota where a key could go around and be passed from boater to boater with the responsibility of opening it and closing it at the beginning and end of the day. This was replacing an agreement that CRT used to have with the local council for it to be opened at closed. A certain person who works here was rather upset to find that gate closed at one point, a Noel Road resident. Anyway, it was very hard to maintain --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** You do not mean the Mayor, do you?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** I am afraid I do. Anyway, it was very hard to maintain because of the boaters' obligation to move. We ran it and we ran it quite successfully but not quite successful enough to establish it.

There was a second proposal made that the mooring restrictions could be loosened up to allow certain boaters to act as mooring wardens in an informal/formal manner with CRT. These negotiations have not worked particularly well in Noel Road but they are being trialled in Stonebridge. Am I right? For a certain amount of responsibility being taken on by a boater, they will be allowed to stay for longer and manage facilities and open locks. The same boater could advise on the use of smokeless fuel, the running of diesel generators, et cetera. Only (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** A pseudo-warden, yes. Sorwar?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Thank you. I am glad you mentioned that. First of all, I might just go back to the pollution issue. Ironically, Noel Road was going to be the focus of a bid to be made to the Mayor's Air Quality Fund to do the very kinds of solutions you have been talking about: working with people to identify greener practices, looking at their stoves and their engines, giving them advice and helping them to acquire more efficient equipment. Unfortunately, that application was declined. That would have been a great place to actually test the new approach of working with boaters and giving that kind of advice. That is the kind of thing the Assembly could support us in in terms of helping us acquire the funding to do these kinds of pilot projects to see how they work.

Secondly, on national as opposed to local, in London we are very much committed to a local approach to solutions, rather than having a blanket policy across the capital for moorings. As

part of that, last year a group called Better Relationships on London Waterways was created which pulled together --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Who created that?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** It was brought together through the boaters and the Canal and River Trust together with the whole idea that there needed to be better relationships between all the different kinds of users, including residents and communities adjacent to the canals. A lot of these ideas have been floated there and since I have come in post, I am co-ordinating that process in terms of coming up with an action plan that picks up some of these proposals and works with interested groups and the like to actually take them forward. We cannot facilitate all of it but we can be the link to talk with the local authorities, to talk to our property people, et cetera, and just explore some of those. We are committed to local solutions and one of those might be to look at bringing groups together at Noel Road and at Kings Cross with residents and boaters together to say, "How are we prepared to work together? What are our limits?" We are committed to that and we fully understand that residents often suffer (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** No. I have been very generous about letting you interrupt but, please, have some courtesy because it is quite important that everybody has their say and I will come to the audience afterwards. Thank you.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** On the moorings, again, that is part of our local solutions. It may be that visitor moorings may be able to work with boaters to have somebody who is slightly more permanent in return for having some responsibility over helping to manage moorings. We do not want to come in with this because one group has suggested it. We do need to work with lots of different groups to say, "Is that a generally acceptable proposal?" We are not saying that is a given yet.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Simon?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Sorwar will not know this because he has only recently come to our little community. I do not know what the correct word is. I do not know what the polite word is. The fact is that there used to be a very large network of moorings wardens up and down the canal and British Waterways did away with them about four or five years ago. I can declare an interest because I was one in the Kensal Green area.

One of the concerns (again, this is not to get at Sorwar in particular) is that some of us have heard a lot of these things before. The concern is the consistency and the sticking power, if you like, of some of these things. There is a feeling that these things get raised from time to time at various sorts of exercises we are having today and with the Canal and River Trust and then three or four years down the road we are almost back to where we starting. Finding a consistency and longevity with some of these things is for me a real issue. That sums it up.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Some institutional memory.

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Yes, that is very good way of putting it.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Until quite recently there were wardens in Primrose Hill visitor moorings and in the Islington visitor moorings. One of them still exists on his boat but he is --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** There is still a warden at Maida Vale, is there not?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** No.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** But they were very effective. I have heard that from several sources. They were boaters. They were respected by boaters. They did not apply force. They had a quiet word and then they get the backup from the real enforcers. That is such a great loss and a false economy to lose them.

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** One of the issues with moorings wardens was historically an absence of support from British Waterways in many cases. I work as a housing manager and I am trained in that sort of thing, so working on estates and working with people is something I am used to doing, so I bring those skills from another part of my life. In the time I was a moorings warden, which was 15 years, most of that time I did not even have a written contract. It was by word of mouth. There is a very good piece of work that could be done there just to try to revisit all that because where it worked well it worked very well and it is just having an informal word. It is peer pressure because it is usually another boater.

We were given the example of Maida Vale. A lot of people who were moorings wardens are still around because we live on the canal and we live on our boats, so there is a resource there. It needs a little bit of support and a little bit of love. There is a case for roving wardens as well. There are plenty of people in the cruising community who could contribute. I am waffling a bit. That is an idea maybe to develop after the meeting, but I do think it is important, that peer pressure.

**Male Speaker:** Based on co-operation, not enforcement. That is important.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Could we come on to the issue of communication? When I had the meeting at Noel Road, there were some boaters who were just casually walking past and who suggested quite a lot of ideas about how to communicate better with boaters. Clive, do you have a view on that?

