



Consultation - proposals for navigation boat registration charges 2019 to 2021

July 2018

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment.

We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

Published by:

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1. Introduction

The Environment Agency is the second largest navigation authority in the UK. We are responsible for managing 1,000 km of inland waterways. It's our job to keep them open and safe for a variety of uses, but especially for boating.

In total there are around 29,000 recreational and commercial boats kept or used on the waterways we manage. It's a legal requirement for these boats to register with us. We charge for this so that those who benefit from the navigation services we provide contribute towards the significant costs of managing and maintaining the waterways.

We are consulting our boating customers and other interested and affected parties on proposals for boat registration charges on Environment Agency waterways for 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021.

The increases we are proposing are the same percentages as those we implemented for 2018 to 2019. They reflect the significant gap between existing levels of income from boat registration charges on each waterway and the cost of providing the services which these charges pay for.

The increases we propose are:

- River Thames: 5.7%
- Anglian Waterways: 7.5%
- Upper Medway: 10%
- unpowered boats, which have a nationally consistent charge and boats (powered and unpowered) covered by our joint registration agreements with third parties (Canal & River Trust - Gold Licence, British Canoeing, British Rowing): 7.7%*

* This is taken as an average of the 3 individual percentages for each waterway area because they have nationally consistent charges.

2. Background

2.1. Current funding position

Each of our waterways currently receives significantly less income from boat registration charges than they spend on the services those charges should pay for. These charges contribute to our overall aim of keeping our waterways open and safe for use by both recreational boaters and those who rely on them for their business. At the moment, across all our waterways, boat registration charges only contribute 25% of the total amount spent on operational services.

Our waterways also receive income from other sources, mainly through government grant-in-aid (GiA) funding and from a range of boating-related commercial activities. However, for a number of years the overall funding position has been declining, with impacts on our standards of service and the condition of our navigation infrastructure and facilities.

We are working hard to address this situation through a range of activities. Changes to boat registration charges are part of this work. We were going to consult on a new charging scheme and 5-year charging plan this year. However, this work is significantly more complex than we initially thought. We are keen to invest the time now to make sure our charges are fair, transparent and linked more closely to the cost of the service we provide for boating customers. It is crucial we

get it right. Therefore, we now plan to consult on proposals to implement this year's percentage increases for the next 2 years. We will then continue to develop our longer-term plans to make our navigations more financially sustainable, involving our customers in shaping this work.

These proposals are the minimum increases necessary to sustain a safe and efficient operational service. We think these are reasonable given the gap between the cost of the services, and the income we currently receive from charges.

We will reflect any increases for 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 in the future 5-year charging plan, which we now plan to introduce, following further consultation, for 2021 to 2026.

2.2. National position and context

Our proposals to increase boat registration charges are for all the waterways for which the Environment Agency is the navigation authority. We have been granted permission to consult on these proposals by the Environment Agency board, HM Treasury and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

This table shows how our waterway areas are funded (based on forecast revenue income for 2018 to 2019):

Area name	Boat registration charges ^ (£k)	Water resources charges (£k)	Flood & Coastal Risk Management Grant in Aid (£k)	Moorings and landing rents (£k)	Other local navigation income *(£k)	Commercial income - estates (£k)	Navigation Grant in Aid (£k)	Total (£k)
River Thames	4,556	890	1,350	851	315	522	68	8,552
Anglian Waterways	2,182	100	520	176	29	6	262	3,275
Upper Medway	179	20	85	60	16	49	348	757

^ before contribution to support costs

* includes Thames Conservancy Act income for Thames Water

2.3. Improving the funding position of our waterways

As part of our future strategic review of navigation charges we want to introduce changes that our customers have told us through consultation they wish to see, bringing more:

- consistency
- certainty
- flexibility
- fairness
- ways to pay

We will also consult further to build on and refine our understanding of the feedback we have already received. Reviewing our charges is just one part of a much wider ongoing programme to make our waterways more financially sustainable. This includes:

- making efficiencies wherever we can
- prioritising funding to protect capital investment
- working to increase income from commercial and other external sources

We are now progressing our commercial activity at a national level as the 'Navigating Forward' project. We are working with individual waterways teams and other Environment Agency departments to look at all the options and complete a range of activities.

