

Fact Sheet

River Thames moorings enforcement

25 September 2015

Following our successful moorings enforcement pilot using civil procedures, we are changing the way we manage some of our free 24 hour moorings on the River Thames. This briefing explains why, and how.

Background

The Environment Agency is the navigation authority for the non-tidal River Thames from Cricklade in Wiltshire to the tidal boundary at Teddington in Middlesex. It's our job to manage navigation of the waterway to ensure it can be enjoyed safely by as many people as possible, with consideration for the needs of others.

The Environment Agency provides some short-stay public and visitor mooring sites to encourage passing boats to stop for short periods, to enjoy the peace of the waterside and use local amenities. These mooring sites are very popular.

Unless otherwise indicated by signage, in general boat owners can stop for free on public open land owned by the Environment Agency, for a maximum period of 24 hours only. Some moorings have an associated charge, either for mooring at any time, or after the initial free 24 hour period.

Unfortunately, some customers do not pay the charges applicable and stay moored up longer than they are entitled to. This deprives other customers benefiting from the moorings we provide.

Why do we need to manage our moorings differently?

Disappointingly, misuse of our moorings has been widespread and customers affected by this tell us it is a major problem for them. Dealing with misuse is an issue for us though, because the cost of pursuing offenders can often be more than the value of the mooring fees we are owed.

We are using a new way of resolving this. We believe this modern and faster enforcement solution, may also lead to a river-wide approach that can be adopted by all landowners with moorings on the River Thames. By changing the way we manage our moorings we hope to increase access to them, making more moorings available to a larger number of customers.

What are we doing?

The Environment Agency is working with service provider NSL Limited and applying the same civil enforcement rules used to monitor and enforce parking charges in private car parks, to mooring charges issued at some 24 hours sites.

We have introduced a daily charge of £100 (£60 if paid early) payable by any boat owner who breaches the conditions of use of our free 24 hour moorings. Conditions of use at those mooring sites will be clearly displayed on signs.

If a breach of mooring conditions is committed, Environment Agency officers will submit a report with evidence to NSL. NSL will then send a Mooring Charge Notice to the registered boat owner by post and pursue payment, issuing County Court proceedings if necessary.

Our mooring sites will comply with aspects of the industry recommendation for signage. We will operate an appeals process to be fair to our customers, and in accordance with industry approved codes of conduct.

This approach will enable us to regulate our moorings more effectively, and free up valuable space for all our customers. Our enforcement officers will be able to spend more time dealing with other enforcement priorities such as boat registration and speed and wash offences.

We have been working closely with River User Groups and the River Thames Alliance Moorings Group to develop this new enforcement scheme.

Where and when will this take place?

We started displaying new signs at some mooring sites during September 2015 and will complete this during October 2015. As mooring sites come online boat owners should check mooring conditions carefully on any new signs displayed, as they may have changed recently. A current list of sites is shown overleaf.

24 Hour Mooring Sites.

Lechlade

Eynsham

Oxford (East Street)

Iffley

Culham

Abingdon

Goring

Reading (Scours Lane)

Wargarve (Lashbrook Moorings)

Sonning

Marlow

Towpath opposite Queens Eyot

Boveney

Egham

Laleham

Weybridge Towpath

Tail of Desborough Island

Walton Towpath

Walton Gridley Miskins

Hurst Park

Kingston Rail Wharf (upstream end)

Steven's Eyot

Where can I get more information?

If you have a question regarding our River Thames mooring enforcement please contact us on 03708 506 506.