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** I live on a permanent residential mooring and so I guess where you have that situation it is obviously easier for communication to be established. When you have moving boats, it is more difficult. Maybe Andrew has a better idea on how --

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** We have successfully distributed a newsletter at one point to hundreds of boats, potentially. We have an email list, a Facebook page and a Twitter account. Only the first of those three I actually understand but there is communication.

Again, one of the strange things is that this is a community that people elect to join but perhaps without really understanding the way it works. I certainly was in that position when I became a boat owner. It looks like a wonderfully attractive lifestyle to people and the more boats you see the more likely you are to want to become a boater. Then, when you engage with CRT, it is a case of filling in a cheque or whatever, sending it in and receiving your plates and then the conversation almost ends. The Boater's Handbook is a very good resource. I read it religiously because I love small print but a lot of people will not do that. Again that is (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** The Boater's Handbook comes from CRT?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Yes, so I know which side of the river to pass on without any wrecks.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I did mean communication between boaters and the CRT rather than between boaters themselves, but your point about the newsletter --

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** As boaters we spend a lot of time talking about CRT.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** What we need to do is have that conversation with boaters and it is fair to say perhaps we have not communicated as well as we could have done in the past. My position represents a change in our approach. My title is Boater Liaison Manager. It was actually advertised as Community Liaison Manager, so it is a very wide remit and it shows that we are committed to doing things differently. It is about listening and acting on some of those things.

I take the point that once we have given a licence there probably is not a great deal of communication apart from when someone then breaks a rule. We have to change that and have much more liaison and dialogue and hear ideas and proposals that can help us manage the waterways more effectively. There are lots of good ideas that we can act on.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** One of the boaters that was walking past did suggest that you send out more information about London-specific issues and when you send the licence that you actually send something physical as well, which I thought was a good idea, like the Boater's Handbook but something specific to London.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** We have had conversations with smaller groups of boaters who have said, "We are happy to rewrite some of our content on our website that actually speaks to boaters more effectively where there are certain gaps in our information", and we have invited them to come in and actually have that conversation and do that content for us. There is more of a bigger conversation to be had about where those communication gaps are.



**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you. I am so sorry. I did not ask people from the audience to put their hands up and say who they are, so if you would say who you are?

**Audience Member:** Paul Strudwick from the Inland Waterways Association. One of the problems with a lot of the communication and a lot of these newer boaters coming on is that we do not actually have anything which says what is likely to happen if you do move on to a boat. What is the expectation of the community that you are moving into and the community around the canals of your behaviour and what you are expected to do? Somebody taking on a boat can move there and think, "I can live here permanently at this spot which is nice and convenient for my work", and then get in trouble because along comes CRT and says, "No, you have to move in 14 days". Somehow they need to get to people before so that when they make the decision to move onto a boat, they have an informed decision. I do not know how you do it, by the way. I have no solution.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That is CRT's job, definitely, yes. In just a moment I am going to come to people in the audience, so did you --

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Yes, I was going to give one example that proves there has been a breakdown in communication and that is when people moor at lock landings.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** It drives me mad.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** We have seen that at the Danbury Street bridge by the ramp. There is a water point and there are two or three boats. They do not realise that they are blocking the turning circle for a large number of boats like the Angel boat. In driving terms, if somebody parked in a box junction they would know about it. They would be (overspeaking) about it. The same thing does not happen on the water. That is because I do not think people know. They are not doing it deliberately. They are just not aware of the inconvenience they are causing.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** The only towpath presence from CRT seems to be that once-a-month delivery of a patrol notice to some boats. There is no community neighbourhood policing equivalent in CRT who might speak to the people who are double-moored on lock landings.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** But not in a policing way. In a sort of helping and facilitative way.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Yes, exactly.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I forgot to tell you all that Victoria Borwick is the Deputy Mayor of London, by the way. There are lots of phoney ones that the Mayor has nominated but Victoria is the real one and so she does have direct access to the Mayor. In the case of your air quality proposal for the Fund, Victoria and I would have been very good people to come to get support. There is an issue actually that CRT has to be a little more creative about reaching out to people.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** (inaudible) their contacts.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** She winked when she said that, by the way. I am going to come to people in the audience, if you would like to speak, if anybody would. Yes. Can you say who you are?

**Audience Member:** I am a medical person working at St Mary's and Hammersmith Hospital and I work with friends and neighbours who have interests on the canal.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Do you mind telling us your name?

**Audience Member:** Elizabeth Simpson.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you.

**Audience Member:** The communication issue is absolutely key. Some of the points that have come up for discussion illustrate that good communication practice has been the sort of thing that Simon Robbins has talked about. Just if I clearly illustrate that, as you know, my substantial concern is over pollution health. The manner in which Sorwar is attempting to improve communication locally, unless -- and the warden idea is something absolutely key to this because people break the rules all the time, mostly not knowing about them but sometimes just not caring about them, so this is both noise and pollution. But if you do things just locally in an area where people only moor for 14 or 7 days and they then move on and cannot come back for six months, it is going to have less effect than if you have a local warden who could actually remind people what those rules are. The signage has already been identified. There is conflicting signage at one site. Communication is key and I think it is a very important point that you have raised.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you. You should understand that the submissions contain a huge amount of information and this is really to draw out anything that is extra especially difficult. Yes, can you say who you are and where you are from?

