

WATERWAYS FOR THE 21st CENTURY

Panel chair:

- Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways

Panel members:

- John Edmonds, Chair, Inland Waterways Amenity Council
- Rt. Hon John Gummer, MP
- Richard Fairhurst, Editor, Waterways World
- Carole Souter, Chief Executive, Heritage Lottery Fund

Panel chair: Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways

This morning quite rightly we talked about the issues that you wanted to talk about which were some very particular boating issues. I think this afternoon the purpose is to talk about where is this Waterways going to go for 2020 and we have to lift, I think, the whole debate to say how do we engage with society because we don't have enough resources to do what we are doing at the moment and to keep it sustainable. I guess we probably want to do more rather than less with what we have got at the moment. So to do that we have to engage society in the widest sense, so they will help us to secure the resources that we need from Government, local Government, from voluntary organisations and so forth. So I don't want to kind of be rattling on, I've had my chance this morning and I am going to ask each of the panel members to speak for about five minutes and then they will take individual questions for about five minutes and then we will have a final wrapping up collective view.

John to kick off.

Panel member: John Edmonds, Chair, Inland Waterways Amenity Council

The observant of you would already have noticed that I am not John Gummer. But I am going to talk about what I regard as really the only game in town. It is not bollards, its funding. Funding of the Waterways. Some of you have heard the figures but we are going to hear them again now. The funding gap for BW is getting on for £30 million a year. If you want a comparison the funding gap for the Environment Agency, the second largest Navigation Authority, is in the order of £12 million a year. These are big numbers. BW cannot any longer, if it ever could, rely on profits from development work to bridge that gap. ISIS has halved its staff, the chief executive has resigned because of the change and size of the structure and so the money as you heard this morning, which is flowing from that particular direction is much smaller now than it was expected to be and needs to be given the size of the funding gap. Some of you in this hall have said this to me in various ways, for some of you the obvious solution is to get more money from the Government. Ask them in effect to supply, I don't know, £50 million extra a year to fill the two gaps and a bit of contingency funding thrown in without getting too expensive. My attitude to that argument is 'well good luck to you'. I honour you in having this particular go. I was a trade union official for 30 years I understand about lost causes. If when you go along to the government you say, well forget the credit crunch, forget fuel poverty, forget the millions going into secondary education, forget the fact that you are fighting two wars, could you just stump up the odd £50 million. I am sure you will get a very interesting and very attentive response and then of course you will leave empty handed. That is not going to happen and anyone who thinks it is going to happen perhaps needs to contemplate one of those white coats with the long sleeves that have a wrap round potential. And whilst we are getting the hard news out of the way because I don't expect any rose petals to be thrown at me after this contribution I can reveal to you that if the British people were to be asked where would you most like (John Gummer entered); there has been this extra bounty of £50 million a year the Government found down the back of some filing cabinet somewhere where would you like it spent I imagine, no I know and you know, that the waterways would not be mentioned in the top 20 opportunities. So if we care about the waterways, and everybody here does, then I think we better find a better and smarter way to argue our case. Campaigning in the traditional sense might prevent further cuts in waterways but I am as sure as hell will not manage to secure additional resources. And boaters alone will not carry this argument. 60,000 or even 100,000 boaters can make a great deal of noise, trust me we all know that but they won't change the minds of ministers in the Treasury. Vague assertions about the multiple non-boating benefits of the waterways which are not backed up with thorough and very convincing research evidence won't cut much ice anyway if there is real pressure, as there will be, on public spending. That's the hard bit out the way, so all of us - what do we actually do? First of all it might be a good idea to get our hands on a few facts. BW are doing some of this now, Defra and IWACC are doing a lot of it now, we have to establish by proper

research exactly what the benefits of the waterways are, for recreation of course, but for regeneration, public health, climate change and for all of those, multiple benefits and advantages that we talk about so glibly but find it so difficult to put a value on, we need to put a value on because a monetary value is going to count in the arguments that are taking us forward.

Secondly, after facts - ideas. Just what are the funding options available, not just the Government at national level, but local government, at regional level as well? How do other countries do this, how successful have they been, what can we learn from them. And what can we learn from our own experience of funding other operations in this country. Can we develop some intelligent ideas about how to fund the waterways.

Thirdly, and you will be relieved to hear, lastly – we need to build alliances. The boaters on their own cannot do it. In building alliances there is no point, in my view, in claiming environment benefits for the waterways. If we spend a large part of our life fighting with green NGO's about the operation of particular canals or navigation on particular rivers. There is not much point claiming that the waterways provide a diversity of recreational opportunities if the canoeist are fighting the anglers and the walkers are fighting the cyclist and by the way we don't have any space for people riding horses, that was a point from this morning's discussion. There is also not much point in claiming the vast and considerable advantages of regeneration from waterways development if we indulge ourselves from time to time by criticising the very waterside development that is actually going to produce the benefits and the money. So what we need is a good case based on well validated facts, ideas and we need to form a grand coalition of interest that goes wider than we have so far contemplated. If we do those things we will put ourselves in the game for succeeding in the future but without those things we are just arguing about the size of our defeat. Thanks very much.

Q. Arthur Bennett, Willow tree Marina and Yacht Harbour Association

First of all John, can I say that your call for information about what happens on the waterways, - can I point out that the British Marine Federation in collaboration with British Waterways, Environment Agency and the RYA are producing the report which is coming out next week which looks at the economic importance of the inland marinas. It is a sizeable report, 100 pages, and the idea is that this will be presented to planners, politicians to show them just what benefits there are on the inland marinas. That's the first part I would like to point out. Most of us know that if we run a business on the waterways we have got to look at a number of things, one of them is increasing income but also in searing loses. We are moving into an era of economic uncertain times. It might be a good opportunity now if British Waterways was to look at the more adventurous interest it has had in the past and see whether in fact they are valid in today's climate. There is a lot of experience out there on the

waterways which could help British Waterways. There was talk for instance this morning about bollards, which I think will be one of those issues that will come up I think, all through today. But simply by involving people, collaborating with people we may well find answers to questions that haven't actually been asked yet and it may well be that British Waterways may be able to move forward with not so much a consultative brief but a co-operative brief from the waterways users.

