

Chasewater Reservoir Works – Water Conservation Plans for the BCN Canals

Without the water resource from Chasewater Reservoir the West Midlands Waterway has been forced to look into the possibility of more controlled water management for the Wolverhampton Level of the BCN. Whilst increasing the use of Bradley pumps is expected to cope with the majority of normal day to day activities, the impact of peak events remains a significant risk. British Waterways is committed to maintaining navigation on the BCN Canals throughout the summer 2010 cruising season, but to do so we feel we will have to introduce a water conservation plan to reduce the likelihood of canal closure due to reduced water resources. British Waterways are continuing to review alternative water supplies that may affect this plan, however to date none have been confirmed.

The basis of the plan is to close down strategic lock flights overnight and in doing so the water conservation plan will address three major concerns –

1. It will help to reduce the possibility of vandalism on lock flights where we currently suffer from regular run offs over the summer period.
2. It will reduce overnight lock usage on the Wolverhampton level so as to allow the level to recover from the previous days activities using Bradley pumps.
3. It will attempt to be proactive by design and thus stop the Waterway from having to add further lock flights on the Birmingham Level into the plan should further problems occur. It is potentially very confusing for customers when problems are continually updated on Waterscape.

British Waterways genuinely understands the concerns customers may have with reduced opening hours of lock flights during the season , but the water models generated by the hydrologists in the Water Management Team show that a 100mm loss on the Wolverhampton Level would take nine days to recover and only then if the entire Wolverhampton Level was shut down. This is clearly a situation to be avoided if at all possible.

The table below shows which lock flights will be closed overnight and the times they will be locked. Please note these are the earliest times any of the flights will be closed down as the teams doing the locking up will need to travel around the waterway and they may on occasions be delayed if boats are still clearing the flights. Customers can be assured that no one will be locked in a flight because they have not managed to clear it on time. Customers who find themselves running late and unlikely to reach a lock flight in time are advised to call the Waterway (01827 252000) for advice on suitable safe moorings.

Lock Flight	Locks to be secured	Time opened	Time closed
Ryders Green	1, 5, 6, 7, & 8	8.00am	4.00pm
Walsall Locks	Entire flight	8.00am	4.00pm
Rushall Locks	Top, bottom & locks 3 to 9	8.30am	3.30pm
Spon Lane Locks	Entire flight	8.30am	3.30pm
Smethwick Locks	Entire flight	8.30am	5.00pm
Brades Locks	Top and bottom locks	8.00am	4.00pm
Factory Locks	Entire flight	7.30am	6.00pm
Wolverhampton 21	Top, bottom & locks 5 to 16	7.30am	6.30pm

This conservation plan will be introduced on 19.04. 2010