

# **THAMES USER GROUP (Navigation)**

**MEETING WITH LORD SMITH 21 DECEMBER, 2011**

**(Chair of Environment Agency Board)**

**with**

**LADY SUZANNE WARNER & PROFESSOR RUTH HALL**

**(Environment Agency Board Members)**

**Representatives of TUGn including representation from Boaters, Trade and Public through River User Groups and River Thames Society met with the Chair of the EA to advise their absolute opposition to the “Freezing of Lock Residents employment” and leasing the vacant lock cottages.**

**Delegates pulled no punches in explaining their reasons for their opposition. They emphasised that the dogma of letting the vacant lock houses and not filling resident lock-keeper vacancies was not efficient and made no financial sense.**

**TUGn members are currently working with the River Managers to deliver service to the boater in 2012 via Customer Charter discussions.. They have made it clear that having a resident lock keeper in 45 locks will make it possible to deliver a good service within the budget the EA expect to have for 2012. It is unlikely that this will happen with just 59 lock staff (21 designated lock and 38 Residents) which is what is now being considered.**

**Lord Smith has undertaken to analyse the differences between the EA proposal and the users’ alternative and take it to the EA Board for a final decision.**

**For more information contact Michael Shefras – Thames User Group (Navigation) at [michael@shefras.demon.co.uk](mailto:michael@shefras.demon.co.uk)**