A. John Edmonds, Chair, Inland Waterways Amenity Council

First of all the marinas, ok fine, that's one gap which we hope, will be filled by this work. There are many, many other gaps when we try to value the waterways and their many benefits. Work is being undertaken at the moment by Defra. The first piece of work has been let to a contractor in the last few days and the intention is to have a comprehensive view of the benefits, in all their very many aspects, which will be frankly a very good bargaining tool with the Treasury, providing it comes up with one set of answers. But there might be some hard information, hard decisions and conclusions people in the waterways community will have to digest. We need the facts because there is no way in the current situation that we will win arguments on the basis of slogans and propaganda. Now if you have got any or if BMF have got any particular suggestions as to how we can create new income streams, how we can find new opportunities for working, for governess and partnership, then great, send them in and they will all be considered, then send me a copy. The Inland Waterways Advisory Council will look at them very seriously indeed.

A. Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways: Thank you John, no more questions for John, he has had his time, otherwise will not get through. But you can ask another at the end. John Gummer, who has now arrived, is going to say his few words.

Panel member: Rt. Hon John Gummer, MP

Thank you very much and I am sorry that the vagaries of the public transport of which I much approve, not the vagaries but the public transport have meant that I was a little late.

First of all I come as a convinced and long time supporter of British Waterways. And in a sense I want to start there because one of the dangers of this whole industry and business is that in the past its support has come from people who have a kind of thing about the waterways. We can't actually say where we started although as far as I was concerned it was as a very small child and I always had it but I can't tell you that that is a very sensible basis upon which to gain support. And for me the turning point for all this has happened actually very recently because this was indeed once upon a time the position in which those who supported railways were. They too were prone to be a reasonably pleasant and not

entirely dangerous group of slightly potty people and they were therefore patted on the head and told that yes how very interesting but you're not really about the future. Now over the past few years certain things have happened which are really fundamental as far as railways are concerned which I don't think that we among waterways aficionados have actually taken properly on board. The first of those is that once the railways were given the kind of management which actually wanted new business they became oversubscribed. I can, most of the people here can remember, there was a time in which every year the number of passengers and the amount of trains dropped. People saw the railways as a kind of sideline with certain particular interest but no real contribution to the future. Now of course, we are in a position in which you can't find an opportunity to put very much more freight on the trains. I represent the town of Felixstowe, Britain's largest container port crucial to Britain's economy, and we really have not got any more slots and it needs significant change to give us those slots. The same of course is true of passengers. Coming up today on the train to Birmingham the difference between that and ten years ago is really very noticeable. It is called lack of comfort not because the trains are not more comfortable but that everybody is in them and the numbers of reserved seats are really very remarkable. Then the latest is the announcement that was done not long ago, that one particular party would if it got into power not agree to the go ahead of the third runway at Heathrow but would in fact spend a huge sum of money in a fast train service to Manchester and then across to Leeds. Agree with it or not you could not conceive of any major political party making that decision and making that statement and receiving a degree of support for it, that that has happened, even five/three years ago. Indeed when I wrote the Quality of Life report last year I thought this was the thing that I was going to have most trouble getting people to understand which was that you could use the railways in place of short haul flights in order to achieve the environmental and transport aims that you have. It seems to me that there is a lesson here for us, first of all we do have to be prepared to do all the things which I heard in the latter part of John's speech and which I know from previous things he has written and talked about are things I am very much a supporter. We have to do that. But we have also to change the image of the whole waterway business. We have to make people understand that this is not an exercise in nostalgia although there is nothing wrong in nostalgia. This is not an exercise in conservation although I will be the last to say that there is anything wrong with conservation. This is actually a business which has a huge amount of potential that it is part of the way which Britain is going to face the realities that now are part of our future. And that we really ought to be emphasising that aspect of the waterway nature. One of my businesses advising a company which happens to have a development on the edge of the waterway. Interestingly, they are not very interested in using it because of the nature of the development as a kind of pleasant outlook which of course has been a part of the offering which the waterways have made. No what they are interested in is having ground heating from using the water as it goes past their site. And not only are they interested but it is their first thought about what you mean in that sense. I think that is a crucial part of the story that

we tell that in the announcement that hit the newspaper today about wind farms and about the provision of opportunities for generation in a renewable way we are beginning to get a new mechanism for looking at waterways. It is very important too because inevitably after today's and yesterdays news, and the news after the last three or four months, the development opportunities which will come our way over the next two or years are bound to be much more limited, that is what is going to happen. So the argument that this is very important for the development of Britain will be less immediate but it is absolutely true that the announcement this week that we shall in the House of Commons increase the percentage of cuts in emissions from 60% to 80% by the year 2050. What that means is that we have to be looking at every mechanism that exists to try to find alternative means of regeneration and I think that the waterways provide a remarkable opportunity which we really must not allow to miss from the pages. So that leads me to how do we do this, I've suggested the fundamental issue is to give ourselves an image which moves away from the train spotting aspect of our history towards one which is clearly presenting the waterways as a contribution and an essential contribution for tomorrow rather than a nostalgia for yesterday. To do that I want to suggest three very simple and very vulgar pieces of mechanism. The first is that waterways have a great advantage and that they are very long so they therefore go through a very large number of constituencies. Nothing changes members of parliament's minds more quickly than three letters on the same subject from their constituents. In other words there is a mechanism of making much more valuable the noise of voters and everyone else which is really never used by British Waterways or its supporters which you really can use. You need to know exactly which constituency your supporters live in, they don't need to write to anybody else but they want to write and continue to write to the Member of Parliament who wants their votes. The next election will in many places be very, very close and every vote will be thought to count even if doesn't and this is the moment, well I hope it doesn't but the point is you need to use that febrile position of members of parliament to make sure that they recognise that this is not a side issue, it is not Fred Jones who has always loved narrowboats it is something quite different and therefore you have to get a story, you have to get a story that you can tell in your own words, you have to direct that story directly to the members of parliament for who it matters and that means not generally but particularly. The people who do that will make a huge difference.