**Audience Member:** Keith Brown, Community Organiser on the Lower Lea and Regent's Canal. Jenny, you said you were going to talk about crime, so I wanted to bring up a little thing that I would love the Greater London Authority's (GLA) attention around. There have been break-ins and a lot of crime happening on the towpath and owners in different places are developing great relationships. We have a great relationship with the Tower Hamlets police because of all the crime that happens in Victoria Park. There is a very good relationship and there is a relationship we are developing with the marine unit who police the entire waterways. That unit is very crucial to us. They take the Thames and the canals and the rivers, so they are pretty stretched. But they are the only unit that is not stuck in a barrel. We have a good relationship with Tower Hamlets but that is seven miles of canal and then there is Hackney next door and then there is Newham. We do not have those same relationships. More support from the marine unit would help our community. That is all I wanted to say.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I am sure if it would help we could talk and ask about the policing.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. We will think about how we could do something on that. Sorwar?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** I wanted to come back, Jenny, just on the point about wardens and towpath presence. Islington and Noel Road has been one of the places where we have had quite constructive discussions and obviously we have a whole history of issues that have been affecting local residents. Last week we had a meeting with Islington where we did talk about the potential of CRT putting in more resources to support me and people who would actually patrol the towpath at times when our current enforcement teams do not operate, so out of hours, at weekends and so on. We are hearing these messages and looking at ways that we can actually use our resources differently to make sure that we do have a bit more of a relationship with people and are able to communicate licence terms and good behaviour as well as specific local standards, if you like.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Community organisers, yes.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That sounds very interesting.

**Audience Member:** I just wanted to pick up on the point on finding creative solutions. Whenever private properties are bordering too close to the canal, would it not be possible to put mains points in? They could be metered. They could be coin-operated. The fuel that exists (inaudible) power for which the boaters are quite happy to pay because the costs for that are a lot less than running your diesel engine or your generator or buying coal. Then you could price out all the issues that we are having in trying to save more but I think it is not that they are just trying to upset neighbours. I think, in winter, it is the pure existence in attaining and I think for that we need to look at both sides.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Is there electricity at Battlebridge?

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** That was a temporary arrangement.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** All right. So there is no electricity there.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** You mean for the basin itself or the towpath?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** For the boaters.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** No. It is just that mooring rings were put in there quite recently.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** But not electricity or water.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** No, absolutely not. We do not even find that on the established stretches.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Yes. I think that is a great idea. We have explored solutions like that. There are issues where you have to cross private land and some properties, some owners of live blocks, those particular sites. They are less willing to have an arrangement whereby the power goes through the towpath for access for boaters, so there are issues where people are being reluctant to take that on board because of management issues or the cost issues but it is something I think we certainly need to build into our overall set of things that we look at.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** My impression is as well, for example, at Noel Road, there is just not the space on the towpath to fit walkers, cyclists and electric points but yes, in other places, there must be that sort of solution. Yes, I come to ...?

**Audience Member:** I would like to come back a bit to where we were talking earlier about strategic guidance. I think one of the problems that we have had across London particularly has been that nobody has actually looked at the canal network, the growth of demand for residential moorings as a whole. We have talked a lot about Noel Road; we have talked a lot about Tower Hamlets. There are vast stretches where there is nothing. Because there are no facilities, there are areas where it has become a serious problem and we do need strategic guidance to the local planning authorities particularly as to what they should allow in terms of residential moorings and development on the canal side because otherwise we are going to navigate anywhere. If each borough tries to solve it, sort it out in its own little patch, eventually we are going to just end up with a series of little bubbles and no joined up thinking.

To show an example, we were talking about loss of facilities. There used to be a very good boatyard over in Southall. It was decided the CRT impact, it was no longer going to be allowing people to use it and there is a disused basin there. From the residential boating point, there could be more facilities in the disused basin.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Sorry, where was it? I was writing.

**Audience Member:** Southall.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Southall, yes, OK, lovely. Can you say who --

**Audience Member:** My name is Hillary Norris and I live actually on the canal towpath. We are this much away from the towpath itself to my window. We have actually installed lighting, which is on at night, shining on to the towpath. We have done that really for two reasons; partly for our own security but the second reason is to let people who are parked, moored along the canal know we are there because I think half the time they do not. They come along, they see a space and they think, "We can moor here. Fine", and they do not actually look up and go, "There is a window there", or, "Perhaps I am a bit close. Perhaps I will just ease a bit further away". We have done it for that reason and our next-door neighbours have done the same thing. They have put lighting outside, so at least somebody approaching will know there is habitation there.

We have a wall which is covered with ivy and I think people just see the ivy and that is it. That is a reason why somebody mentioned lighting. It is actually quite a good idea to have pockets of light because it does draw attention to the fact that it is not just the canal there; there are residents. That is the first thing I wanted to say.

The second thing is that again going back to the proximity of the towpath to certain types of housing on the canal; we have had instances where boats have come along which have had quite a high superstructure and it means that if they park outside our window, that is all we can see. It is like having a Chieftain tank outside our windows. It blocks our light; it blocks everything, so that is another reason. I think there has to be some recognition from people using the canals that there are people actually living along the towpath and I am wondering whether -- I know, Sorwar, you have on the website a code of conduct for boaters actually on the canal. There is nothing about interaction with residents. I think that would be a really good idea if you could do that.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Very good, absolutely.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you. That is a really positive comment.

