

Navigation update: What's the latest?

November 2023

Dear Stakeholder

Here is our latest newsletter, updating you on key areas of work and priorities that the National Navigation team are focussing on, which hopefully you will find useful.

Please feel free to share this with those you represent.

Kind regards

Omoniyi Green and Jo Scully
National Navigation Managers



Creating a better place for people and wildlife

National Navigation Team news



A reminder that the National Navigation team have a new email address. You can contact us by emailing navigation@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Emails sent to our old address (navconsultation@environment-agency.gov.uk) will be redirected.

Introducing:

Timi Kiakubu

I have recently joined the National Navigation team as an Advisor. I am new to the organisation. The immediate past six years of my career was in UNICEF as WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Specialist, and Emergency Response Focal person.

I will be working with colleagues to support the team with developing insights and reports from data, obtaining and tracking business plan targets/updates, alternative financing (including green finance), customer experience and participation, RBMP (River Basin Management Plans), and co-production of the Updates for National Navigation.



Navigation Business Plan update



Overview

We have been working closely with our colleagues internally to drive forward our Navigation Business Plan and are focusing on the progression of our navigation priorities for the coming year; Finances (exploring alternative funding sources), Enforcement (influencing government to change legislation and byelaws) and Participation and Benefits data collection.

The summer period has now drawn to a close and the autumn period is proving to be a busy period for our Navigation Capital programme. In addition, there has been lots of great work taking place to deliver elements of our business plan and some of these are mentioned below.

For more information please contact the National Navigation Team:

navigation@environment-agency.gov.uk



Navigation Business Plan theme

You will see this marker throughout the newsletter to identify which Business Plan theme the update is referring to (Sustainable Outcomes, Sustainable Operations or Sustainable Funding)

Creating a better place for people and wildlife

National stakeholder engagement

Our work with our national stakeholders continues, and we are certainly realising the benefits of the new engagement model.

National Waterways Forum member 1:1 meetings

We are currently engaged in our second round of annual 1:1 meetings with each organisation that is a member of our NWF – those national boating and non-boating organisations that have an interest in our navigable waterways.

These are sessions in which our stakeholders set the agenda and we are there to listen to their areas of interest in more detail and together identify those common areas where we can work more closely.

National Waterways Advisory Group

We have recently held our third meeting of our National Waterways Advisory Group (NWAG). The focus of this interactive meeting was on the Environment Agency's Participation Strategy and Access, together with an introduction into Nationally Consistent Boat Identification and an update on the Article 16 – Removal of unregistered vessels procedure consultation. Members of NWAG and other subject matter experts will be working closely with us on these topics, and others, to help us deliver the outcomes our waterways users have told us are important, and we look forward to updating you in due course.

