

**Embargoed until 23 November 2011**



## **Authorities Work on New River Access Agreement**

The Conservators of the River Cam and Environment Agency are working together to ensure boaters can continue to enjoy good-value access between the River Great Ouse and River Cam.

An agreement was set up in 1994 between the Conservators and the National Rivers Authority (predecessor to the Environment Agency). The purpose was to allow access by Agency-registered powered craft to Conservancy waters without incurring additional costs. However, both parties feel the current arrangements do not meet their requirements, as they are under significant pressure to increase income and reduce expenditure, and to do so in a transparent and accountable manner. Accordingly, the Environment Agency gave notice to terminate the agreement from March 2012 so that a more suitable arrangement can be created.

The Conservators and Environment Agency aim to replace the old 'Interchange Agreement' with a new one designed to help the organisations continue to meet the needs of boaters while responding to the challenging economic climate.

The two organisations want to work together to offer efficient, value-for-money boat registration and simplified paperwork. The Interchange Agreement has meant many boaters with powered craft have enjoyed lower registration costs.

Irven Forbes, the Environment Agency's Anglian Waterways Manager, said: "In these challenging economic times, it is important we work with the Cam Conservators to ensure all parties are getting good value for money."

The Conservators recently asked boaters on the River Cam for their views on how to close a gap in the navigation's funding. The results of this survey are currently being reviewed and will be reported at the Conservators' December and January meetings. Comments will be considered before the new agreement is drawn up, and the two authorities hope it will come into force on 1 April 2012.

John Adams, Chairman of the Conservators of the Cam, said: "Cambridge is a wonderful destination for boaters. We are committed to ensuring that the River Cam is maintained as a resource for people to enjoy. Working in partnership with the Environment Agency means we can ensure people enjoy the River for many years to come".

## **Notes for editors:**

The current Interchange Agreement, in place since 1994, gives the 4,500 boaters who register with the Environment Agency access to 19km of the Conservators-managed River Cam. Approximately 250 powered craft which normally register with the Environment Agency while residing on the River Cam, a tributary of the River Great Ouse, also have access to 550km of Environment Agency waterways.

Under the current Interchange Agreement, the Environment Agency receives fees from the boats registered with it. A proportion of these fees are refunded to the Conservators each year using an agreed formula. The formula uses figures from an annual 1-day count of mechanically-powered boats on Conservancy waters (conducted jointly by the Conservators and the Environment Agency).

The Conservators of the River Cam are the statutory navigation authority for the river between The Mill Pond, Silver Street, Cambridge, to Bottisham Lock with lesser responsibilities up-stream to Byron's Pool. Craft using the river between Bottisham Lock and the Mill Pond register with the Conservators, except for powered craft which may be registered with the Environment Agency.

See <http://www.camconservators.co.uk/> for more information

Boaters registered directly with the Conservators have to pay for additional registration with the Environment Agency to navigate downstream of Bottisham Lock and beyond on Environment Agency navigations; this would normally be a visitor or short-term registration.

The Environment Agency Anglian Waterways team manages 550km of statutory navigations including the River Great Ouse, River Nene and Rivers Welland and Glen. All boaters must register with the Environment Agency to access Environment Agency waterways.

See <http://environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/recreation/129900.aspx> for more information.

For more information:

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