Quickly the second two are these; we do need to have at the centre co-ordinated with all those who support a continual supply of stories in which the waterways are seen to be central either to regeneration which will be more difficult in the times we now face or to renewable energy and the whole battle against climate change. There is no reason why the waterways couldn't become one of the regularly quoted examples of how you can fight climate change. And as people will be talking about that all the time, when they are not talking about the collapse of the banking industry, that will be crucial. I say to the chairman

here, the person I would be going after immediately is the chairman of the Climate Change Committee needs to get into their pressures into their budget, you need to get your own budget, you need to be part of the whole panoply. And the last thing that we need to do right across the board is to win the battle for the integrity of the waterway system. I am deeply appalled at the idea that somehow or other it would be sensible to take away from the waterways the means of their providing their own resources because for some reason or other that somebody else might be better at doing it. I am a great believer in constantly recognising that the only way the waterways will become increasingly able to support themselves is to give them the basis upon which that support has always rested and we need to fight that battle all the time. We need to do what I hope we can do, which is instead of sitting back thinking what might go wrong I hope you will quote from the Quality of Life report where we say that the British Waterways ought to extend its remit rather than be restricted. I still think that it ought to have responsibility for all the leisure arrangements throughout the country on all rivers and not just some, I am very clear that it will be ancillary to the Environment Agency whereas it is central to British Waterways and I certainly think it should take over the whole of the responsibilities of the ancient and I think slightly self-satisfied organisation that runs the Thames. It seems to me that it is time that the whole Thames was under the same rules and it should be under the rules of British Waterways, why not turn this whole thing round, onto, and I use an old fashion word crusade for increase rather than a defensive program just to stay where you are.

A. Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways: Thank you John, we do have a director of the Environment Agency and a director of the Port of London Authority here – they are not allowed to speak on this issue. We can probably take quick two questions or one long statement.

Q. Will Chapman, Chair, Save our Waterways

Thank you Mr Gummer for describing exactly what our campaign is. It is to reach down into the local communities through the local councillors and also the MP's. You might be interested to know that during the protest we ran in 2006 and 2007 against the cuts, no fewer than 314 MPs signed one or more of the 6 or 7 EDM's. Those 314 MP's need to be updated with what our current opinion of the issues are. Number two, there are roughly 250 Riparian constituencies. This is our target, we have to work together on this, it is not about a competition. It can't be done by only our members, absolutely we all need to get together and follow through that campaign and we have ways to do that which are rather imaginative using the internet. Thank you very much for underlining the importance of going through the local communities. Thank you.

A. Rt. Hon John Gummer, MP

I just think it is all part of a total mix and one of the reasons why I ended up saying the remit of British Waterways should be extended is because if you want people to understand that this is part of the future, then you have to show why the huge success of British Waterways and the way it is worked now gives it the quality of management and the standing to be able to take over those areas which any government knows are not as they should be. Every Government is faced now with an issue about the port of London authorities, there is no doubt about that, it isn't working it hasn't worked for some time, it needs to be changed. Every government is also faced with the fact that the Environment Agency is going to have to change, there is no doubt about that, it's too big and it isn't able to concentrate on the key issues. Now there are various ways of doing it, one of the things you do seems to me you find those areas where you do really have a ready mechanism for continuing the good things, improving that which needs to be improved and creating a force for the future. That is what I think is of the moment, it is not because one wants to get at the people, it is just that the world is changing. Good Lord it has changed more over the last three weeks than we ever wanted to happen but this is the moment. That is why it is not just your 'Save our Waterways', even the phrase is a little bit backward looking, about saving something you've got. What I want in a sense to be saying is make the waterways a part of the future, let's move this really forward and that's what I think the tone ought to change to. So you get people to get up and make speeches and fight and vote for a new waterway. What you've proved over the past 15 years is that this is not a dying organisation that needs to be managed into the grave, it is a living organisation which needs to be given the opportunity of a contribution into the future.

Q. Will Chapman, Chair, Save our Waterways: *The name of our organisation - Save our Waterways which is historic because that is why we started. All of our campaign this summer on our posters and banners is Support your Local Waterway.*

A. Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways: To be fair to everybody else we are going to just move on actually and get Richard to say his piece then give Carole a chance then everybody will be able to have a go at the panel again.

Panel member: Richard Fairhurst, Editor, Waterways World

Thank you. I'm not sure I like the idea of everybody having a go at me and I don't think Carole does either.

We've heard so far, John at the end of the table who has spoken as a hard-nosed ex-trade unionist and John here who has spoken as an environmentalist and I think a campaigner, I

would like to take a minute to speak as a user of the waterways. I am a user in several ways, I am a boat owner and use the waterways on the boat, I use them on foot and I use them on my bike and whichever one of those I am doing there are just three things I want. A bit of a big just, I want them to be well-maintained, I want them to be affordable and over time, not instantly, I want there to be more of them. That is it essentially, I don't want them to be gold plated, I don't want everything done for me I just want them to be well maintained, affordable and slowly expanding, everything comes back to those. Now the question is and the question that John in particular posed is how we pay for that. In an ideal world maybe we could carry on as we are at the moment. BW will provide all this magically and we'd all live happily ever after. The reports that BW had put out recently say that there is this £29 million shortfall which is a pretty frightening number, now I am sure I could suggest a couple of savings that might go a bit towards that and I am sure people around here could suggest a couple of savings I think bollards would come up once or twice, and I promise I won't mention that again. But even then, even with all the bollards in the world that probably wouldn't reach £29 million. We also have the KPMG report which came out a few weeks ago and they came up with some answers as to how to get this money. But they are city people so they come up with what you might call a city answer and at one point in the report, they sum up their advise with the phrase, invest skilfully. Now I don't know about you, call me a rotten old cynic but I am not really willing to take any lessons from the city at the moment about how to invest skilfully. So instead I would like to give you a user's answer that I would like to offer to help. I am what you might call a serial volunteer I am a volunteer for canal societies, I am a volunteer organist at our local church, I'm (this will get me booed of the stage) but I am a volunteer ranger for the national cycle network, I'm a volunteer programmer for an internet project but I'm not a volunteer for British Waterways. I am not a volunteer for the navigable waterways and we have lots of volunteers in this room today as well but the majority are not volunteers for BW. There is some volunteer work of course that goes on the navigable system, there was yesterday the award which we saw on the slides earlier for the BCN clean-ups which had been happening for so long. That saves BW money. The Huddersfield Canal Society I believe are now greasing the lock paddle gear on Huddersfield, that saves BW money. I was talking to James at Wyvern Shipping the other week, they have adopted a lock and they clean up the canal through Milton Keynes every year. That saves BW money. There is a whole lot more that volunteers can do, if you want proof of that you only have to look at the Cheltenham & Blackwater Navigation which is in Essex, that is now being run by the Inland Waterways Association essentially by volunteers because it is not just about shovelling mud or just about spring cleans. Volunteers on the Cotswold Canal Trust manage really, really, big engineering projects, they do bridge projects which are exactly the sort of thing that BW does. To return to Sustrans rangers I know the chap who is actually the ranger on the route just outside here and he is a canal enthusiast and he should be a volunteer for the waterways because he is actually a tunnel engineer by profession. Now there are problems with the Netherton Tunnel, there have been for a few

