

Boater briefing

Low flows in the non-tidal River Thames and impacts on boating: update 2

19 August 2022

From Wednesday 24 August, Thames Water are introducing a Temporary Use Ban (also known as a 'hosepipe ban'). More information on who this affects, and how, is available on their [website](#).

In line with this and the wider escalating response to manage the impacts of drought, we will implement restrictions on the use of our locks on the non-tidal River Thames from the same date. This is to help maintain depths for safe navigation for as long as possible, to help reduce environmental impacts, and to support the abstraction of water for drinking water supply.

From 9am on 24 August we will operate locks at 15 minute intervals, completing one full cycle (allowing both upstream and downstream passage), before starting another on the next quarter hour – either on the hour or 15, 30 or 45 minutes past it. This will be effective across all locks until further notice.

Due to vacancies (which we are in the process of filling) and sickness (including due to COVID-19) amongst our lock and weir keeping staff, you may find that more locks are currently on 'self service' operation than usual. Other appropriately-trained members of our River Thames Waterways Team are helping out by carrying out lock-keeping duties instead of their normal roles where possible, but where locks are on self service operation (including outside of lock and weir keeper normal hours of duty) we ask for your co-operation in adhering to this approach, which we believe strikes a sensible balance between the need to conserve water by reducing lock use while minimising inconvenience to river users.

Information on weekly lock keeping service aims for each site, and lock keeper hours of duty, is available [here](#).

We ask all users of unpowered vessels to make use of boat rollers and portage points where these are available if possible, and if no other vessels are using the lock.

We also encourage boaters not to navigate outside of lock keeper's hours of duty, this is to allow (where possible) water levels to replenish in reaches overnight in order to support the following day's boating activity.

We will issue a Harbour Master Notice confirming these arrangements which will be published [here](#), where you can also subscribe to receive them, and other communications, directly.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

River Thames Waterways Team



Creating a better place for people and wildlife