

NAVIGATION CHARGES 2012-14

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR OUR WATERWAYS

Following careful consideration and discussions with the boating community at national and local levels, we have decided to increase our navigation charges by the consumer price index plus 2% per year in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Our navigation charges will consequently rise by 6.4% from January 2012.

We are doing this to reduce our reliance on public funding to provide a sustainable future for our navigations going forward, regardless of who manages and operates them. Cost inflation and reductions in public funding mean that we must increase our income and reduce our costs to sustain the needs of our waterways. Increased funding from charges is part of a wider package that will see us reduce our operating costs; prioritise funding to protect capital investment; increase income from commercial and external sources; and, deliver a sustainable service that meets the needs of our different customers as best we can – as well as engaging the support of local people and communities to jointly operate, maintain and own their navigations and shape how they are used and developed.

Having listened to the concerns of the boating community we will also:

- annually review the impact of our increases, together with economic and other pressures on registration numbers and review our subsequent increases for 2013 and 2014 if we are not confident that our customers can sustain them;
- freeze our navigation charges for commercial craft at 2011 levels until 2015;
- introduce a rolling year for our annual registrations;
- develop a system for part refunding the registrations of craft in specific circumstances (to be defined).

In an ideal world there would be no increase in our charges but unfortunately the reality is that we need to deal with the increasing pressures of reduced public funding and inflation that we are faced with to help secure the future of our waterways. Our navigations face an uncertain future without such difficult actions and could quickly become unreliable and then unsafe to navigate if we fail to act.