years, would BW like him as a volunteer someone to help completely free? There are obviously things volunteers can't do. They can't mend embankment breaches, as we have seen that has cost BW a lot of money over the past couple of years, but maybe they could actually help to find out where those breaches are going to be. The Irk Aqueduct on the Rochdale Canal was known to be a trouble spot by the local people. The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal, really big bridge early in the year was known to be leaking near that embankment. If you spoke to the farmers nearby they would have said that. If volunteers feel engaged with British Waterways one would hope that they would tell you a few of these things because they are the eyes and the ears of the waterway system. It is not that radical a thing to suggest because there are plenty of organisations like BW for which volunteers are the life-blood, the national parks obviously do it. The National Trust which we heard mentioned earlier have 52,000 volunteers every year who I am told, contribute 2.3 million hours. We heard the number 8,000 in relation to British Waterways. 2.3 million for the National Trust. They have this wonderful website where you can go there and say I would like to help, I would like to do something for the National Trust, what can I do. I found the other day that they would like someone to wire up a solar panel and wind turbine. Now some of you might have seen in the papers that BW is going into wind turbines in the next couple of years in a big way, well we could probably do with one of those as well. The beauty from my point of view as a boater is that it isn't just boaters who ask to do this, we have all these people who I think John called 'people with a thing about the waterways', they are not just boaters. Boaters already contribute a lot to the waterways through licence fees, moorings, so-on and so forth. But there are thousands more people out there with an interest in the waterways who can help and who would like to help. Now we can look at why this isn't really happening at the moment, part of this I think is publicity, you need to identify your opportunities and publicise them. Part of them is obstacles. Now we have heard the words health & safety a few times today, there is a lot one could say about that but it is a mistake again to think that it is just health & safety sensitive work that needs doing. There is a lot of publicity, promotional, administrative work that volunteers can do, The National Trust for example, do not need a health & safety assessment on that. There are a lot of people, myself included, who are not the best skilled at physical work but would love to help in some way for administrative or what have you. Possibly, the biggest thing is that we have to feel that these are our waterways not BW's waterways. The biggest successes over the last few years have come where volunteers and BW have been pulling in the same direction. If you look at the Millennium restorations at Huddersfield, Forth & Clyde, all of that, all of those projects were volunteers and BW going for the same aims. That was when people were happiest with the network, that was when satisfaction scores and BW's figures were highest and that was when a lot of canals were restored incredibly successfully. BW has to recapture that spirit. Now I can't present this as a panacea, I can't say this is going to solve all of BW's problems, of course its not. £29 million is a lot of money to find. But if you take this 2.3 million hours that we have seen for The National Trust, if you price that up just at the

minimum wage, if you assume people are just doing unskilled work then that's worth £13 million a year which is around half your shortfall. If you get people to do much more skilled work then it is potentially a lot beyond that. Now to do this, you can't just graft volunteer work onto the existing British Waterways, it won't work and we have probably seen this morning a few of the reasons why it won't. The KPMG report has raised the prospect of the new status for British Waterways, people have been talking about this for a while. I think it is pretty much obvious that within that new status we have to design volunteer involvement, volunteer ownership, and user ownership into the new British Waterways as the first principles. Now I've been a bit worried that this is just me getting up here and saying something I have just made up off the top of my head, fortunately I think this morning we heard that it isn't, Mike from Grantham Canal said pretty much the same thing. We heard the figure about 20 million people who like to go twitching and to help, and that is so many more than we have volunteering for the waterways. It is something I am hearing more and more around the waterways, around various internet discussion groups it is coming up, it is an idea whose time has come, because after all we are the users, we are the people to who the waterways really matter, we will still be here in ten years time, using the waterways, we want the waterways to still be there, give us a chance to give our enthusiasm, our commitment and our energy to produce and I think the results will be fantastic. Thank you.

A. Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways: Thank you Richard

Q. Stuart Sampson, National Association of Boat Owners

I would like to endorse what Richard has said and I would also like to point out the fact that if you actually take the waterways in a rather wider sense, and actually, talk about the effective rolling stock in other words the boats on the waterways. There are probably some say 30,000 boats there and those boats are worth £40,000 each, you actually get a figure of £1.2 billion individual investment in the waterways in the wider sense. Those people have actually got a great deal, all that investment is effectively at risk. It is at the mercy of British Waterways in particular as I am only talking about the number of boats on the British Waterways. Those people have got a tremendous incentive to protect their investment and that incentive is towards actually maintaining the waterways. If you can harness that like Richard said I think you have something worth following.

A. Richard Fairhurst, Editor, Waterways World

I think that is absolutely the case and Stuart has actually just given me the opportunity to mention something he did a couple of years ago which he is too shy to mention himself but if you go to the NABO website the organisation Stuart is chairman of, they have this thing called a waterway report forum. The idea there that if you see something that is wrong with the waterway, perhaps you see something as simple as a paddle that is a little bit stiff or on

the other hand if you go up the Shropshire Union Canal and you see a puddle in the field near an embankment and you think 'hello there might be something wrong there' you can punch it in and tell people about it. I would love to see that actually on the British Waterways website so that next time I am going on the Birmingham & Fazeley and I am a bit worried about the state of that bridge I can tick it off and make sure that you know about it.

A. Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways: Thank you. In fairness let's come to Carole. Carole's organisation, the HLF, has provided huge amount of support and funding for the waterways. I am sure that is because of the very wide social benefits that you've felt it has delivered.

Panel member: Carole Souter, Chief Executive, Heritage Lottery Fund

Well wide benefits of all kinds, I know my place, I'm here as a funder, and there is no money anywhere, so that's my place clearly. **Tony** - no you're not.

Carole – What I would like to build on is all the things that the people have said in the last three presentations because actually we have always said as a funder that we feel we are about more than just money, and that we are about bringing people together, encouraging partnership, encouraging working together and I think everything that has been said so far underlines the importance of that. Tony talked about wanting more engagement and having to do more with less. Yes, we do have to do more with less money but we don't have to do necessarily more with less input. I think we do always tend to think about what is the cash that we have to raise, to put on the table. And one of the things we have learnt over the past 14-15 years is that the cash is incredibly important and it is the thing that makes it happen but the passion, the enthusiasm, the commitment, the involvement are what actually change things for the better. Just putting the cash in only is very, very dangerous. You mustn't just put the cash in unless you have talked to all the people who are involved, unless you have listened to the good ideas, unless you have done the research and you know what the cash is going to do. I'll do my bad news bit as well now. In the peak year, I've been at HLF for five and a half years now, the peak year we invested about £360 million. From next year onwards we will be investing £180 million a year and that will be the case until 2019 which is the end of our current guaranteed period of being a good cause. And it is partly to do with the Olympics but it is not only to do with the Olympics, it is to do with how we front-ended a lot of projects in the past because of cash flow. So half empty, that's a lot less. Half full, £180 million is a large amount of money. Now what we know is that that money, any money actually, can lever in a lot more effort and a lot more output if it is used with good intend and to good purpose by working with partnerships. So we will look at the input of volunteers, we will cost that up, we will take that as a matching element in application of funding to us. There was a figure mentioned for volunteer involvement with BW's money and I was staggered at how little it was. But then thinking about it I'm not that staggered because the

voluntary effort does not have to be channelled through BW I would argue. One of the things looking at the figures of what we have funded over the past is that we have put over £90 million over 200 projects. Around £50 million of that has gone into BW so the other £40 million has gone to other people who were engaged and active on working around the waterways. And I was noticing when, I think when it was Robin's slides going through this morning that we were looking at Leeds, where we put £11 million into the fit out of the new Leeds museum which will overlook the new canal. Sorry Liverpool. Leeds we put money into the museum store which overlooks the new work there. Wakefield we have put money into the new gallery which fronts onto the work that has been done on the canals, and it goes on and on. So there is an absolute imperative that everything that is done to the waterways is to sit down and think who were the partners here, who were the people we can work with, what extra benefits can we gather here and how can we demonstrate those extra benefits. Now an AGM is by its nature and by its very title, one of those occasions when people have to stand up and make formal presentations and people with particular interest, in particular bits of business, come and ask their questions. But actually a debate about waterways in the 21st century should have the Ramblers, the RSPB and The National Trust as well as all of the boaters and all of the people who use the waterways as water, if you like. And I think one of the challenges for British Waterways perhaps is how to generate that conversation on a big stage in public so that people don't say that's British Waterways' job, but say the waterways matter to us, and I should declare that I have an interest as I ride as well and I was a bit disappointed with the answer although I entirely understand that my horse in particular would fall in the canal at the slightest opportunity. You know there are a lot of people who have a lot of interest who could be eventually gathered into this family to argue the case for the waterways. And I think we need to think slightly at angles sometimes, there was a lot of talk about health & safety and I know it is an overwhelming responsibility for directors of companies and organisations such as BW, but flip that on its head, which is what John was doing, where better to introduce children and young people to the idea of taking risks safely than on the waterways, it is something that is becoming a real concern about our kids not knowing how to look after themselves, not knowing how to set limits for themselves, not understanding. I know that some of the work that Urban Splash have done in developments, I think in Manchester, looking at canals in and around urban developments have found that there is much research, that it is much better for kids to be near dangerous things because then they learn how not to fall in and harm themselves. So I think there are all sorts of ways to looking at the contributions of the waterways to the 21st Century that must be debated on a wider stage and I think there is an enormous fund of enthusiasm and energy and excitement out there and it doesn't have to be BW volunteers, get the RSPB people thinking about what they are thinking about the habitats along the waterways. Get the Ramblers thinking about how they could clear the towpaths, get all those people thinking together about what could be done. I hope we will continue to be talked to about more local voluntary engagement projects, that can get towpaths opened up to people with mobility

problems, that can get kids on narrowboats thinking about what life was like for people of their age 200 years ago. There is so much that can be done and it doesn't always come down to how do you fill the cash capital gap. That's Robin's problem and his team's problem and they will have to address it. I think it would be a shame to focus purely on that and not harness all that other access to help and support and advice from a much broader society.

Q. Roger Squires, Inland Waterways Association

Bringing in the concept of the broader society, bringing in the concept of the environmental and climate change issues there was a very interesting report in the press a couple of days ago identifying the need for migratory routes for those creatures and plants that were displaced by climate change and probably their need to move from the South to the North. One might say that the way in which we can all come together is to identify through waterways network that set of routes which need to be protected so that all members of society each in their own way and each with their own interest can see the value of that integral network as an implicit part of assisting those who are not so able to assist themselves to reach the desired optimum position where their future can be best assured. So we must look at the waterways in the widest way and that is probably why I think in bulletin number 10 of the Inland Waterways Association the concept of the national waterways conservancy was muted. You shouldn't look at the waterways as simply an entity for any group but should look at them as a conservancy which can be developed to benefit the whole of the country and all the people, creatures and plants within it. Thank you.