We are launching new commercial activities as well as maximising income from existing ones. To do this we are seeking additional flexibility from government to allow us to be more innovative in how we establish new income streams to spend across our waterways.

We know our boating customers are keen for us to do more to secure revenue from all those who benefit from the waterways. We intend all of our project work to boost the income we receive from sources other than our boating customers, whether in the short, medium or long term.

2.4. Impact of the charge increases on boating customers

The increases are between 3.4% and 7.7% above the latest published annual consumer price index rate of 2.3% (as of June 2018). Our proposed increase will therefore be largely absorbed by inflation-based increases to our operating costs, but it does allow sufficient headroom to reduce the impact of further reductions in navigation GiA on existing levels of service.

The majority of the boats we register are private leisure customers, although there are a number of commercial operators, for example passenger and hire boat businesses. Across our waterways, 98% of boats are private and 2% are commercial.

By applying these proposed increases, by 2021 we expect the total income from all boats registered on our waterways to be £7.9m. This represents approximately an extra £930,000 based on income from existing registrations.

We appreciate that any increase to the cost of enjoying a leisure activity or running a business is rarely welcomed by those who must pay it. But boat registration charges are a relatively small element of the total cost of boat ownership which of course includes the cost of buying a boat, its ongoing maintenance, mooring fees and fuel costs. And while many of those will have been subject to increases considerably in excess of inflation over recent years, boat registration charges have not increased significantly.

The service we provide is arguably the single most important enabler of boating and successful boating businesses on our waterways. This is certain in the case of maintaining our locks and weirs in safe working order and managing water levels. It already receives significant, though reducing, financial support from government, so we believe the relatively small charge increases that we are asking for are reasonable.

These tables show examples of how the proposed increases will affect charges for a range of boats on the different waterways, to give an idea of the impact for customers:

River Thames

Thames	Private							
ANNUAL CHARGE	2018 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2019 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)	2019 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2020 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)
<i>Unpowered boat</i>	38.20	7.7	41.14	2.94	41.14	7.7	44.31	3.17
<i>Powered boat: 4m x 1.5m (Small)</i>	117.60	5.7	124.30	6.70	124.30	5.7	131.39	7.09
<i>Powered boat: 7.1m x 2.3m (Medium)</i>	313.60	5.7	331.48	17.88	331.48	5.7	350.37	18.89
<i>Powered boat: 11.6m x 3.7m (Large)</i>	823.20	5.7	870.12	46.92	870.12	5.7	919.72	49.60
<i>Narrowboat: 16.7m x 2.0m (Medium)</i>	646.80	5.7	683.67	36.87	683.67	5.7	722.64	38.97
<i>Dutch barge: 23.0m x 4.5m (X Large)</i>	1811.10	5.7	1914.33	103.23	1914.33	5.7	2023.45	109.12
<i>Passenger boat: 25.9m x 3.9m</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Thames	Commercial							
ANNUAL CHARGE	2018 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2019 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)	2019 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2020 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)
<i>Unpowered boat</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Powered boat: 4m x 1.5m (Small)</i>	181.62	5.7	191.97	10.35	191.97	5.7	202.91	10.94
<i>Powered boat: 7.1m x 2.3m (Medium)</i>	484.32	5.7	511.93	27.61	511.93	5.7	541.11	29.18
<i>Powered boat: 11.6m x 3.7m (Large)</i>	1271.34	5.7	1343.81	72.47	1343.81	5.7	1420.40	76.60
<i>Narrowboat: 16.7m x 2.0m (Medium)</i>	998.91	5.7	1055.85	56.94	1055.85	5.7	1116.03	60.18
<i>Dutch barge: 23.0m x 4.5m (X Large)</i>	3117.81	5.7	3295.53	177.72	3295.53	5.7	3483.37	187.84
<i>Passenger boat: 25.9m x 3.9m</i>	3057.27	5.7	3231.53	174.26	3231.53	5.7	3415.73	184.20

