

National Bargee Travellers Association

Response to Llangollen basin moorings consultation

The National Bargee Travellers Association is opposed to the proposals in the consultation for the following reasons:

1. Increased charge from £6 to £12 charge for electricity

The increase from £6 to £12 per night is disproportionate. This is an increase of 100% and as such is greater than almost all of the other crippling price increases that have occurred for electricity, other fuels and food. The increase is well above inflation, which in February 2023 was 10.4% according to the Office for National Statistics (see attached screenshot). Indeed it is inflation plus around 90%. To double the price would be grossly unfair, especially on boaters who do not need or want electricity. Boaters who cannot afford this fee will be excluded from mooring in Llangollen basin as the proposals stand. The nightly fee already discourages boaters on low incomes, who tend to be liveaboards. This is an indirect attack on boat dwellers, especially those without a home mooring, who are on some of the lowest incomes in the entire population. If the price is to be increased, it should increase by 10.4% to £6.62.

CRT has not provided any evidence to support the need to double the cost of electricity/mooring in the basin. CRT should be transparent about this issue and provide clear information about the current price it pays for the electricity supply in the basin and the shortfall between this and mooring fees. It should also make it clear whether CRT is only paying for electricity actually used by boaters or not, and whether the electricity supply to the basin moorings is billed separately or as part of a larger electricity bill that includes other uses on the Llangollen canal, such as back pumping, and whether the supply to the basin and/or overall supply to the Llangollen canal is metered.

CRT has also not provided any information about the amount of electricity used by either each boat that has moored in the basin or the overall total used per day by all the boats moored in the basin. It is very difficult to see how a single boat would use £12.00 worth of electricity in one day unless they were running some very power-hungry appliances on their boat, which is not the case for most boaters. It is extremely unlikely that any boater would use £60.00 worth of electricity in 5 days. However, providing electricity will not stop all engine running as some boats have calorifiers without electric immersion heaters and engines have to be run for hot water.

In addition, CRT has not factored in the use of solar panels in the summer months. Most boats now have solar panels, which means that most boaters would not need mains electricity at all between April and October. This period coincides with the greatest use of the basin and therefore it is hard to avoid the conclusion that CRT is simply proposing to exploit the fact that the basin is heavily used in summer to obtain the greatest profit from boaters, without considering the actual pattern of use of the electricity.

2. Is 4 berths at 5 day moorings the right offer for those wanting to stay longer?

The moorings in Llangollen basin should have a mix of stay times and should also have a mix of moorings with electricity and without electricity. Some berths in the basin should be free of charge on condition that boaters do not run their engines, so that boaters who cannot afford to pay per night have an equal opportunity to moor in the basin. Some of the

berths, both those with and without electricity, should be 14 days all year round. At least half of the others should revert to 14 days in winter.

The towpath moorings in Llangollen should also be changed to a mix of 14 days and 48 hours, reverting to 14 days in winter, with the option to moor free of charge on condition that boaters do not run their engines. Neither the basin nor the towpath moorings are busy in winter so there is no need to restrict mooring to less than 14 days in winter.

3. Should we be seeking funding to convert to metered bollards in the long term? This isn't something we currently have in budget but could enable us to offer a lower nightly cost for those who don't want or need an electric supply.

CRT should definitely seek funding to convert to metered bollards. This would not only provide provide free of charge mooring for those who don't want or need an electric supply, but it is also fairer to all users of the moorings in that they will only pay for the electricity they have actually used, rather than those who only use a little electricity paying too much.

4. What else do you think we could do to improve the moorings and make Llangollen an attractive waterways destination? Who should we be working with?

Instead of increasing the charge for electricity, CRT should create a Quiet Mooring Zone in Llangollen basin. Quiet zones are advisory rather than compulsory, but in some circumstances local authorities can take action against noise nuisance. Please see the attached photograph of the sign for the Quiet Mooring Zone at Honeystreet on the Kennet and Avon Canal. This was set up with the support of the Parish Council and the local pub (which was partly responsible for noise). Reports from the Parish Council suggest that that this has been working well. CRT should work with boaters, with the Town Council in Llangollen and with any residents' groups affected by noise. Any Quiet Zone proposals should be put out to a separate consultation with boaters.

CRT should also distribute its Considerate Boating leaflet on the Llangollen canal in the vicinity of the town and include information from it on any signs in Llangollen basin.

In addition, CRT should install solar panels and/or wind generators to provide the electricity supply to the basin and the towpath moorings, to cut costs and cut carbon emissions.

**National Barge Travellers Association
March 2023**