

Fact Sheet

For a 12 month period we are piloting some minor changes in the way we manage some Environment Agency free 24 hour moorings on the River Thames, to help our customers. This briefing explains why, and how.

Background

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, including designated 24 hours moorings, have an associated charge, either for mooring at any time, or after the initial free 24 hour period.

What have we done so far to improve fairer access to mooring?

We have worked with private civil enforcement companies, applying the same civil enforcement rules used to monitor and enforce parking charges in private car parks, to develop similar mooring charges issued at some 24 hour mooring sites.

Customers can still enjoy free 24 hour mooring at our advertised sites, however they must now register their arrival at site with Thames Visitor Moorings to be able to continue to enjoy the free period.

We recognise customers may wish to stay in some popular locations for longer than 24 hours, so we have relaxed the historically rigid '24 hour only' rule and introduced 24 to 48 hour & 48 to 72 hour chargeable periods.

A daily charge of £100 (£60 if paid early) still remains payable by any boat owner who breaches the conditions of use of our designated 24 hour moorings, this includes failing to register on arrival or continuing to moor after the 72 hour period has expired. Conditions of use at these mooring sites are clearly displayed on signs.

Why are we introducing more changes and what will those changes be?

Some boaters are not finding it easy to pay their mooring charges at the local locks, particularly when the lock keeper is not on duty, or away from site. Some boaters are simply just not registering on arrival at a mooring site, or telling us if they have been moored at a local site and that they owe us mooring fees. This is depriving the river from essential income.

We are working with a company called Thames Visitor Moorings (TVM) for a 12 month pilot, to introduce improvements to help make compliance easier for customers.

TVM will manage and assist customer compliance at Environment Agency designated 24 hour moorings on our behalf, by enabling boaters to be able to notify them of their arrival, planned departure date and time, as well as to pay the appropriate fee online. This will replace the current system whereby the fee collection and monitoring is dependent on the adjacent locks being manned.

To ensure continuity for boaters who are visiting other parts of the river, the TVM website has details of moorings for the whole of the non-tidal Thames for the purposes of providing information and the collection of fees from other landowners.

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

This approach will enable us to regulate our moorings more effectively, and free us 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 will start displaying new signs at mooring sites during November 2016. As mooring sites come online boat owners should carefully check mooring conditions on any signs being displayed, as they may have changed recently. If the sign indicates they should they must contact Thames Visitor Moorings to register their arrival at site, they should now do that instead of contacting the local lock. A list of the 24 hour mooring sites where this pilot will be operated is shown below.

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)

Where can I get more information?

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