A. Carole Souter, Chief Executive, Heritage Lottery Fund

I think, I'm not sure about the particular proposition about having a conservancy but I think one of the things we found again and again is that with any aspect of our heritage it can be a building, it can be a piece of canal, it could be a park, it could be an oral history. When you ask why it is not being looked after or celebrated or recognised people say that people aren't interested, we've tried, people aren't interested. If you get a proper engagement and consultation going, what you usually find is that people didn't know, they didn't know it was there, they didn't know they were allowed to use it, they didn't know it was valuable or they didn't know what its history was and give them half a chance to find out all of those things and you then generate an enormous warmth and enthusiasm to get involved. The reason we always push applicants really, really hard to show us why people want you to do this project is because we know that the only way of insuring the sustainability of anything actually, is to have people engaged in it and to have passionate advocates for it whether they are writing to their MP or their local paper or whether they are turning up on a Saturday morning and opening something or dredging something or whatever. The way to keep things being used and valued and valuable for the future is to help people understand what

is important about it and special about it and that is why I am so determined about the broader debate. Because you guys all know why it is so important as it is deeply rooted in you, but there will be people you sit on the bus next to or on the train next to or whatever who have no interest because no one has opened it up to them and offered it to them and I think that is an enormous opportunity for all of us to take. Whether it is the natural environment or the history environment.

Q. Nigel Hamilton, Chair, Association of Pleasure Craft Operators

A question really to Mr Gummer. The interesting views you put forward, are these going to become conservative party manifesto policy?

A. Rt. Hon John Gummer, MP

Well I'm told there is going to be a sort of green paper which will take onboard the things we have said in the Quality of Life report. So far most of what we have said has become party policy except that the Government have taken in advance, well I don't mind that as the whole idea was to get these things done so I think there is a good chance of much of that being there. My own view that quite a number of these big issues need to be faced and I know that some of these things are uncomfortable for people to raise, both in that report and since, just need to be raised. It isn't a sensible answer to say it is not too bad so let us leave it where it is. There are things that are broken and that needs to be put right and therefore I'm suggesting we should push it on that sense. And I happen to think it has this huge advantage of giving a new life to people's attitude towards the whole of the system. I do want to emphasise the point that you have made about involvement. Involvement is not just about delivery service which otherwise would have had to be paid for, involvement is about people having an increasingly instinctive understanding of why waterways contribute to their life's and that is the best way to make politicians listen to you because there are a lot of people out there who have made the politician understand that this is not just something that can be cast on one side.

A. John Edmonds, Chair, Inland Waterways Amenity Council

It has to be outward looking and I am not just talking about BW I am talking about the waterways community as a whole. We are surrounded by organisations who are very large, who manage to generate exactly the enthusiasm that we are talking about and which many of the people in the waterways community have for their own particular activity. I mean RSPB have been mentioned over and over again, the Ramblers of course, Sustrans, BW have an arrangement there, but where is the outward looking attempt to build what I call the grand coalition of interests. To show to people in those other organisations that the

waterways may be a way of delivering what they want as well as what boaters and people more intimately involved in leisure activities on the waterways want. I don't think any of us are doing enough about that. I think there is the temptation to become a little bit inward looking at times. Of course anyone who came and listened to the debate this morning couldn't possibly have thought that, but you know just once or twice people might get a feeling that we should be talking to them out there rather than us in here.

A. Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways: Robin do you just want to say something about that. I don't want you to be defensive. I want you to be forward looking.

A. Robin Evans, Chief Executive, British Waterways

I don't feel defensive at all, I think a lot of what the panel has said is a lot about what the Executive have been talking to the Board about. I think the last comment, John's comment is something we have felt very strongly that British Waterways has to become much more outward looking. It has to engage much more with not only with yourselves but also with what is commonly called the Third sector. There is a huge amount of talent, energy and knowledge in the Third sector which is simply vast. We are natural allies, I say quite often to our people we are on the side of the angels we run 2,200 miles of the most fantastic industrial archaeological heritage, 65 sites of scientific interest, 2,200 miles of open easy access towpaths, we are not nuclear energy, we are not the prison service, we are on the side of the angels we are engaging with all these people. I think I am right there that we are in danger and we can be accused of looking too much inside and getting too wound up about our funding issues which are immense, and are at the bottom of a lot of our problems but maybe the solution is not down there but is up there right at the top. So I am incredibly enthusiastic about that and it is really interesting hearing Carole being shocked at 8,000 days, that has made quite an impact you know, shocked me, should we go to 84,000? Actually it is pathetic, it is pathetic and not only with The National Trust at the beginning of volunteering 20 odd years ago where we were talking about 8,000 days, £1.2 million so it shows what can be done with enthusiasm.

A. John Edmonds, Chair, Inland Waterways Amenity Council

It is not just BW, Robin, that is what I keep saying. In this hall now there are the secretary, chairs and presidents of boating organisations galore, I sometimes think there are more boating organisations than boaters, but anyway there are lots of them. All of the boating organisations here ought to be having proper partnership agreements with other organisations who could look to the waterways to generate success for their own particular interest group. If you've got that great, but most of you haven't, I don't know why but you haven't. That is what I mean about inward looking. BW have your agreement with Sustran you are on the side of the angels not everybody in this hall is.

Q. Howard Smith, Chair, Erewash Canal Preservation and Development Association

So that is where we are upon that thing this morning in having won the East Midlands. What I would like to say is that BW over the last few years, and I know as a volunteer over those last 40 years, that they have been very aloof in fact sometimes so big headed it was unbelievable, and I would imagine that some people who are here are volunteers have found it difficult in years gone by, to be able to do work within British Waterways because they have been so big headed and aloof.

A. Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways: Thank you. I don't think that was a question to the panel but is a fair statement.

Q. Chris Leah, Wooden Canal Boat Society

For the last umpteen years me and my friends have been looking after a fleet of historic wooden canal boats, important part of heritage, etc., and involving local communities as much as we can. I have been hearing a lot about involvement, involving the wider community, great, it has been the sort of thing I have been wanting to hear for years. The thing that worries me a little bit is that we've found that our relationships with British Waterways, well British Waterways attitude to us has varied from 'what are all these old barges doing here' to 'we think you are great and how can we help you.' It varies depending on the attitude of the current manager to old wooden boats. Is it possible to organise some sort of consistency when you every few years, seem to get staff change.