**Audience Member:** Madam Chair, three points if I may.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Would you like to say who you are?

**Audience Member:** Yes, of course. Andrew Phasey of St Pancras Cruising Club on the Regent's Canal but also representing the Inland Navigation Panel of the Royal Yachting Association. Three points; but before that, if I may, what a joy it is to be here today listening to this actually very friendly debate because sometimes, I have to say, the friendliness does not always transfer to the navigation but it is a pleasure to be here.

My three points, Madam Chair. First of all, how much confidence do we have in the accuracy of the data that says how many continuous cruisers we have in London? The reason I ask is I have seen the data checkers in action for some years now and they always take a detailed look at boats moored closest to the towpath but they don't cross boats to get the details of the double-mooring or the triple-mooring and this is apparent in my conversations with some of the data checkers over the years. I am not sure how much confidence we have in that data. That is my first point, ma'am.

The second; we cruise often on the Regent's Canal and I would like to be associated with Ian's comments on mooring on lock landings. It is appalling and when we pull alongside an illegally moored boat to drop crew to operate the locks, often we are subject to abuse and a couple of years ago, someone threatened to break my legs. OK? I am an old soldier and will take care of myself.

My third point is because there is so much occupation of visitor moorings we have real difficulty leaving our basin at St Pancras to go for half a day or a day's mooring because there simply is nowhere to moor. That is tying the hands of people who pay moorings and licenses and want to

go boating when we are able to skive off work. Something really needs to be done about the lock landings and have visitor moorings for genuine visitors who wish to boat. Thank you.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Otherwise it becomes locked; nobody moves because no one can move. The whole thing is a self --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Yes?

**Audience Member:** Maggie French, London Waterbus Company. We run an operation on the canal so it is essential for us to be able to move. Nowadays because there are so many boats moored all over the place, it takes us an hour longer to do a daytrip and it becomes uneconomical. While we are talking about increasing moorings and spreading the moorings out, it will cause even more of a problem and at the same time, we are talking about maybe moving rubbish by water but that will not be economical because it will take them too long to get anywhere with the rubbish, so every boat will have to slow down.

Similarly, what Andrew was saying, we can no longer go to Limehouse because it is too difficult to get there. There are too many boats on all the lock landings and too many people all over the locks and you cannot actually get your boat through safely.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Those dratted people and in good weather. No, they are everywhere. Yes? Thank you for that comment.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Thank you, Chair. I think it is really useful to hear those issues. We are aware of the issues about landings and myself and Paul at the IWA, we have been talking about better signage and how we can improve that. I have found that in the two months I have been here, there was a bit of a process to go through in terms of looking at planning restrictions, heritage issues around signage as well as the practical issues of then implementing signage. We are looking at the case. It is just taking a bit longer than we would like to do it but we understand, especially with summer coming up, it is a priority, so we certainly need to look at that very quickly.

Secondly, around the data checking, in doing this piece of work, has highlighted that the amount of data we have and how difficult it is actually to analyse it, but I would be concerned if there was an issue with the accuracy and the robustness of our data checkers who are actually volunteers but have a clear role and so on. We also have enforcement officers who lead that data checking team and, as far as I am aware, every single boat, whether they are double or triple berthed, should be being checked and I believe they are but if they are not, I would like to get some more evidence around that obviously.

As I said, the growth in numbers means that obviously it is leading to lots of conflicts between trade boats, leisure boats, people that live aboard, et cetera. I think that is partly the reason for our Better Relationships Group trying to identify how we can manage those different conflicting demands. We cannot avoid the fact that, in the last three years, there has been a doubling of boat numbers who are allowed to have moorings, so that will inevitably have an impact on the

space available and the passage of boats past those moored boats, so we have to find a way around that.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Right, yes, the man behind.

**Audience Member:** Yes, my name is Simon Elliston. I live on a boat and I would actually dispute the figures you have. You give a figure of I think 120 something in 2011 and 250 this year.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** This is on the Regent's Canal only. The analysis we have done is so far for sightings of boats on the Regent's.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Did you want to add to that?

**Audience Member:** I did not quite realise it was the Regent's Canal.

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** I apologise. I should have made that clear.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** No. It did seem low for London. Yes, the lady at the back.

**Audience Membe:** Sarah Emmings. I am on a small private mooring sited in central London. I also work as a Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) qualified skipper. I am also worried about space, why it is still only licensed as the density of the boats on the canals as opposed to imposing the same as the European Association (EA) so it goes on square footage because a broad-beam is going to take up twice as much space as in our boat.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That is one of my ad hoc questions actually. Should wide-beam boats pay more? Yes. Shall we park that for a moment and we will see if there are any other questions as well? Yes.

**Audience Member:** It has reached a point now where there are so many boats and there are not places for anybody to moor. Just in the last two weeks, we have had a double boat tie itself to the underside of a bridge. Your enforcement officers, three of them went past and did not put a notice on it. In the end, I think some direct action was taken by boaters and it was removed. We now have a boat on one of our moorings, which we pay for, who moored himself up there yesterday and refused to move. He went to the CRT office and was told there he could stay there. As far as I am concerned, that is stealing from us because that is our mooring and we cannot put our boat on it, so it needs to be dealt with really fast now.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Could you deal with that as a matter of urgency?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Absolutely (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. I have forgotten your name already. I am sorry.