Anglian Waterways

Anglian	Private							
ANNUAL CHARGE	2018/19 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2019/20 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)	2019/20 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2020/21 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)
<i>Unpowered boat</i>	38.20	7.7	41.14	2.94	41.14	7.7	44.31	3.17
<i>Powered boat: 4m (Small)</i>	301.20	7.5	323.79	22.59	323.79	7.5	348.07	24.28
<i>Powered boat: 7.1m (Medium)</i>	369.78	7.5	397.51	27.73	397.51	7.5	427.33	29.81
<i>Powered boat: 11.6m (Large)</i>	654.45	7.5	703.53	49.08	703.53	7.5	756.30	52.77
<i>Narrowboat: 16.7m (Medium)</i>	944.61	7.5	1015.46	70.85	1015.46	7.5	1091.61	76.16
<i>Dutch barge: 23.0m (X Large)</i>	1036.18	7.5	1113.89	77.71	1113.89	7.5	1197.44	83.54
<i>Passenger boat: 25.9m</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Anglian	Commercial							
ANNUAL CHARGE	2018/19 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2019/20 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)	2019/20 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2020/21 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)
<i>Unpowered boat</i>	58.97	7.7	63.51	4.54	63.51	7.7	68.40	4.89
<i>Powered boat: 4m (Small)</i>	322.81	7.5	347.02	24.21	347.02	7.5	373.05	26.03
<i>Powered boat: 7.1m (Medium)</i>	570.64	7.5	613.44	42.80	613.44	7.5	659.45	46.01
<i>Powered boat: 11.6m (Large)</i>	1009.99	7.5	1085.74	75.75	1085.74	7.5	1167.17	81.43
<i>Narrowboat: 16.7m (Medium)</i>	1457.80	7.5	1567.14	109.34	1567.14	7.5	1684.67	117.54
<i>Dutch barge: 23.0m (X Large)</i>	1599.09	7.5	1719.02	119.93	1719.02	7.5	1847.95	128.93
<i>Passenger boat: 25.9m</i>	1110.49	7.5	1193.78	83.29	1193.78	7.5	1283.31	89.53

Upper Medway

Medway	Private							
ANNUAL CHARGE	2018/19 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2019/20 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)	2019/20 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2020/21 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)
<i>Unpowered boat</i>	38.20	7.7	41.14	2.94	41.14	7.7	44.31	3.17
<i>Powered boat: 4m (Small)</i>	141.40	10	155.54	14.14	155.54	10	171.09	15.55
<i>Powered boat: 7.1m (Medium)</i>	250.98	10	276.08	25.10	276.08	10	303.69	27.61
<i>Powered boat: 11.6m (Large)</i>	381.39	10	419.53	38.14	419.53	10	461.48	41.95
<i>Narrowboat: 16.7m (Medium)</i>	381.39	10	419.53	38.14	419.53	10	461.48	41.95
<i>Dutch barge: 23.0m (X Large)</i>	381.39	10	419.53	38.14	419.53	10	461.48	41.95
<i>Passenger boat: 25.9m</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Medway	Commercial							
ANNUAL CHARGE	2018/19 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2019/20 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)	2019/20 charge (£)	Proposed increase (%)	2020/21 charge (£)	Charge difference (£)
<i>Unpowered boat</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Powered boat: 4m (Small)</i>	242.44	10	266.68	24.24	266.68	10	293.35	26.67
<i>Powered boat: 7.1m (Medium)</i>	430.33	10	473.36	43.03	473.36	10	520.70	47.34
<i>Powered boat: 11.6m (Large)</i>	653.99	10	719.39	65.40	719.39	10	791.33	71.94
<i>Narrowboat: 16.7m (Medium)</i>	653.99	10	719.39	65.40	719.39	10	791.33	71.94
<i>Dutch barge: 23.0m (X Large)</i>	653.99	10	719.39	65.40	719.39	10	791.33	71.94
<i>Passenger boat: 25.9m</i>	490.49	10	539.54	49.05	539.54	10	593.49	53.95

3. Responding to this consultation

We would like your views on our proposals to increase navigation boat registration charges for 2019 to 2021. We also want to better understand what parts of our service are important to customers to help us prioritise the service we provide on our different waterways. We will also use the feedback we receive to help shape our future funding proposals.

3.1. Consultation questions

Section 1: About you

To help us analyse the responses we receive we'd like to understand more about you and the boat/s you own, operate or represent.

