

COVID-19: restarting navigation services on the non-tidal River Thames

March 2021

Introduction

In line with government's gradual lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, and the Environment Agency's guidance for users of all the waterways we manage, we have developed a plan for the phased re-introduction of navigation services on the non-tidal River Thames. In doing so, we are putting the safety of all boaters, visitors to our locks, and our staff, first. The plan also reflects the continuing need to take appropriate measures to prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

Our aims are set out overleaf. These are subject to change in response to any alterations to the government's published roadmap out of lockdown. Should there be any significant changes, we will issue an update to this plan.

Our first priority is ensure the river is safe to navigate, following an extended period of strong river flows during which hazard marker buoys will have moved and need to be repositioned. New hazards such as fallen trees and sunken boats, will have been created, and will need to be located, and marked.

This work is already underway and is due to be completed by 29 March. Should you choose to use your boat before then, you do so at your own risk, and we would urge you to exercise extreme caution.



Debris removal from Cleeve Lock



Sunken boat at Whitchurch Lock

Service issues

We will continue to publish information any short-term service issues or breakdowns via our [River Thames Conditions webpage](#). Information on planned river or lock closures and restrictions, and on any unplanned emergency closures or restrictions likely to last a significant period of time, is available on [GOV.UK](#).

More information

Should you require more information, please email WaterwaysThames@environment-agency.gov.uk

Timetable

Between 8 and 29 March

- During this period you must stay local and minimise travel where possible. This means staying in the village, town or city where you live. Any use of your boat should be in line with these restrictions.
- Reach surveys carried out to ensure hazards are identified and removed or marked as appropriate.
- Locks self-service on public power where public power is available. Please note: Hambleden and Cookham locks have no public power facility so will be hand-wind only.

Between 30 March and 12 April

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- Assisted passage at *some* lock sites during [lock keeper hours of duty](#), subject to staff availability.
- When assisted passage is not offered, locks will be self-service on public power where public power is available.

Between 13 April and 17 May

- Assisted passage at *all* lock sites subject to staff availability and vulnerability, during [lock keeper hours of duty](#).
- 24 hour service reinstated at Teddington Lock*
- Contactless transactions resume at lock sites
- Campsites re-open to annual permit holders where there is self-contained accommodation and where indoor facilities are not shared with other households.

From 17 May

- Review carried out into potential re-opening of lock site camping facilities for casual users.

From 31 May

- Volunteers return subject to safe systems of work being approved, supply of additional protective personal equipment, and availability or vulnerability of both volunteers and staff.

From 21 June

- Campsites re-open to annual permit holders and potentially, subject to the findings of the review, casual users too.

*Teddington Lock

There is no self-service facility at Teddington Lock. Passage is currently only available from 9am to 3pm. We offer tidal transits between these times.

More information can be found here: [Teddington Lock 2020: lock restriction notice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