**Audience Member:** Tina. I think it would be very beneficial because some of those things are pretty much a seasonal extreme where there is the cruising clubs in the summer or the heating in the winter but I think whatever solution would arise there, it has to sort of trace. That is not a blank canvas and needs to realise which season we are in and what works best for the different stakeholders in that moment in time rather than to rule something out and we spend (inaudible).

**Audience Member:** Could I respond, Madame Chair? As long as the ice has not formed, we boat in all seasons because we do not have -- it is St Pancras Cruising Club.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I can vouch for that. I am a member actually, so I ought to declare it. Yes?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Just responding to several of the things people have said from the floor. There is an issue around how effective CRT enforces some of these rules. It is a sort of elephant in the room for me. It is difficult to say a lot about it without getting very technical about what the legislation says and all the rest of it and I will try to avoid doing that right now, but you give the example of lock landing which are essential operating structures for anybody moving through. In the past 18 months, two years, CRT has said quite unequivocally they will not use one of their sets of legal powers to deal with that. They do actually have exceptional powers to move boats without notice where it is causing an obstruction. That is not something Sorwar can answer; that is a national policy issue.

On the other hand, the legislation is, if not weak, ambiguous, and there are quite extensive notice periods required for less urgent actions and there is generally an issue around what powers and how effectively CRT apply those powers on enforcement. It is a very, very difficult question and I am not even going to try to get into a long debate about it now but one does need to look at that. It is the classic thing of in the legislation, in the regulation, CRT has no direct powers to enforce things like noise pollution. That is something generally that rests with the local authority.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Do you mind if I --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Go ahead, yes.

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlet):** We cannot enforce it because, like I said, we have to give a period of time for abatement under the environment and we test the boat can move or change the fuel. The issue is abated. However, somebody else comes along and we have the same issue, and while we do have an enforcement role in the borough, we do not necessarily want to just take enforcement action all the time. What we are actually trying to achieve is by working with the Canal and River Trust, some system whereby we can develop an enforcement policy that communicates to people using the waterways that some things are unacceptable and we can take enforcement if necessary. That may deter some of the behaviours that we have discussed earlier today.



It is not that we want to just be enforcers and enforce on everything. I think there is a problem with communication and if we can address that, that may negate the need for any enforcement but it should be there in the background for any particular reason. Like that lady said, somebody tying their boat to underneath the bridge which prevents people actually using the canal, the lock landings preventing people using the canal. So there has to be something there to deter people from behaviours like that.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Behaving badly. Yes.

**Audience Member:** I would like to speak on Simon's point about enforcement. I think one of the problems, which is an historic one as well, is enforcement within BW was, at the very best, patchy. Sometimes they would suddenly come down and enforce in an area almost to a point of stupidity and then the next day, they would move away and that was that.

I think one of the things we can hope for from CRT is that they actually develop an enforcement policy for a range of issues and then stick to them and just apply them steadily. Once that happens, two things will happen. People will then actually know what they are entitled to do and what they are not entitled to do and other people will be more confident in perhaps reporting somebody who is not complying with what are the rules and be able to help those people more in coming to a way that we want them to work. I think there is a lot of history in this which goes back many years with British Waterways and we have an opportunity now with CRT in its formation to get things right in the future.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you. Can I go back to this issue of broad-beam boats and wide-beam boats? Should they pay more? Should it be square footage?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** I have a narrow boat. It is all right by me.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. OK.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** It has to be, Jenny. I think it has to be. If we are allowing double mooring --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes, more money.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** -- a wide-beam is a double moored narrow boat, in effect.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes, fine, OK, good. I think so. It seems sensible. Could I (overspeaking)

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** Could I just speak?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Against? Do you have a wide beam boat?

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** No, but I have a wide-beam mooring. It is a very difficult area. Where I moor, I pay for a berth and I can put anything up to a wide-beam boat. I pay the same money whether I put a 20-foot dinghy or a 75-foot Dutch barge in that space, so there are inconsistencies on this issue of wide-beams.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I really just say once again, I was supporting the fact of some flexibility is really this.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Perhaps in hot spots we should have that rule but not in the other spaces.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Perhaps the licence should cost more.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** It already does.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Does it?

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** It does.

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** If I could just make one more point, there is a belief that the bigger the boat is, the more impact it has on the canal. We did some research with the then British Waterways a few years ago which shows that generally the size and the frequency a boat is used does not have a huge impact on the general cost of running the canal. It is the age of assets, how old something is, how worn out it is. So there are difficult arguments about just because something is bigger, it has a bigger impact. It certainly takes up, obviously, more space on the canal but again, there is an issue of not everybody wants a double moor when there is no requirement to double moor, so I think it is a little bit more complicated than it might seem just on the obvious size of a boat.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** The last thing I wanted to ask everybody about is the new Olympic moorings. I do not know anything about that.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** One of my questions to you: is the Olympic Park open yet?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** No.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Again, they are only those wooden bollards. There is no electricity or anything or facilities, are there?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** No. Does anybody know anything about the Olympic moorings? Perhaps we should get (overspeaking)