Please contact us: navigation@environment-agency.gov.uk

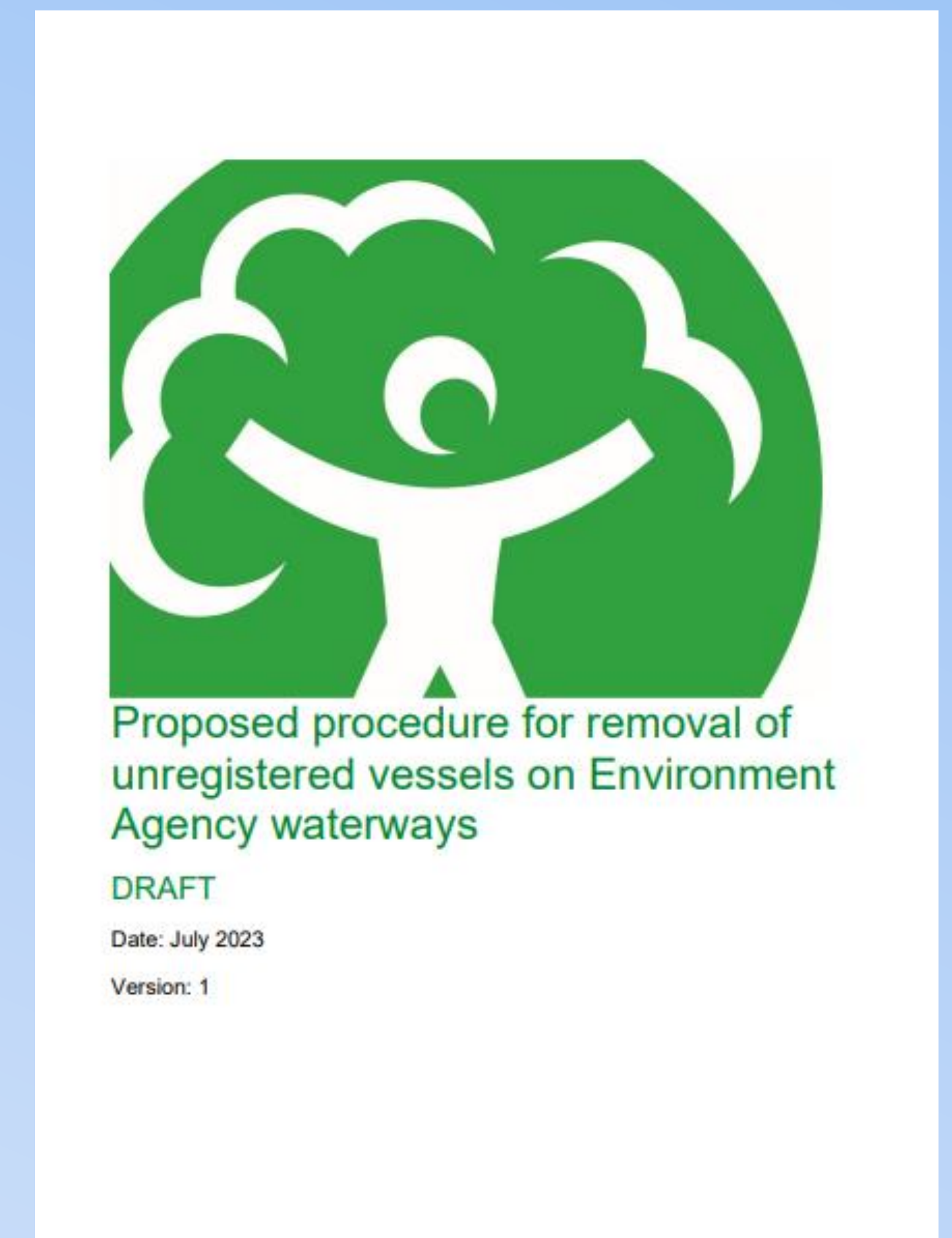


Consultation on procedure for removal of unregistered vessels from Environment Agency waterways

We ran an 8-week external consultation on a proposed procedure relating to our power to remove unregistered vessels under Article 16 of The Environment Agency (Inland Waterways) Order 2010. This consultation was through our stakeholder groups, user representatives and other relevant interested parties and was aimed to help us shape the procedure for the removal of vessels, including those used for residential purposes.

Whilst some responses were supportive of our proposals, we also received some challenges to them. Some responders were concerned that the procedure is too lengthy and bureaucratic, with the risk it would be inefficient and not used; whilst others felt it is too heavy-handed and does not address human rights issues. We are now looking at all the responses in more detail with our colleagues from Legal Services, before deciding upon our next steps.

Please contact us: navigation@environment-agency.gov.uk



Compliance and Enforcement



Sustainable Outcomes



Environment Agency

Development of a new Community of Practice

We are setting up and leading a new internal Community of Practice for compliance and enforcement within the Navigation / Waterways regime.

It will be made up of representatives from Area Waterways Operations, Environment Management Enforcement, Legal Services and National Navigation teams.

The first meeting took place in early November. It was a really positive session, thanks to all who were involved.

We will also be working with the Area Waterways teams to look at what other areas of work could benefit from this approach.

Developing Communities of Practice is a key outcome within the Navigation Business Plan, to share best practice and learning - "We will support our people to feel safe, valued and equipped, through more effective engagement, better guidance and increased investment in skills and capabilities".

