

JERICO WHARF TRUST draft summary of boaters Survey

2012

An earlier census (autumn 2011) identified more than 400 boats in the wider Oxford area, of which 109 were residential boats moored on the canal or river within the Oxford City boundaries.

During the summer of 2012 Jericho Wharf Trust distributed questionnaires to many residential boats mainly within City limits with a few close to the Oxford city boundary who visited with their boats building a profile of these boat dwellers and their needs.

61 completed questionnaires have been received, representing 56% of the target group. Analysis of their responses follows.

45 questionnaires completed show 75 people live on these 45 boats, including 15 children. Respondents' ages range from the 20s to 60s. 38 of the respondents own their boats. 33 respondents cite inability to afford rental or purchase of a house as their prime reason for living on a boat. 45 respondents are in full or part time work. However, 33 have yearly incomes of less than £20,000, including 22 whose incomes are less than £10,000. Only 6 currently claim any benefits: 23 of the boats are at authorized moorings. 22 respondents either admitted to being at unauthorized moorings or declined to answer this question. Lack of availability, and/or unaffordability, were the reasons generally cited.

In conclusion we suggest that this data, taken in combination with the written anecdotal statements identify a substantial community of boaters who are contributing citizens whom Oxford city council has given some moorings to previously with individual arrangements created such as the Agenda 21 and Hythe bridge Arm moorings on the canal with Walton well moorings on the Thames millstream. This however has not addressed the numbers of people many with families who have obtained their affordable floating homes but whom cannot at present source permanent or winter moorings and obtain often only with difficulty basic water and sewage facilities.

The detailed 2012 survey report has been shared to the central government inspector's examination of Oxford city council's Sites and Housing Development Plan Document providing the only survey evidence reporting on boatyard and residential mooring wants on Oxford's waterways. The consultation, now concluded have seen city council planning officers moving towards a more positive approach to Jericho and local boating people's wants. The central government inspectors report is due early January 2013.

JWT would like to thank all those who contributed to the survey.