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** At the next meeting or some other time.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** We will find out about them. Yes?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Chair, my understanding is it will not be open this year. It is either next year or the year after but it is --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I am told next year.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Again, it is eyes on the river. I mean, that is the other problem. One of the things I have to admit to you is that earlier I was on the Olympic Security Committee and one of the things I was very keen on is that we should keep the canals open as much as possible based on the more eyes on the river principle rather than the police's desire which obviously was to shut everything down and to go into a sort of lockdown but the police inevitably always win. I am absolutely a firm believer in it is eyes on the river being the thing but of course, just thinking back now, when I visited, as you say, it is all hard. I know they have the bollards. I do not remember seeing any other facilities, so maybe that is something we ought to go back to.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Will it be CRT-owned, the water and the towpath?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** I believe it is, yes.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Right, OK.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** We need to ask about it.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I think we will find out about that because this is an opportunity to create some more moorings; visitor moorings, residential moorings.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Exactly.

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** I think the absence of any communication about this speaks for itself really. If there was a genuine willingness to engage with people who want to create community moorings on the offside of the canals and rivers, thereby increasing the mooring space for everybody, that was a wonderful opportunity for it to be done. The boaters were very, very good. We complied with the Olympic restrictions despite an awful lot of inconvenience for people and we were promised some kind of input as a consequence of that and we have had no input. I became aware only through the internet of proposals to develop more into Victoria Park, permanent residential moorings; no communication. The other thing --

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Sorry, what permanent residential moorings?

**Andrew Bailes (London Boaters):** Residential moorings. The other thing with these developments is they are quite often being put in the wrong places. They are being seen as a solution to the problem of continuous cruising boats would be to establish a shiny boat with an electricity plug-in point, whether that is permanently lived in or whether it is a lovely use because it closes the problem and I don't think that is the right way to think about moorings.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I will write to them. Is it the Olympic Legacy Development?

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I have been trying to give them --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** We will have a meeting.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** With the support of the people here, maybe we could --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** The Deputy Mayor of London will have a meeting with the London Legacy.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** We would love to have a meeting and ask, hopefully -- hang on, I will just summarise some of your points really about that problem.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes, OK. I was going to just suggest a letter but obviously a meeting is much more powerful. Yes, Commodore?

**Audience Member:** Chair, if I could just speak in support of the Deputy Mayor for that, we wanted access to the navigations too, ma'am (inaudible) because he refused us access to the navigations.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Perhaps so but no, there is a lot of work to be done, as you say. I think we are starting right on the back foot here. Maybe start off with the letter and then say we want to go into battle.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** By chance, I did invite the Mayor's Chief of Staff here, who runs the whole Mayoralty, on to our boat for a trip around the Olympic Park and it caused a bit of a flutter when they had to admit it was not going to be open, but very frustrating actually.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Is there anybody who has not spoken?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. Anybody who has not said anything who would like to say anything about any of the issues we have covered or anything you feel we have not covered?

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Keep feeding it in.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** We have had submissions from people on the Thames.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I was asking; is it the River Thames Trust? You are going to have to put me right here. The River Thames Association? I cannot remember what the name of it is.

**Audience Member:** The Port of London Authority and the Navigation Authority.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** No. There is another boaters' group.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** We did invite the Port of London but they felt it was (and this says it all really about the river) really a canal issue and not a river issue.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** No, I think it is a river issue.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Of course it is and I think we will chase --

**Audience Member:** There are so many issues going on, on the River Thames, with the residential houseboats. That could be a reason why the Port of London Authority (PLA) did not show up today.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Do you want to give us a flavour of something because then we can write to them?

**Audience Member:** There are two court cases just finished now. There is probably another seven in the pipeline just on the riverbed alone and the PLA are registering the freehold in their name. So they are creating almost a ransom script for the house boaters. People see it as within CRT. CRT own fence line to fence line. Here they are the statutory navigation authority for the safe navigation of the river. What they are turning themselves into is the landlord of the river and those people who have residential boats on the river are now finding that they are in a very, very precarious state because they are being priced off the river by PLA with a works licence structure and underneath it all, the riverbed is being taken away from them. You get to a situation where you might own your boat; you thought you might have owned your mooring. The reality, you have nothing. This is a very, very real problem.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** You are absolutely right. That does come within the remit of this Committee, of this scrutiny, so we will have a --

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** If you give us your name and address afterwards and maybe we could follow up some of the things you have said with you.

**Audience Member:** Yes.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Thank you.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** You are with him, are you?

**Audience Member:** I know him, yes.

**Audience Member:** I grew up on the River Thames but I do know the canals quite well, so that is why I have been asked to come along today but I think there are many issues on which are relevant on the tidal river where I think there is enormous scope to provide facilities and moorings and there is very little sign of it ever happening.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** In fact, they are diminishing all the time.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** We need to take the pressure off the canals and be a bit more flexible on the river.

**Audience Member:** Absolutely, yes.

**John List:** One point I would like to make is that the topics we have discussed here, you would almost say, are low level topics. What we are not party to is the high level management decisions be it at CRT or the PLA that directly affect house-boaters that we don't get to hear about until it is too late because we actually have no input into policy and certain things on our rivers or canals is shameful and this is something that really needs to be looked at from things like CRT and what has been going on, it should.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes, very well. You have Victoria interested, so we will be doing something.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I do offer myself to you.

