

1 WATERWAYS OMBUDSMAN COMMITTEE MEETING

On Monday 13 March 2023 at 09.15am
Zoom

MINUTES

Present:

Karen McArthur (KM)	Independent Member (Chair)
Jane Brothwood (JB)	Independent Member
Warren Seddon (WS)	Independent Member
Alan Collins (AC)	Independent Member
Alison Jack (AJ)	Independent Member

Apologies

None

In attendance:

Navigation Authority Observers

Janet Hogben (JH)	Canal & River Trust Board Representative
Tom Deards (TD)	Canal & River Trust Executive Representative
Geoff Crane (GC)	Avon Navigation Trust Representative

In attendance:

Sarah Daniel (SD)	Ombudsman
Sobia Saleem (SS)	Governance Assistant (minutes)

Action

1. Welcome & Apologies

The Chair opened the meeting, no apologies received.

AJ and WS provided introductions.

2. Register & Declarations of Interest

The Register of Interests report was noted. No further interests related to the Committee's work were declared.

WS agreed to declare any conflict of interest from the judicial review.

3. Governance

3.1 Minutes of the last Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 05 December 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

3.2 Matters Arising

All open actions on the Action Log were to be discussed at the meeting.

13 September 2021

- Item 6: New Business and Comms: TD agreed to reach out again to AINA and Peel (in respect of the Bridgewater and Manchester Ship Canal)

TD noted that following discussions AINA have expressed an interest in joining the Waterways Ombudsman Committee and there has been no response from Peel. The Chair, Ombudsman and TD are to discuss this further outside of the meeting.

Action: SS to arrange a meeting between the Chair, Ombudsman and TD to discuss AINA and Peel options.

SS

05 December 2022:

- Item 3.2: Boat Safety Scheme Subsidiary - TD to present a paper on the Boat Safety Scheme subsidiary once the subsidiary is in place.

Discussions surrounding the Boat Safety Scheme Subsidiary are ongoing. Action to remain open until further information is available.

- Item 7: To review if there is an industry body that can offer an affiliated membership for marinas.

TD has obtained contact details of an individual at the British Marine. The Chair, Ombudsman and TD to discuss further at their meeting.

4. Committee Recruitment Update – User Representative Member (non-voting)

It was noted that the position is still vacant and the Chair expressed a desire to have a waterway user join the committee, who can share their valuable experience.

The Chair proposed to extend the terms of office for the user representative member to reflect their time at either Avon Navigation Trust or Canal and River Trust.

TD: To communicate with the Council the position and the role profile with the new longer term.

TD

The Committee noted and agreed the four-year term and for the user representative member to come from either Canal and River Trust or The Avon Navigation Trust.

Action: AC to review and amend the Governance documents, including terms of reference for the committee to approve at the next meeting.

AC

5. Finance

The Finance Report shared ahead of the meeting was taken as read. TD noted that the figures and expenses are consistent with previous years.

6. AINA & Peel (Verbal Update)

Covered in the Action Log review.

7. Industry Body for Marinas (Verbal Update)

Covered in the Action Log review.

8. Ombudsman Report

The Ombudsman report shared ahead of the meeting was taken as read.

Canal & River Trust Customer Service – It was highlighted that the savings being made at the Trust due to increased financial pressures may result in more complaints being directed to the Ombudsman. It was noted that the Trust will be communicating with the community and introducing a set of minimum customer service standards. The Ombudsman noted that all general complaints should not be going to the Ombudsman, only when the customer can demonstrate maladministration. The Ombudsman to send the complainant back through the correct process as explained on the Trust's website.

Casework & Enquiries – Enquiry numbers were 15 for the period. Of these 7 had not completed the ICP, 4 were not about CRT, 3 were OTOR, 1 was accepted for investigation. The investigation regarding the end of the garden mooring has concluded. The Trust cannot grant the mooring in the onward sale. Two further complaints regarding tree ownership and erosion of the canal bank have been resolved and closed.

Customer Service Training – The Trust will be implementing a customer service training for every customer support advisor currently working for the Trust. The training is to be delivered through the Institute of Customer Service and the Ombudsman feedback has been shared.

WS left the meeting at 09.54am

	Action
Action: SS to invite the Trust's Customer Service Supervisor to feedback on the customer service training	SS
9. Judicial Review Update	
The Committee discussed the judicial review and it was agreed that in light of recent events it is in the Committees best interest to offer mediation. It was noted that retrieving any funds from the complainant will prove difficult.	
SD: To discuss with Bates Wells mediation options for the complainant.	SD
10. AOB	
AC noted that the Governance document on diligent needs updating.	
SS: To check and upload the most recent Governance document on resources section on diligent.	SS
SS: To source a new date for the September in-person WOC meeting.	SS
14. Close of Meeting	
There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 10.50am	
15. Next Meeting Date	
19 June 2023	

These minutes were approved by the Committee as an accurate record:

Chair