Q1. Please tell us if you're responding as an individual or on behalf of a group or organisation.

Q2. Please tell us on which waterway you or those you represent keep or use your/their boat/s most often.

Waterways

- River Ancholme - Anglian Waterways
- River Welland & River Glen - Anglian Waterways
- Black Sluice (South Forty Foot Drain) – Anglian Waterways
- River Nene – Anglian Waterways
- River Great Ouse System – Anglian Waterways
- River Stour – Anglian Waterways
- River Thames
- Upper Medway
- Canal & River Trust waterways
- Other

Q3. What is the main reason you or those you represent use your/their boat/s?

- For private pleasure use
- For commercial use
- Other

Q4. What type of boat/s do you own, operate or represent?

- Hire boat
- Motor cruiser/motor sailer
- Narrowboat
- Passenger/charter
- Powered day boat

- Static houseboat
- Unpowered (e.g canoe, kayak, rowing/sculling boat, sailing boat without auxiliary engine)
- Wide beam barge
- Workboat
- Other

Q5. Please tell us if you would like to receive an email acknowledging your response and/or email to let you know that the summary of responses has been published.

Q6. Can we publish your response? We will not publish any personal information or parts of your response that will reveal your identity.

Q7. Please tell us how you found out about this consultation?

Section 2: Your views

Q8. Do you agree with the need to increase Environment Agency boat registration charges in order to maintain the navigation service?

Q9a. We are proposing to increase charges for the River Thames by 5.7%. What is your opinion of this proposal?

Q9b. We are proposing to increase charges for the Anglian Waterways by 7.5%. What is your opinion of this proposal?

Q9c. We are proposing to increase charges for the Upper Medway by 10%. What is your opinion of this proposal?

Q9d. We are proposing to increase changes for unpowered boats and those boats (powered or unpowered) which are part of joint registration agreements (British Rowing, British Canoeing, Canal & River Trust Gold Licence) by 7.7%? What is your opinion of this proposal?

Q10. To what extent do you agree that the boat registration charge is important in the overall cost of owning or operating your boat/s?

Q11. If introduced, would the proposed increases make you consider either leaving Environment Agency waterways or giving up boating?

Q12. If we were not to increase charges, some services may have to reduce or stop. We would like to understand what's important to you to help us prioritise the service we provide on our waterways.

Q13. Please tell us if you have any ideas on alternative or additional ways that we could/should fund the navigation service we provide?

Section 3: Any other comments

Q14. Do you feel confident that the Environment Agency is working to secure a sustainable funding future for the waterways we manage?

Q15. We really value your feedback on our proposals. Please tell us if you have any further comments and provide as much information as possible to support your answer.

3.2. How to respond

Online

You can view the consultation documents and questions online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-proposals-for-navigation-boat-registration-charges-2019-to-2021>

Here, you can submit your response using our online tool which will enable you to manage your comments more effectively. It will also help us to gather and summarise responses quickly and accurately as well as reducing the costs of the consultation.

By email or post

If you would prefer to submit your response by email or post, please email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk using 'Navigation charge proposals 2019 to 2021' in the title or write to the address below. We will send you the consultation documents and a response form to complete.

All completed email and postal responses must be received by Thursday 30 August 2018 using the consultation response form. Completed responses should be sent to:

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Post:

Environment Agency

Navigation charge proposals 2019 to 2021

National Customer Contact Centre

PO Box 544

Bow Bridge Close

Bradmarsh Business Park

Templeborough

Rotherham

S60 1BY

3.3. Consultation dates

The consultation will run for six weeks from Thursday 19 July to Thursday 30 August 2018.

The closing date for responses is Thursday 30 August 2018. Any responses we receive after this date will not be included in the analysis.

3.4. How we will use your information

The Environment Agency will look to make all responses publicly available during and after the consultation, unless you have specifically requested that we keep your response confidential.

We will not publish names of individuals who respond.

We will also publish a summary of responses on our website in which we will publish the name of the organisation for those responses made on behalf of organisations.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we may be required to publish your response to this consultation, but will not include any personal information. If you have requested your response to be kept confidential, we may still be required to provide a summary of it.

For more information see our Personal Information Charter at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency/about/personal-information-charter>.