**Audience Member:** (inaudible) the question that this is something that, in order to inform your decisions for the report, or that would also be a possibility to have a similar setup every three months for a period of time so that those issues have been addressed and to sort of carry on the communication that was established or what the way is to make those steps.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** The normal thing after a report is done is that the Chairman would then have the opportunity of reviewing progress and then would call people to account at six months or a year, so there would be a normal thing whenever a report or rapporteurship, which Jenny is leading on, she would then have the opportunity of following that up to see whether any or what change had happened as a result of that. Obviously we would want to get media and other support for Jenny for the work she is leading on in order that might also help put a bit of pressure to open up this debate.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** It is not possible. We just do not have the resources to run something every three months. It would be great but we just cannot do that. We are good at making trouble and making a fuss and so you can always email us and ask us to act. Sorwar?

**Sorwar Ahmed (Canal and River Trust):** Chair, if I may; we would be happy to welcome any new members to the Better Relationships Group and I think we need to find a way of making that an effective and workable group that involves lots more people. So anybody else who would like to carry on, we do plan to meet every three months, so these issues that have been raised today will be so we can work through solutions to this, so you are very welcome to join us.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Ian?

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** Before we finish, I just want to mention something that Simon brought up about auction, auctioned moorings. The more I think about it, the more it worries me. To me, the analogy is like luxury homes that get sold to overseas investments and left empty. I smell a rat with an auction.

I always thought, until I was corrected, that there was a waiting list like a council home waiting list. You earned your place for a mooring. The longer you had spent on the waiting list as a genuine boater, the greater your chances of getting a mooring. I was told it does not work like that. It is the highest bidder and the higher the prices are, the more chance it is that just somebody as a hobby, perhaps a Russian billionaire thinks, "I will have a status mooring. I'll boot them out of place" and that will make things even worse. That is one less mooring.

I suppose if you go to places like Limehouse, you do see all these empty luxury yachts and it is just like what is happening in Battersea. All the building that has happened there are sold off-plan and the same thing seems to be happening here. I really think we should address whether it is the way forward to continue with the auctioning system or having a waiting list.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you; good point. Limehouse is relevantly empty at the moment, is it not? There are lots and lots of empty moorings.

**Audience Member:** There are an awful lot of empty pontoons there, Madam Chair.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes? Just say who you are?

**Audience Member:** Christine Kemp, residential boater at Three Mills Mooring next to the Olympic Park and Vice-Chair of their association. I happen to know the Chairman of the Limehouse Boaters Association and the rent is in the region of £9,000 to £9,500 a year. To be able to afford to stay there, for instance, I could not afford £9,500 and then be able to eat or go out boating, that basically, boaters are being priced out of moorings on to the canal because they are and that is it.

Whilst I am speaking, lots of points that I was interested in have been mentioned and sorted but one thing that was said earlier was you should take your rubbish with you. I have been out boating for a month and I pay a residential mooring and I expect to be out a bit longer. We have been taking our rubbish with us. We just took it home yesterday. Where do we put the recycling? There are no facilities; there are very few facilities around. We were in Ware in Hertfordshire. We found a bottle bank but we only had two bottles. We have all this recycling. We have all our general rubbish and nowhere to put it.

The Canal and River Trust say that these bins are for casual passers-by, so how much rubbish can a boater take with them? It is not just boats. We have a green park next to where we live at Three Mills; no rubbish bins. I have been on to the Lee --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Is that Newham?

**Audience Member:** Lee Valley Trust or whatever they are on several occasions saying they need bins there. People are supposed to take their rubbish home and we do as they say. When the weather is nice, people go out and picnic and they just leave their -- not everybody, but the rubbish is left behind and people try to be neat and tidy because where the dog bins are, there is a big pile of rubbish which, as soon as it gets windy, gets blown away. The Canal and River

Trust are denying it is their responsibility to put bins along the towpath and the council are denying it.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** It is the same as falling between (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes.

**Clive Wren (Residential Boat Owners Association):** I think it is largely a management issue as well. I live next to a park in Hammersmith which is, on a nice day, intensively used. By the end of the day, a lot of people treat it with a lot of respect and actually a lot of people do take the rubbish away, but there is always some who do not. The litter bins that are there are not adequate to take the amount of rubbish, but what happens is that the contractors come round before the end of the evening and it is completely cleared up and everything is in sacks ready to be picked up and taken away. It is a matter of anticipating the problem and dealing with it. You do not need massive bins necessarily. You just need someone to come along at the right time and deal with it.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That is what Tina was saying about it is cyclical or a problem that happens at certain times and it needs to be dealt with. Yes?

**Audience Member:** It really is a problem with rubbish because we have noticed that people will moor on a canal and understand we see that behind our block of flats, there is a car park that has rubbish bins in it and recycling bins and because they are being tidy, no other reason, and fill up whole bins. We come out to put our rubbish in and we cannot, so it is a huge, huge problem. There just needs to be more.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Have you told your local ward councillor about that?

**Audience Member:** Yes.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Your local ward councillor should really do something about it.