A. Robin Evans, Chief Executive, British Waterways

I am very sorry to hear that, I mean from the top we are enthusiastic about historic boats, enthusiastic about historic boat owners themselves. It is very difficult. We do change staff and I hear, don't just go into resentment mode, don't go into battle mode and think we are a lost cause. Tell someone higher up, let us know, do contact us and we will get things done. There are people in this room who do contact us. We are not a perfect organisation. I don't know what all 1,800 people are doing every second of the day, some of them are making mistakes I would like to know about it, tell me and we will try and do something about it.

Q. Robin Evans, Chief Executive, British Waterways

Can I ask a question, this is from my engagement with people? What I want to know is, people have seen it, and many of you have seen it, what are the magical ingredients, what should we do that breaks down the barriers and makes us different and allows this to happen.

A. Carole Souter, Chief Executive, Heritage Lottery Fund

It is always difficult when you pick up someone else's slogan but the thing for me which I think encapsulates a lot of this is the classic 'think global act local'. So have a strategy, know why you are doing it which clearly everybody does, but then do it locally and think locally about what that means. And it came up quite a lot this morning.

Have some ideas about what you want to do locally so you don't look as if you haven't thought about it at all, then listen to what people are saying and if they want something slightly different then do something slightly different and keep doing it. I think the most successful projects we see are those where people have got great ideas and have good ideas about engagement and they start down a particular course but then some enormous new opportunity comes up because suddenly they have made contact with a group that hasn't been there before and wants to get involved and it is quite scary but if you can take a deep breathe and say ok lets go with this a bit, lets see what happens if we expand this thinking and look at it in a different way. You can get some amazing results.

There is really a lot of practical technique around about how to develop audiences, how to develop new audiences and we can help with that. But I think the main thing which is true of any type of change of any kind, is to keep talking to people and listen to the answers and then change if necessary

A. Richard Fairhurst, Editor, Waterways World

I would agree absolutely with that. I think the crucial thing is for us to feel part of that, to feel pride in the waterways. I want to be able to go down the two miles of canal outside where I moor and to think that it is not necessarily BW's responsibility to pick up that bit of litter or to make sure that sign hasn't fallen down, that I own the waterways, that I am part of it. That requires a bit of goodwill on the part of the volunteers, it also requires a bit of goodwill on the part of BW as you say, to listen, to make it feel like a two way conversation rather than we just provide the waterways, you consume them. They are our waterways, they are everyone's waterways.

A. Rt. Hon John Gummer, MP

I do think that the key issue is attitude. You don't get participation unless the people who are trying to get the participation cease to feel this is a means of replacing paid labour or doing something of that sort. But actually that they think that they will get more out of it, that the whole thing will be better, that they will be better, that their management would be better, the whole thing will be better. I always remember trying to do this in a business and I got in the chap who ran one part of the business and all the other directors were sitting round and I tried to explain what modern management really meant, it was rather an old fashioned

management. And I always remember he turned to me, he was from the North of England, and he said 'well if we share all that with the people who work with us they will know as much as we will won't they, and where will that leave me?' I do think there is a sense in which it is very easy to feel that there are a certain things which are kept for you because that is the sort of management. And there are certain things that you are kindly going to allow somebody else to take part in but seems to me is the way forward always is to put the whole lot into the bag, you say 'we really want to do something here'. You restrict it maybe by the area, by distance, by saying I'm going to do this bit of the waterway. There are some real issues. They are not the only issues, we want to be able to hear what you think about it, bring in all sorts of people that you haven't sought before. Then on the other side, those of you who are enthusiastic about the waterways let me say you need to put into the way you are talking about this the whole concept of movement. Now I much prefer, if I can dare say this, the Wooden Canal Boat Society to call itself something like the Wooden Canal Boat Development Society because it's got to be about moving onwards. One has to move away from the idea that you are a very intimidating kind of thing because it is rather like those men who mend old railway trains, you see these people, how terribly clever they make these things work, they have filthy hands and they manage to get inside and make it all work and I couldn't help there. Then you realise they must have someone who takes the tickets and they've got to get someone who cuts down the stuff around the railway line and they've got to have people doing all sorts of things. One of the things we have got to show is that in doing things with the waterways, there is a wide range of things. There are people who will do better with the history, people will find out the connections with other things, people who will as you say do the administrative jobs. Who will not always be there mending bars and pushing this and doing the other. I do think you as an organisation have not broken that back. You haven't made yourself attractive to the huge range of people who are out there and would like to volunteer.

Q. David Stevenson, Foxton Incline Plane Trust, Inland Waterways Association, Save our Waterways

I'm making a point here, we can work together. What I would like to say is that in my many years in the waterways this has been one of the most productive panels I can ever remember. I do congratulate all of you. I would like to indulge myself slightly by mentioning just one or two. First of all I was a member of IWAC in the past, secondly we've benefited considerably from £1.9 million at Foxton for the improvements there and will be coming along fairly soon for £5 million for restoring the Incline plane. And Mr Gummer, how nice to see you, when I was a former member of the Ipswich branch of IWA you were my MP there I believe. So it is very good to have you on board and now to the important point. Volunteers. It is my belief that we have only just touched the surface here. It is essential in my view that BW and indeed similar organisations make the maximum use of them. I am very pleased at

the meeting this week I met again Edd Moss who I understand is your co-ordinator for volunteers. Is that so sir? Right, that's a very good move for a start and from my experience from working with him in the past it is a very good move too. And Richard, thank you for making the point about volunteers. There are plenty of them here, even if some of them are 75 plus.

Q. Dr. David Fletcher CBE, Chair, BWAf heritage sub-group

Tony, among other things I chair a sub-group of British Waterways Advisory Forum which is linked to this subject. I am an accountant by background I'm afraid, I would like to come back to the £29 million gap. I understand what John Edmonds says and I think he is saying to create an environment in which the £29 million is forthcoming, given his comments about the Treasury, given that the majority of waterway users use the towpaths for nothing I would be interested in the panel's thoughts on how to capture that benefit. Turnstiles on the towpaths have been ruled out, is it a question of creating a new environment which in local authorities are asked to contribute? To follow up on one of John's points, how do other entities work? Police and Fire, they charge a levy on local people collected by the local council. I would be very interested in the panel's thoughts on how to financially capture that once the atmosphere is right to try and do so.