3.5. Consultation principles

We are running this consultation in accordance with the guidance set out in the government's Consultation Principles. You can view these here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

If you have any queries or complaints about the way this consultation has been carried out, please contact:

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Environment Agency

Horizon House

Deanery Road

Bristol

BS1 5AH

Email: emma.hammonds@environment-agency.gov.uk

4. Annexes

4.1. Annex 1: Navigation service on the River Thames

We publish a River Thames Waterway Customer Charter each year. Alongside our lock keeping service targets, it gives a summary of the service standards we try to achieve with the funding available. These documents can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-customer-charter>.

We also produce an annual report each year, setting out our performance against these service ambitions. View the latest report here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-annual-report>.

In addition, the following summary will provide a better understanding of the extent of the activity that makes up our navigation service on the Thames, but it is still not exhaustive.

Our navigation service on the Thames is delivered by our River Thames Waterways team. This team is formed of 90 highly trained, well equipped, hugely experienced, passionate and dedicated full-time navigation specialists. This includes 60 full time lock and weir keepers, who between them, carry out duties at our 45 lock sites.

The team's role is to maintain the public right of navigation, and to facilitate safe boating on the 135 miles of navigable non-tidal Thames from Cricklade in Wiltshire to Teddington in south west London. With support from colleagues from a range of other departments, the team provides this service for the non-tidal Thames boating community 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Throughout the peak boating months of the summer, the team is assisted by as many seasonal lock and weir keepers as our budget will allow us to employ. We also have a very successful volunteer programme in place, with some 250 volunteers carrying out a wide range of duties. Their contribution enables us to provide a level of service far beyond what would otherwise be achievable within our budgets.

4.1.1. Maintaining the infrastructure

Safe navigation of the non-tidal River Thames would not be possible without the network of 45 locks and weirs that stretch along it. Keeping them all in working order requires significant investment and is an extensive, year-round programme of work for us. We:

- constantly assess and monitor the condition of every structure
- plan, cost and prioritise any repairs, refurbishment or renewal works
- make sure all sites are compliant with the latest health and safety legislation, to keep everyone working at or visiting our locks, safe from harm.

We also maintain a wide range of other assets such as toilets and showers, welfare rooms for our staff, access tracks for emergency service vehicles and footbridges. We must also maintain our lock houses to a high standard, for the members of staff who live there.

Managing water levels

The 45 locks which allow safe navigation of the non-tidal River Thames would not function without the adjoining weir complexes. We operate these weirs to manage water levels, to enable the locks to function, and also to provide a safe depth for navigation within the middle third, or 'fairway' of the river in each stretch between lock sites. This includes alleviating the impact of adverse weather conditions (extended periods of heavy, or very little rain) to the limits of what is achievable with the weirs.

4.1.2. Service at our locks - assisted passage

Much of the work we do is focussed on providing the best possible levels of 'assisted passage' that we can. This is when we have staff available at locks to help boaters through them. Every year we work with our principal advisory group representing boaters on the River Thames - the Thames Navigation Users Forum - to develop our assisted passage targets. We then communicate these to boaters so that they are aware of the service levels we aim to achieve:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-customer-charter>.

These targets take into account the manpower available, the amount of boat traffic at each lock, and any characteristics of a lock which might make it more difficult to use. They also recognise the other important duties that need to be carried out at some sites and may take the lock keeper away from the lock side.

4.1.3. Enforcement and compliance

We have powers to enforce the legislation that governs many other boating activities on the river. These are mainly the Environment Agency (Inland Waterways) Order 2010 and the Thames Conservancy Acts 1932, 1950 and 1966, along with numerous bye-laws. Our priority when it comes to enforcement activity is boat registration compliance, to ensure we receive all the income we are owed from this important income stream, so that we can reinvest it in all aspects of the service we provide.

We carry out registration checks along the river and at our locks, taking enforcement action against all unregistered boats we find.

We use intelligence to target areas where we believe there are concentrations of unregistered boats.

We progress criminal prosecution against owners who do not bring their boats into compliance.

More information on this, and the wider work we do, is available in our 2018 to 2019 compliance plan: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-thames-enforcement-plan>.

