

SPC response to the Mead Lane Mooring Consultation – approved 1.10.2019

Saltford Parish Council refers to its 4 June 2019 resolution on Mead Lane*. SPC is concerned that the B&NES mooring trial has exacerbated the problems of non-compliance with mooring limits, anti-social behaviour and heavy littering from a minority of boaters as well as the disruption caused to residents, visitors and other river users and damage to the flora and fauna of the riverbank. Evidence submitted by local residents to B&NES Council shows that these issues have got considerably worse as the trial progressed from 2017 into 2018 and the situation has continued to worsen during 2019.

The trial has clearly demonstrated that Mead Lane as a hitherto unspoilt beauty spot in the Green Belt and in close proximity to residential housing is unsuitable and impracticable for moorings which require continual management. It lacks the infrastructure (pontoons, purpose built embankments, water, waste and sewerage collection etc.) normally associated with moorings which are having a detrimental effect on the natural environment for one of Saltford's most important amenity locations for viewing and appreciating the local landscape, the Cotswold AONB.

SPC concludes that, in order to protect the riverbank for the majority of visitors, most of whom would not be aware or in a position to respond to this consultation, and residents who all value this important and iconic location, a mooring ban should be implemented without delay commencing with, on health and safety grounds, an immediate winter mooring ban.

SPC welcomes and supports the case made by Saltford Environment Group for the creation of a Local Nature Reserve at Mead Lane in SEG's paper of 5th September 2019 (attached/submitted separately). As described by SEG, the riverbank's south-easterly aspect means that it can support rich water-edge herbaceous vegetation and the shallows warm more than typical along this river, increasing local habitat variety. It benefits from easy access. These features combine to make it unique and thus an ideal location for a Local Nature Reserve. SPC considers this to be a very positive way forward to maximise the value, use and enjoyment of this location by the majority of stakeholders.

SPC therefore asks B&NES Council as the riparian owner to urgently pursue the creation of a Local Nature Reserve at Mead Lane and that SPC, SEG and Mead Lane residents are consulted and kept informed of progress, including design, for this project.

***SPC Resolution concerning Mead Lane of 4 June 2019**

A. The River Avon in Saltford is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and SPC considers that the river should be afforded protection from inappropriate practices and behaviour from all users of the river and the riverbanks.

B. The riverbank at Mead Lane and the adjacent highway are the sole responsibility of B&NES Council.

C. SPC wishes the riverbank to be enjoyed by all stakeholders equitably. However the B&NES Mead Lane Mooring Trial during 2017 and 2018 showed a high incidence of noncompliance with mooring limits, anti-social behaviour and heavy littering from a minority of boaters; the disruption caused to residents, other river users and damage to the flora and

fauna of the riverbank was considerable. The mooring trial proved that Mead Lane, a residential narrow rural lane overlooking the Cotswold AONB within the Green Belt, does not have the amenities or facilities for longer stay moorings normally associated with a marina that would typically be remote from residential properties. SPC therefore concludes that Mead Lane is not a suitable location for longer term, semi-residential moorings of 14 days.

D. On health and safety grounds SPC requests the implementation of an autumn and winter mooring ban from 1 October to 31 March.

E. SPC considers that there should be a 48-hour only mooring limit within a restricted length of the lane and that this should be effectively monitored and enforced by B&NES Council.

F. If a 48-hour limit is abused or ignored on a regular basis and/or other related anti-social behaviour and riverbank damage issues continue then SPC would wish for a complete ban on moorings in Mead Lane so that the riverbank can revert to its previous status as an area suitable and appropriately protected as a wildlife conservation area that can continue to be enjoyed by residents and a wide range of visitors.

G. We request that B&NES conducts a public consultation on the option of establishing a Wildlife Conservation Area as soon as possible.

H. The riverbank and parking bollards in Mead Lane have constantly been damaged by vehicles before, during and since the 2017/18 mooring trial in addition to damage through their incorrect use as mooring posts. Inconsiderate and obstructive parking can also restrict access for emergency vehicles and the large vehicles requiring access to Wessex Water. This is a matter of serious concern and SPC asks B&NES Council to install a post and rail system of protection for the river bank, together with white lines to protect access to properties by residents and to deter obstructive parking in narrow stretches of the lane. There should also be a ban on overnight sleeping in vehicles in Mead Lane.

I. SPC asks B&NES Council to take action to address these issues without delay and as a matter of priority. Moorings should be suspended forthwith in Mead Lane until the issues are properly addressed to the satisfaction of Mead Lane residents and SPC.