

10 months ago, I addressed Cabinet and shared my experience and fears over the loss of Mead Lane moorings and the impact it would have on my family's way of life.

I heard Cabinet members express a genuine concern regarding the structure of the river bank which was of course deeply troubling as I am a keen environmentalist.

I've taken part in many boater-led environmental initiatives; I am a member of the River Avon Users Group, I supported the tidy up at Warleigh Weir following issues with members of the public leaving litter and regularly help out at with a boater kids forest school.

I was therefore understandably relieved to read that Atkin's concluded that no detrimental environmental or structural impact was as a result of boats mooring at Mead Lane.

However, I am now concerned that 10 months on, and despite no evidence of damage to the stability of the bank or the environment, Cabinet are still being asked to consider moving moorings from Mead Lane.

I am growing increasingly weary of having to share my story. I have attended countless meetings, consultations and surveys over the years. I've heard many empty promises, seen many compassionate nods when I explain the importance of Mead Lane to boat families. Access to the basics is hard enough.

But to continuously drag us and our stability through what feels like a never-ending process.

I've patiently waited for the Atkins report. It finds no reason or evidence to relocate the Mead Lane moorings. So I cannot understand why I am here again - with the same story. The same issues. The same instability. I am appealing to fellow parents in the room to do the reasonable thing.

I'll repeat my points from January's Cabinet meeting once more:

Why is the 20 miles cruising distance so important to us? If my family does not meet these ever-changing guidelines we are placed under enforcement, putting us at risk of losing our homes. That is a real threat - many families have struggled under the pressure and some have faced legal action for not keeping up with the challenge of range.

So why is Mead Lane mooring so important to families? Mead Lane is the only 14 day mooring provision on the River Avon for continuous cruisers. It is the furthest westerly mooring spot and the only mooring provision which enables my family to remain within a reasonable commute to school. It was also where my son was born 5 years ago. After falling pregnant I was evicted from a marina (like many) who do not permit children. Moorings are very rare and waiting lists are long. I had no choice but to start to continuously cruise with a baby.

Removing the Mead Lane moorings or relocating them to an alternative site would be detrimental to my children's access to education and family life. Mead Lane moorings means I can satisfy my licence conditions moving every 2 weeks between Saltford and Trowbridge. All of

the stopping places in between have good access to public transport, have regular facilities like shops, water and rubbish points.

Removing Mead Lane moorings would displace the furthest westerly mooring option by over 5 miles. The consequence would mean I would instead be forced to travel between Bath and the other side of Devizes.

Beyond Devizes and its 29 locks are rural villages with limited facilities and public transport and a long commute to school. As a mother, the long-term aspiration to relocate Mead Lane moorings fills me with dread. Keeping a boat warm, filled with water and fuel with the logistics of a new school or work journey every fortnight is not easy. I'm lucky my son is now able to walk, but managing a pushchair piled up with shopping and laundry down a muddy towpath is not for the faint hearted!

This is in no way a sympathy vote. I am a proud and resilient mother to a fantastic boater child who has the most incredible childhood - surrounded by nature and a community who are amongst the most generous and supportive I've known. This is the only way of life my child has ever known.

Mead lane is a key site for boaters with safe access to boats. It has access to doctors and local shops. It is on a bus route and also has parking. There are no other spots on the river with access to these essential services.

You have heard the evidence from the Atkin's report. You have repeatedly heard my story. I am asking you once more, to please do the right thing this evening.