**Audience Member:** What about? On the amount (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** No. About your bins and they should actually make sure there is enough because people on the canal have a right to use the bins and so --

**Audience Member:** No, no. It is a private home.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes, but your ward councillor should still be involved in an issue like that. Yes. We are both councillors and we would.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** You would have to say in Kingsland and Tinsley they are keeping the bins out because we have somebody who is driven by taking out bins on the path. However, in the ward I am in, we have just had more bins put in but only after a tremendous battle. I



support that Kingsland and Tinsley are quite rubbish conscious but although people cannot put rubbish in people's own private bins, if they were public --

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** That is different, yes.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** -- what we desperately need is more -- I have said over and over again (overspeaking) because of the use of the land.

**Audience Member:** For use along the canal.

**Rita Craddock (Environmental Health Team, London Borough of Tower Hamlets):** Just to clarify as well, we can only deal with waste that is on the land that we own. For the Canal and River Trust, it is the same and sometimes it is a duplication of where. I go out somewhere, realise it is the Canal and River Trust; I have to contact them vice versa. They find something, it is not their land, they have to contact me but something has been reported to them, they follow it up and, therefore, it is to me and there is clarification of who owns what. We kind of really need to establish that and make boaters and residents understand it.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** I am going to come to Simon and then you.

**Simon Robbins (National Association of Boat Owners):** It was just a very quick point going back to Ian talking about moorings auctions. There is a double whammy on the moorings' auction system because there are reserved prices applied which are far from transparent. The prices can go up but they tend not to go down and I can give a lot of concrete examples of that so it is a double fix. I just throw that into the mix.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Thank you. We will follow that up. Yes?

**Audience Member:** My point was just about the rubbish. The man from CRT who deals with all the rubbish on the towpaths in London is not based in London. He works in some other part of the country and has no idea and I have reported the problems that we have with rubbish in Camden to their own canals manager, who cannot then forward the information to whoever does deal with it. It does not appear to be his job.

**Ian Shacklock (Friends of Regent's Canal):** It is a national contract.

**Audience Member:** It never gets through that we do not need a cleaner every day of the week in winter but we need two a day on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday in summer, and they cannot organise it.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Exactly, yes.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I think we have covered the question on that.

**Audience Member:** I think it is very seldom that a boater puts their rubbish in the canal. In fact, I personally take the rubbish out of the canal when I can and also, I was going to say, when

I came down the canal through Hertfordshire, I found that because moorings have been changed from some places from 14 days to 7 days or 2 days, and my experience, this guy, at one dry dock I was speaking to people, and some people have actually pulled their boat out the water and are living in their boats on the land because of not being able to stop for 14 days at some of these places and they have just given up and are not able to stay on their boat anymore. That was just a story I wanted to share.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes, thank you.

**Audience Member:** Finally, the one positive thing, when I was coming through Tring on the flight of locks recently, a guy came up to me from Canal and River Trust and said, "Can I help you with going through the locks?" and I really didn't believe it. I thought he was just joking but I would like to say, this goes along with what other people are saying because some of these problem areas we are talking about, maybe a dozen, half a dozen boats, it is a very small number of people that are involved in where these issues are and somehow it does -- things like this meeting, for example. You know what am I trying to say?

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** How wonderful it is to be here today.

**Audience Member:** The effort put into this meeting is similar to an effort that it would be to have what is being suggested; someone that is there or someone from the Canal and River Trust that is helping, going through the locks, I thought was really good and it was positive thing which I was getting, which is very rare, but I feel there for my side, that that was a nice thing to happen.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Actually, I want to stop there because that is a nice story about CRT.

**Audience Member:** I have one important last comment which is in straight relation to that in answer to what John has said. What we have not addressed yet really is that the whole enforcement process on the canals has changed through CRT which, due to the lack of regular presence, is now a four-stage enforcement system where at the end of it the boom has been taken away from me because it cannot be on the waterways any longer. I think it is also not clear what the legal status of that is because, especially for vulnerable people with less financial income, we are starting to see those notices being passed and the wording of those letters but I think the fear of existence that has been put into quite a number of (overspeaking) is something that I find rather (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Tina, actually I cannot remember that being in any of the submissions, this four-stage enforcement.

**Audience Member:** It is a process that starts with a carbon copy letter with the person (overspeaking)

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** OK. We will follow that up.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Has everybody here given their name and address or has everybody put a submission in? It would be awful if we wanted to come back and ask you something more and we did not know who you all were. We could perhaps put a pad and paper out for people to scribble down their contact details and leave a card or something and then, if there is something we need to come back on or it is not clear, we are just trying to save your time.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** We are going to work on putting this report together. We have another meeting on it, I think. Have we? What is the next process?

**Ian Williamson (Scrutiny Manager, GLA):** We do not have another meeting set up.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** It will just come to the Committee.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Perhaps we could have one more.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Neither Victoria nor I are people who like to leave reports on shelves to gather dust, so I can assure you that when the report comes out, we will push very hard on all our recommendations and follow through and make sure that everybody knows exactly what we are saying.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** There will be things we need to check with people or to validate so, again, please keep in touch.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** A draft will be sent to various stakeholders just to make sure.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** We want to get these things right and not put in something that is not right.

**Jenny Jones (Chair):** Yes. I want to say thank you to you all particularly to the panel who have given their expert knowledge but also to you for feeding it in. It is very important and I was very concerned that those here should feel that their voices had been heard because it is not a homogenous group of people by any means, so lots and lots of different views. Thank you all very much for coming.