A. John Edmonds, Chair, Inland Waterways Amenity Council

At the moment the grant in aid to BW and the Environment Agency is not based on any system of principles. This amount for this particular benefit, this amount for that benefit or anything like that. It is based on what happened last year plus or minus a small percentage. Often it is the concept these days, of flat cash, which isn't flat at all actually because prices are going up all the time. But that's the way it is done, if I may indulge myself. It's a bloody silly way to do it because it leads absolutely nowhere. It's wonderful for ensuring not too many difficult questions, the sort John Gummer was suggesting we did ask, are asked because everything just runs on in an unhelpful way. But if you were starting from another place and you were to say well how much can the waterways contribute to mitigating climate change and what sort of adaptation can they help us to achieve in things such as flood defences, so on. That is a considerable benefit to the whole of the community. It might even help towards this enormously challenging task of reducing by 80% of the carbon footprint by 2050. So what we need to do is develop a set of principles based on where the benefits fall for how to fund the waterways of the future. Once we have done that, we are intending in IWAC to do that in the next year. Once we have done that then I think we can make some sensible decisions about what has the local community gained out of this and therefore what should the local council contribute. And if the local council has a real benefit and should contribute, is a levy the way to do it, a preset ,or is some other way better.

At the moment we are just starting there in the middle of a fog, of a whole series of historical decisions made by people looking as far as next Tuesday and no further than that. We have to bust this system open and start writing down some proper principles on how to do it well in the future and that is the mandate that IWAC has set itself for the next year. You see we don't do the easy jobs, other people work out where to put the bollards, we'll work out how to fund the waterways.

A. Rt. Hon John Gummer, MP

Can I just suggest this single very small thing that you can do to make a huge difference? I chair a water company and one of the biggest problems we have is that the way the system works you can't easily do a deal with someone which is cheaper for you and contributes to them in order to deliver one of the requirements that we may have, whether it is flood prevention or whether it is something of that sort. So if I want to put in, if I want to clean up the water as it comes in to be turned into drinking water I can get permission to spend £6 million out of the money which I take in from our customers, but I can't get permission to spend £200,000 a year to do a deal with local farmers so the water is much cleaner to start with and I only have to spend half a million pounds on the equivalent. That's called cross-subsidy, I am not allowed to do that, now I think it is particularly important to get change for the waterways because there are many organisations who if presented with the option could use the waterways for mechanisms which would mean that it would cost them less, they would contribute to the waterways but you have to have a regulatory framework which makes that possible. I know it is a boring technicality but it's a boring technicality which could end with several millions towards that £29 million if only we could get that right. Instead of building hard defences for example against flooding in many places, we would be much better to use the waterways and operate with the waterways in those circumstances, and pay money to the waterways for being a residual place for water to be used. So that it would be that for many months there would be no use, but you'd get paid for it. There is so much that can be done if we can break down this Treasury attitude towards how we pay for things.

Q. Mike Palmer, Waterway Recovery Group

I am not going to talk about volunteers I don't think there is any future there.

My question is for Tony. We have heard four excellent, excellent speakers give a very, very talented presentation. All of which basically call for wider involvement, so my question to Tony is when and how are you going to take this excellent debate out to the people that matter and away from this pack of bollard wingers?

A. Tony Hales, Chair, British Waterways

Actually, you know, we all might have our individual short term views about each other and I am sure there is one or two people here think I am a short, fat, pompous fat cat and a business man. Just as some people here might think there is a bollard winger in the room. We are the most passionate people about the waterways. That is what unites every single one of us in this room, we all care. That's why we have all taken up the time to come here today, some of you from a very long distance. I want to engage all of you because you are the most important ambassadors to go out there. We are going to go out and we are going to have a major consultation next year, and yes we are going to go out and seek the views of everybody who is interested and we will seek to engage those people who don't appear at first to be interested. It is the National Trust, it is the local authorities, it is the Ramblers - not necessarily everybody's best friend, the bird people, we must go out and seek them out and engage them. We will have a major consultation next year and in the remainder of this year, I think it is about, first of all the Executive getting some bones together. I mean there needs to be something to consult on and they will then be presenting that to the Board. That will be going out and we will be talking about how we go out and consult. So we are in a pre-consultation phase we do want all your views on who we should consult with and how we should consult. I said earlier on that the Board are all committed to getting out there and going to regional meetings and will either sought to talk to them on particular issue groups, because I think there are particular issues. How do we engage on climate change? Fundamental subject. How do we get people who are interested in that and having national discussion about how the waterways contribute to climate change. I know John is going at 3:00PM so it is very difficult for me to sum up on what we've had, for as you've said, really excellent contributions. We have got to lift ourselves up, we got to start by having a vision and developing what the waterways deliver for society, what do we want the waterways to deliver to society, what is the relevance of the waterways to deliver for society. That is the sort of start point and what is the future relevance and in a way when I was referring back to those old IWA articles by Munk. Actually it has changed over the years, first it delivered the freight, then it delivered the amenity and then it delivered regeneration, what is the new thing that will engage society and engage our Government. So we have to be talking about the future. How do we do things differently, that is perhaps a more internal discussion, but quite clearly we must do things more effectively. There is a difference between effectively and just cost reduction. We want to do more but we want to do it more effectively, clearly the whole volunteering and engaging part of that is part of it, it's the volunteering and partly doing it more effectively but it is the engaging of society as a whole. Carole was very articulate on that. How do we generate our funds for all the things we wish to do.

So there are some big subjects, I do seek you all, and I want all of you, even if you think we are doing everything wrong at the moment. We are not in a bad place, we are starting in actually quite a good place, but we can deliver so much more. You want us to deliver so

much more. The Executive want us to deliver so much more. My Board and I want us to deliver so much more and the Panel here have all said you know you can deliver more.

So lets all work on that and thank you very, very much. I am sorry if we have cut one or two people short because we could go on. Most of us will be around for at least another half an hour so come and collar us over a cup of tea. To the Panel on my left, very appropriately John, thank you very, very much and Carole thank you and on my right, John (but not the extreme right, you know) and Richard thank you very, very much.