

IWA Policy on the Provision of Boaters' Facilities

This policy statement sets out The Inland Waterways Association's views on the provision of boaters' facilities along the waterways, by navigation authorities, landowners and third parties.

1. Introduction

1.1 Boaters staying on board their boats, whether at a mooring or navigating the system, need regular access to a number of facilities including water, refuse and sewage disposal, as well as less frequent access to additional services such as showers, laundry, electricity, fuel and places where maintenance can be carried out. Such facilities should be accessible on a suitably frequent basis, in reliable working order, and any charges for additional services should reflect the cost of their provision.

1.2 Navigation authorities are generally responsible for the provision of facilities. The UK's largest navigation authority, Canal & River Trust, provides hundreds of water points and water-side waste disposal facilities across its 2000 miles of waterway.

1.3 IWA recommends that maintenance and renewal of boaters' facilities should be considered as part of navigation authorities' asset management strategy. Currently many are old and unreliable resulting in poor service for customers and high maintenance and emergency callout costs. Demands have changed. For instance:

- the provision of mains electricity for charging batteries has become a higher priority, in order to reduce the anti-social and environmentally unfriendly practice of running engines and generators
- drainage to facilities often requires upgrading to take the necessary quantity, particularly when utilised for self pumpouts.

1.4 In some locations the provision of facilities does not meet demand. One example is in London. Canal & River Trust identified in their 2016 survey of London boaters that there were insufficient facilities for the number of boaters. The survey identified a 57% increase in people living on boats in the capital since 2012, with only seven public water points, five sewage and five refuse disposal facilities to serve all of Central London's resident and visiting boaters. IWA's London Vision (2019) sets out the need for additional provision of facilities, over and above its national recommendations made in this policy document.

1.5 Generally there needs to be a national perspective on the provision of facilities, between one waterway area and another and even between navigation authorities, such as the well-used route from the Trent & Mersey Canal via the Bridgewater Canal (owned by Peel Holdings) onto the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

2. Minimum Standards

2.1 IWA believes that there should be minimum standards for the provision of boaters' facilities across the waterways network regardless of the navigation authority or landowner. Ideally, every waterway should have:

- Water points, rubbish disposal points including recycling points, portable chemical toilet disposal points and electricity (shore power mains connection charging sites) at the following frequencies:
 - Every 5 hours of cruising across most of the inland waterways system, including between waterways managed by neighbouring navigation authorities
 - Every 2 hours of cruising in London and other urban areas with large numbers of residential boats on unserviced moorings.
- Pump out facilities at regular intervals, ideally provided by boatyards, marinas and other third-party providers. Where there are gaps of more than 10 hours of cruising then navigation authorities should encourage third party provision and where this fails, should provide DIY pump out facilities, or portable chemical toilet disposal points should be suitable for the use of boat-based DIY pump out equipment.
- Recycling points at the majority of rubbish disposal points, as recycling is currently seriously under-catered for and when cruising accessing recycling points away from the water is not always practical or possible. IWA recognises that boaters will only be encouraged to separate items for recycling if there are frequent recycling points and their location is known. As recycling policies and the colour coding of bins vary from place to place, clear information about what can and cannot be recycled will be needed.
- Facilities appropriate for the demand in the area:
 - Capacities and collection schedules of waste disposal facilities should accommodate the demand.
 - Facilities should be maintained in accordance to the level of traffic that uses them (e.g. sewage disposal points with high traffic should be cleaned more regularly than those used only occasionally).

2.2 IWA supports the provision of new shore power mains connection charging sites to enable the recharging of both electric boats and batteries on conventionally powered boats. These should be provided as widely as possible in appropriate locations and kept up to date as technology develops. In order to ensure adequate access to all parts of the canal network by electric boats IWA has an aspiration for shore power mains connection charging sites ideally no more than 5 hours cruising apart. Each site should include between 2 and 20 sockets and where available be based on 32A 230V systems, although 16A might be all that is possible in remote locations.

2.3 Other considerations include:

- Facilities should be adequately protected from vandalism. The design of new facilities buildings should incorporate anti-vandalism features, which can be as simple as doors which open outwards instead of inwards to prevent their being kicked in.
- Appropriate systems should be in place to deal with the breakdown of facilities in a timely fashion.
- Existing facilities should not be removed without a suitable replacement being made available.
- Water points should be suitably lagged so that they are still available for use during colder months, and designed so that portable containers and water cans can be filled without needing a hose attachment.
- Where shore power mains connection charging is provided, the electricity should be charged in accordance with pricing from Ofgem.
- The construction of new facilities should, where possible, be on mains water and sewage and not rely on bowsers, septic tanks or macerators.

