

WATERWAYS OMBUDSMAN COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held at
Burgess Salmon Offices, 6 New Street Square, London, EC4A 3BF
on Thursday 10 September at 10.00 a.m.

Present:

Steve Harriott (SH)	Chair (Independent)
Tom Franklin (TF)	CRT Trustee
Jackie Lewis (JL)	CRT General Counsel
Kevin Fitzgerald (KF)	Independent Member
Jenny Murley (JM)	Independent Member

In attendance:

Andrew Walker (AW)	Ombudsman
Yetunde Salami (YS)	CRT Assistant Company Secretary (minutes)

Action

1. Welcome & Apologies

Apologies were noted as above and the Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

Declaration of interest

Tom Franklin declared his interest as a Trustee of the Trust and Jackie Lewis declared her interest as the Trust's General Counsel and Company Secretary.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 July 2015

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2015 were adopted.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 *Draft Annual Report - Minute 4.2* - It was noted that the comments made by members on the Chair's draft report had been incorporated in the report.

Customer Satisfaction Survey – Minute 7.1 – KF and AW are scheduled to attend the Trust's Council meeting on 23rd September 2015.

SH informed members that he is having an on-going dialogue with a customer who wants the Committee to reopen an old case on the basis that the investigation was flawed. It was noted that it is outside the remit of the Committee to revisit the case and that SH will advise the customer to seek redress elsewhere.

SH

The remaining matters arising items are on the agenda.

4 Ombudsman Presentation to the Trust's Council

- 4.1 AW informed members that his presentation was well received the previous day at the National Users Forum meeting. AW stated that some users at the meeting had shown interest in engaging more with the Ombudsman. AW will set up the meetings for SH and himself to meet with the relevant parties.

AW

AW had circulated the draft presentation that he and KF would present to the Trust's Council. Members discussed the draft presentation and agreed a number of amendments.

KF and AW will progress the amendments.

KF/AW

5. Draft Annual report

- 5.1 Members discussed the amended draft annual report and suggested further amendments. It was agreed that the Chair's report will be merged with the Committee report and that SH and AW will finalise. It was also agreed that SH will approve the final report.

**SH/AW
AW**

6. Report of the Waterways Ombudsman to the Committee

- 6.1 AW introduced his report and gave highlights. He explained that his workload was manageable and that:
- 10 new investigations had been opened as at the end of August out of which two draft decisions will be issued within a fortnight.
 - 6 investigations had been closed from April 2015 to date

The report was noted.

7. Update on submission of application to TSI for approval as a Consumer ADR Body, including recent amendments to Rules

- 7.1 It was noted that the Chartered Trading Standards Institute had approved the Waterways Ombudsman as a consumer ADR body. Members commended AW for work done. It was noted that the approval and the updated Rules have been published on the Ombudsman's website.

8. Update on tracking customer satisfaction with the scheme by way of customer survey

- 8.1 AW presented a draft customer satisfaction survey and noted that the survey will ask objective questions about the process and will be carried out before a decision is made so as to remove the possibility of bias.
- 8.2 SH stated the need for the Committee to assure itself that the Scheme is effective and that the Committee is performing its role well. This needs to be achieved without interfering in the Ombudsman's work.

It was acknowledged that the proposed customer satisfaction survey is one of the ways to do this as it is expected to reveal any process issues. Members discussed and felt that random sampling of cases will be a useful tool although this type of review would not result in the reopening of a case. It was emphasised that the sampling exercise was not a process by which the Ombudsman's decisions could be questioned and the need for this type of exercise does not mean the Committee does not have confidence in the Ombudsman but arose because the Committee must be able to demonstrate that it assesses the effectiveness of the Scheme.

SH

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 JL informed members that declaration of interests in any matter on the agenda will be a standing item on future meeting agendas.

10 Date of Next meeting:

25 November 2015 at 10.00am

CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 11.37a.m.

Chairman