The Community of Practice will be a platform to:

- Get to know and understand the people and teams involved in compliance / enforcement work, and their ways of working
- Support each other by sharing best practice and learning from each other
- Offer a safe and welcoming space to discuss local operational and national strategic issues and challenges around compliance and enforcement
- Develop recommendations for new or better ways of working, driving a more consistent approach where appropriate
- Take a task and finish approach to developing and implementing new ways of working
- Provide a conduit to the national Cross Regime Enforcement Group
- Feed into the National Waterways Advisory Group and a potential National Waterways Technical Group for this subject area (both are external stakeholder groups)



Creating a better place for people and wildlife

Boat Registration



Sustainable Funding



Environment
Agency

A new digital service for Boat Registration

We are continuing to develop a digital service for boat registration, with the ultimate vision to have an automated system for our customers to register boats online through .GOV.UK.

As we let you know last time, our focus has been on developing a new platform for managing boat registrations.

This work is progressing well, and we aim to migrate data from our current IT system to the new data platform in May 2024. We will work hard to make this transition as seamless as possible.

However, we recognise it could impact our service while we transfer the data and make sure our teams are trained. We are letting customers know about this through the registration renewals and are asking them to bear this in mind when applying for their registration. The earlier they apply, the less impact there should be for them. If you are able to help us spread the word, we would appreciate it.

Development of the externally facing system should start in 2024 to 2025. There are no significant changes that external customers and Stakeholders need to be aware of currently, but we will keep you informed as the project progresses.

If you have any feedback please email us at navconsultation@environment-agency.gov.uk

A stylized landscape illustration at the bottom of the slide. It features rolling green hills, a blue river winding through them, a white bridge, a person fishing, a tractor in a field, and various trees and animals like cows. The background is a light blue sky.

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Boat Registration



Sustainable Funding



Environment Agency

Boat Registration update

It's that time of year again! We have been busy preparing for our River Thames registration renewals which were sent out from 13 November. Our focus now moves to preparing for the Anglian and Medway renewals which will be sent in February. Charges for 2024 will increase by 2%, which is the final year of our 3-year charging plan. We are now gathering the evidence we need to develop proposals for charges from 2025. We are planning to consult in Spring 2024.

We have been monitoring registration numbers throughout the year and comparing with last year. The table below shows the registration numbers for 'Private powered' up to the end of October 2023 compared to the same period for 2022. This shows overall registration numbers have increased by 195 compared to the previous year, showing an increase across all our waterways.

Waterway	Private powered registrations to end of October 2022	Private powered registrations to end of October 2023	Increase
Thames	6802	6869	67
Anglian	3558	3650	92
Medway	477	513	36
Total	10837	11032	195

NB: data accounts for any refunds given during the year

Boat Registration survey

In September, we launched a survey to help us gather customer's views on registering their boats. Feedback from this survey will help us to improve the registration service for our customers in the future.

The survey is now closed and we are analysing the data. We had over 2000 responses which is a really positive response rate. Thank you to those who completed the survey and also helped us to spread the word. We will update you and share the project findings when they are available. We will then review the finding to see what changes we can make to improve the Boat Registration service going forwards.

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Commercial Development



Sustainable Funding



Environment Agency

Progress is being made on the Mooring Development and Improvement Programme, with an extension to the moorings at Denver Complex on the river Great Ouse currently underway (see photos). This work is due to be complete in January.

We are also in the process of procuring appraisal and design for mooring extensions across 7 (currently) sites along the Thames. The current aim is for this work to be complete by the end of the financial year, with construction programmed for next year, subject to approval of the Full Business Case.

Furthermore, we continue to assess Thames leisure moorings to identify where there may be space to increase capacity without any capital work. This is being done on a site-by-site basis, with boats placed on any identified additional capacity as and when any potential impact has been assessed.

We are also in the early stages of identifying potential locations on the Thames at which to introduce Winter moorings. Where safe and suitable to do so, we would aim to introduce these for the 2024-25 Winter season.