4.2. Annex 2: Navigation service on the Anglian Waterways

The Anglian Waterways includes navigations between the River Ancholme in the north and the River Stour in the south. It incorporates the Black Sluice and the Glen, Welland, Nene and Great Ouse rivers - 353 miles (568km) of river with associated locks and other facilities.

The service we provide to boaters and boating businesses is delivered through a team of 29 highly trained, well equipped, hugely experienced, passionate full-time navigation specialists, all dedicated to providing the best possible standards of service that the funding available to us will allow.

That service comprises the following activities as set out in our Anglian Waterways Customer Charter. The degree to which each of these activities is carried out varies according to operational priorities and the funding available to us.

4.2.1. Liaison with customer representatives

We will meet with customer representatives from across our waterways to discuss issues and the service we provide. The Anglian Waterways Group (AWG) meets quarterly and covers all Anglian waterways. In addition, we meet regularly with local user groups across our waterways.

4.2.2. Maintaining our locks, moorings, other assets and river channels

We provide and maintain safe access to our lock sites and facilities. Throughout the year we maintain our locks, landing stages, moorings, canoe portage points, slipways and other assets according to our maintenance plans. These plans identify assets that are 'closed' and waiting funding. We review the waterway maintenance plan with the local users each year on our larger navigations.

We provide safe access on navigation channels by maintaining river weed according to the maintenance plans. Again, these plans are reviewed with local users. We will remove (or arrange for others to remove) obstructions from navigation channels as soon as reasonably practicable. Any obstructions we are aware of, but are unable to remove, we mark with hazard warning buoys.

4.2.3. Closures and restrictions

We issue navigation closure notices at least one month before any major planned works. We will inform customers of any emergency and restriction notices as soon as we can. Closure, restriction and emergency notices are displayed on appropriate notice boards on the river, emailed to clubs, marinas and individuals (who have requested the information), tweeted and placed on 'Teamup' calendars at <http://www.northamptonmarina.co.uk/navigation-works-calendar>

4.2.4. Boating facilities

We maintain our pump-outs, toilets and shower facilities in a clean, safe and usable condition throughout the year. When we receive reports of facility breakdowns we arrange repairs as soon as we can. We will review maintenance at our facilities with principal local users each year.

4.2.5. Service at our locks

Our lock keepers help boats pass safely through South Ferriby Lock, Black Sluice Lock, Fulney Lock, Dog-in-a-Doublet Lock, Denver Lock and Hermitage Lock. These locks are closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

4.2.6. River information for boating

Higher river flows can be hazardous for boating. We provide free River Advice for Boaters (RAB) messages to our boating customers on the Rivers Ancholme, Nene and Great Ouse.

We keep Floodline information updated so users can call at any time to find out river conditions. We provide information by displaying RAB signs and flags along our waterways.

We provide information on river conditions on the Teamup Calendar at:

<https://teamup.com/ks95856e13ff0fd3b1>

<https://www.northamptonmarina.co.uk/navigation-works-calendar>

Anglian Waterways bridge heights and lock details are in local guides and at www.gov.uk/government/collections/anglian-waterways-information-to-help-boaters

4.2.7. Enforcement activity

We support a safe and enjoyable environment for our customers. We protect our river and income by undertaking regular enforcement activity throughout the year. We place warning notices on vessels that are not registered and undertake enforcement action which may lead to prosecution and/or removal of unregistered vessels. We will provide updates on our enforcement activity to the Anglian Waterway Group on a quarterly basis.

We carry out other enforcement activity, according to priority and funding.

4.2.8. Responding to incidents

We support the emergency services in dealing with emergency river incidents.

For non-emergency river-related incidents, including pollution incidents, we will respond as soon as we can or advise you on the best course of action.

BoatWatch is a partnership scheme dedicated to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour associated with our waterways. We will continue to work in partnership with the Association of Nene River Clubs, the Great Ouse Boating Association and the police to promote BoatWatch and make boating safe and enjoyable.

4.2.9. Social media

We will use Twitter to deliver messages and images in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to be informative and helpful to river users. This will include all closure and restriction notices and newsworthy items. Follow Paul Separovic on Twitter at @PaulSeparovicEA.