3. Other Facilities provided by navigation authorities

3.1 Navigation authorities should maintain existing slipways (and provide additional facilities in appropriate locations) in order to encourage access by small trailable boats.

3.2 Dry docks which are owned and operated by navigation authorities should be maintained and made available for DIY work by boat owners at an appropriate cost.

4. Third-party provision

4.1 Facilities provided by navigation authorities and landowners may be supplemented by those available at boatyards and marinas. IWA considers it desirable that all existing and new marinas that cater for visiting boats should provide the following facilities for such boaters:

- Small sites should provide rubbish disposal and a freshwater tap, along with portable chemical toilet waste disposal facilities and shore power mains connection charging where practicable.
- Medium sites should provide rubbish disposal and a freshwater tap (with a reasonable flow of water), shore power mains connection charging, toilets, portable chemical toilet waste disposal and pump-out, along with laundry where practicable.
- Large sites should provide, in addition to the above, disposal facilities for oily waste, fuel sales, dry dock, wet dock, maintenance services and a chandlery.

4.2 Navigation authorities and landowners should not, however, rely on these facilities to meet the desired frequency of facilities outlined above as they are not all accessible out of hours. Where navigation authorities do rely on marina or other private facilities to meet their obligations IWA expects the following criteria to be met:

- a) Water, portable chemical toilet waste disposal, rubbish and recycling should be provided at no charge and should be accessible at all times
- b) These facilities should be easily accessible, ideally outside the marina
- c) Signage should be provided to make it clear that the facilities are available to all customers of the navigation authority.

4.3 IWA supports the provision of services such as pump-outs by mobile providers using appropriate equipment on board suitable boats. This is often an additional service offered by several fuel boats which also sell solid fuels, gas and diesel, and IWA recognises the important service that such providers bring to the waterway community.

4.4 Where waterside developments including marinas and housing are proposed, the inclusion of boaters' facilities should be encouraged. Inclusion of facilities in development plans is an alternative way to produce more facilities at potentially reduced costs. Canal & River Trust already encourages, or sometimes requires, developers to provide boaters' facilities as part of plans to develop their sites. Examples include Loughborough Wharf, where a former British Waterways yard was developed into student accommodation and included boaters' facilities, and Marsworth Junction where a new facilities building has been provided as part of a residential development. Such opportunities should be explored wherever appropriate, including the opportunity for shore power mains connection charging sites.

4.5 IWA encourages boatyards to retain or install equipment to allow the sale of petrol in addition to diesel, in order to encourage the use of the waterways by smaller boats with petrol outboard engines.

4.6 IWA encourages boatyards and marinas to maintain existing slipways and ensure that they are accessible at all times for use by trailable boats. New boatyards and marinas should incorporate slipways into their development plans. Information on slipway design is available on IWA's website [https://www.waterways.org.uk/waterways/restoration/restoration_resources/technical/slipway_design].

5. Access and use

5.1 IWA believes that good access to facilities is essential and should be achieved by ensuring:

- All access points to a facilities site and the facilities themselves meet current Health & Safety legislation and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2004.
- Mooring points for boaters using the facilities are safe.
- Mooring rings or bollards are provided for vessels to use in line with best mooring practice and to limit damage to the bank. These should be placed between the bank and walking surface to avoid ropes crossing the towpath.
- Access paths to the facilities are clean, safe and well maintained.

- Vegetation is maintained around the mooring area and facilities including regular cutting of grass.
- Penalties for overstaying at moorings adjacent to facilities should be strongly enforced to enable visiting boaters to access them easily, particularly when heavily used.

5.2 Boaters should be considerate in their use of all facilities in order to keep facilities in operation for other users.

6. Future developments

6.1 There is a need to think strategically when considering how to meet the need for more facilities so as to fund new facilities in ways that do not necessarily require fee increases. Encouraging waterside developers to include boaters' facilities in their projects is one way of doing this. Existing facilities should also be looked at to see how they could be improved to be more efficient. It may be that the introduction of new facilities to a site such as recycling, shore power mains connection charging sites or pump-out points would provide a more rounded service that is in demand; or that the introduction of measures to reduce vandalism and decrease breakdown response times would increase the reliability and reduce the downtime of existing facilities so that demand is better met.

7. Further Information

Further information on topics briefly touched on here can be found in the following policy documents:

Standards for Construction, Restoration and Maintenance of Inland Waterways
(https://www.waterways.org.uk/information/policy_documents/standards_for_construction)

Moorings on Navigable Waterways Policy
(https://www.waterways.org.uk/information/policy_documents/mooring_policy)

Towpaths Policy
(https://www.waterways.org.uk/information/policy_documents/towpaths_policy)

Revised October 2020