Creating a better place for people and wildlife

Electric boat trial



Sustainable Outcomes



We are working with internal and external partners to progress a 3-year electric boat trial for up to 4 work boats and 2 charging points, in our Anglian and Thames waterways areas. This bid has been successful, and we are currently working to create the specifications for two Pulse 63 ribs and two catamarans, electrically-driven. These are being specified to meet the requirements of Anglian and Thames waterways, however, we expect they will be seen across our navigation areas once built as, alongside their use as internal work vessels, they may attend various river-focussed events to showcase what they can do. We have a push target of June 2024 for the first Pulse 63 ribs to be ready, to align with Henley Regatta and Henley Festival. Please do contact us if you think there are any events in your local area after this which you think may be of interest to promote electric propulsion boats.

We will also be installing two fast-chargers during the trial, which will become available to the public and form part of our infrastructure to support electric-propulsion as one of the key avenues to sustainable boating. For more information on the electric boat trial, please visit: [Environment Agency wins bid for net zero workboats on Thames - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-wins-bid-for-net-zero-workboats-on-thames)



Early stock designs of the pulse 63 ribs, updated designs are currently in progress



A current catamaran in the fleet, at hermitage lock on the R. Great Ouse, as the basis for a net zero redesign

In addition to electric propulsion, we are conscious of various alternative power and propulsion solutions for the EA to be aware of as we develop our strategies for sustainable boating. There are a wide variety of vessels on our waterways and, just like road vehicles, there is a cost to changing to electric. We have to be mindful that there isn't a 'one size fits all approach' at the moment, but making the changes in the right direction more accessible to all in some way should be a priority.



Creating a better place for people and wildlife

Water Safety & Asset Management



Sustainable Operations



Environment Agency

Water safety

We continue to promote water safety messages, working with partners. The [National Water Safety Forum](#) are planning their messages for the Autumn and Winter under their [Respect the water campaign](#). We will be supporting their campaign and sharing their messages through our social media channels over the next few months. This will include the Royal Life Saving Society '[Don't drink and drown campaign](#)' from 11 to 17 December. We are now planning our communications for 2024.

#BEAMATE
DON'T DRINK AND DROWN

Asset Management

- As the technical authority we supported Thames in reviewing the recent Chertsey lock failure.
- We have liaised with Canal and River Trust regarding lock gate manufacture and material use.



Creating a better place for people and wildlife

Boat safety



Sustainable Operations



Environment
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Review of the Boat Safety Scheme 2002 standards for non-private boats

We have previously updated on the need to review the current 2002 Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) standards for non-private boats such as small passenger and hotel boats, workboats and boats let as accommodation that are not self-drive hire boats (e.g. on Airbnb). Last year we participated in a working group with other Navigation Authorities to scope what was needed before presenting these findings to the BSS, and BSS has now set out its proposals for how this work might be delivered, to the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA). AINA members including ourselves are now looking at these proposals in detail, and we hope to be able to update further soon on next steps and timescales.

Boat Safety Scheme Advisory Committee (BSSAC) Chair replacement

Phil Aspey has taken the decision to withdraw from the role of Chair of the BSS Advisory Committee after 8 years in the seat. He has supported and upheld the principles of the BSS, has helped drive issues through Committees and played a major role in ensuring the BSS was given well-rounded advice.

For more information about this vacancy, please visit the BSS website <https://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/BSSAC-Chair>

Potential candidates can send their Expressions of interest to BSS.Office@boatsafetyscheme.org before 17:00hrs on Wednesday 6 December 2023 with the Subject line: BSSAC Chair Expression of Interest in the role



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Contact us



If you have any questions or feedback about this update please email us:

navigation@environment-agency.gov.uk

We have received requests for the contact details for the area teams in order for you to be able to get in touch with them regards to any area specific issues. Please find these contact details below:

Thames - WaterwaysThames@environment-agency.gov.uk

Anglian - Enquiries_EastAnglia@environment-agency.gov.uk (East Anglia area)

LNenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk (Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire area)

Medway / Rye Harbour - enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Wye / Lydney Harbour - wye-navigation@environment-agency.gov.uk

For any national issues, please continue to contact us at navigation@environment-agency.gov.uk



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