We will use our Northampton Marina website (www.northamptonmarina.co.uk/) as a 'hub' providing links to other relevant and useful web-based information including the Teamup calendars which provide up to date information for boaters including closures, restrictions and events.

4.2.10. Volunteering on Anglian waterways

We will work in partnership with CambsAcre to develop our volunteering programme to complement the work of our team. The Northampton Marina website (www.northamptonmarina.co.uk/) provides a link to the Volunteer Scheme website with more details about the scheme and how to apply.

4.2.11. Capital investment

We will provide a quarterly update on our capital investment programme to the Anglian Waterways Group.

4.3. Annex 3: Navigation service on the Upper Medway

4.3.1. Liaison with customer representatives

The Upper Medway Navigation runs from the Leigh Flood Storage Area (2km to the west of Tonbridge), to Allington Lock just west of Maidstone. We are the navigation authority for this 31km long stretch of river which has 10 lock sites and associated weirs and sluices. Our Navigation team consists of 10 Environment Agency staff. We are based at Allington Lock House, the tidal gateway to the navigation.

The team's role is to maintain the public right of navigation and to facilitate safe boating on the Upper Medway. To enable this we maintain 3 standby roles 24 hours a day, 365 a year. We also receive support from other Environment Agency staff.

4.3.2. Managing the infrastructure

The 10 locks and associated weirs and sluices are essential in maintaining the safe navigation of the Upper Medway. We keep these assets in safe working order by undertaking an extensive year round programme of work. This includes inspection, routine repair and more extensive repairs usually involving external contractors.

We also maintain a wide range of other assets. This includes facilities for boaters such as the toilets and showers at Allington and Yalding as well as the offices at Yalding and Allington Lock. We also maintain the 2 Lock Keeper's cottages at Allington Lock which house our resident lock keepers. This enables the assisted passage we provide at this site 365 days a year. We receive support from our Estates team to maximise our incomes from other sites we rent out such as Allington Lock Boathouse.

As well as maintaining the structures we also spend significant resources maintaining the navigation channel. This includes regular shoal removals and the removal of overhanging branches using our in-house tug and dredger. We work closely with our fisheries and biodiversity teams to ensure we balance the needs of the boating community with those of the wildlife we share the river with.

4.3.3. Managing water levels

We manage water levels to balance the many uses of the river, including boating, retaining enough for water companies to extract, managing flood risk and ensuring fisheries and water quality are protected. We monitor water levels on each river pen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We manage the weirs and sluices to provide the best conditions possible for all uses of the river. Our ability to control water levels may change in flood or drought conditions.

4.3.4. Navigation safety

The safety of our navigation is our top priority. Each year we undertake the following tasks to ensure our customers are kept safe. We:

- inspect our structures for defects (locks and weirs) at least once per month and undertake formal annual asset inspections
- undertake twice-yearly public safety risk assessments of our sites and structures, to ensure we identify hazards and deal with risks to the public
- issue Strong Stream Warnings to our boating community
- close canoe passes that become hazardous in strong stream conditions
- respond to reports of obstructions in the navigation (such as trees) and mark them with buoys if they are a serious danger or if they cannot be removed within a few days
- issue Notices to Mariners for works, events or anything else that could affect the navigability of the river with at least 28 days' notice (with the exception of any emergency/urgent notices)
- undertake regular speed and safety checks with assistance from the police

4.3.5. Enforcement and compliance

We support a safe and enjoyable environment for our customers. We protect our river and income by undertaking planned enforcement activity on important dates throughout the year. We place warning notices on boats that are not registered and prosecute owners of boats that do not respond to these notices.

4.3.6. Other activities

As part of our role to facilitate safe navigation of the Upper Medway, we also provide expert support for the fire and rescue service, Marine Accident Investigation Branch, Boat Safety Scheme and many others. This is to investigate incidents involving boats, and communicate the findings to boaters, alongside other safety guidance, to reduce the likelihood of future incidents.

We also provide expert advice as part of the planning process on any development affecting navigation or the aesthetics of the river. This ensures the views of boaters, alongside those of all other river users, are properly considered and any negative impacts are prevented or reduced.

We also respond to reports of antisocial behaviour where we can and where it is safe for our staff to attend.

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