

I'm Rebecca and I've been a continuous cruiser for 9 years.

In 2016 B&NES', WaterSpace Study highlighted a lack of river moorings and facilities for the boater community, especially along the River Avon and suggested more moorings were provided

The mooring trial in 2017 found an 85% compliance of boaters to the 2 week rule

In 2019 the residents called for a community trigger, the police officer present at the meeting I attended, advised the council to instruct the residents to modify their behaviour and that they should not be continually approaching boaters and documenting their behaviour. These actions constitute as harassment and violate data protection laws

In the autumn of 2019 the council spent thousands of pounds on an independent consultant, Lemon Gazelle, and ran an in-depth consultation with all the stakeholders. The consultation found that overall there was support to retain mooring at Mead Lane, and that this was an inappropriate location for a nature reserve.

The complaints then changed late last year to be concerns about the stability of the bank. The cabinet who didn't appear to have an understanding of the history of the situation, said they had all visited Mead Lane and spoken to the resident's, yet not a single councillor spoke to a single boater. This cabinet decided to take all of the claims at face value, with zero data to back them up and decided to suspend mooring at Mead lane.

My solicitor challenged this decision and the process of coming to it and was told by your legal department "No action should be taken at present to remove the 14-day moorings..." and "That an engineer's assessmentshould now be obtained"

Then it said, "Once B&NES has received the engineer's report there will be further consultation with interested parties before the matter is brought back to the Cabinet for a decision."

And here we find ourselves, at said cabinet meeting and you still have not consulted us.

Then the engineers report said there was no indication that boats were adversely affecting the bank.

The council have spent 10s of thousands of pounds on reports and surveys and reviews that all say that the moorings should be remain.

It is only the resident's view that is affected by these decisions, for hundreds of boaters it is the safety and security of our homes

I have not chosen this fight, I am just consistently forced to defend my lifestyle. The waterways act and my licence make this a perfectly legitimate lifestyle. I do not want to have defend my right to exist, every time a new cabinet member is elected. Unlike other travellers, boaters are not yet a protected characteristic, but we experience the same disadvantages as other travellers such as a more limited access to health care and education, and we are much more likely to be victims of crime and prejudice. The council doesn't have one single piece of evidence for claims made against boaters, and reems of studies and data to say the moorings should be retained.

The cabinet must listen only to the firm evidence they have before them, and seek to understand the lives of those that their decision will affect, as removing the moorings will lead to further legal action