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Duration: 1:28:28  
Date: 27/03/2016  
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Interviewer: [That's okay 0:00:02].

Will Barnard: That's the entry word.

Interviewer: Brilliant. Will, can we start with you introducing yourself and your role here, at the Wetlands?

Will Barnard: I will. Yes, I'm Will Barnard. I work for Thames Water. I manage the fisheries here, at Walthamstow, and at Farmoor in Oxford. Not only do I do that, but I look after all sorts of leaseholders that lease the fishing rights on a number of our balancing ponds and stretches of river, right from Cirencester down to Kent.   
  
I also get involved with post-pollution incidents, certainly when there are downstream neighbours that have been affected. Very often, that will be a fishing club or an angling interest.

Interviewer: Yes. Can you tell me about your experience of the opening up of the site, and how you've been made aware of that, or in any way involved in the process? Because it's been such a long journey for Thames Water and everybody else. So your touchpoint with that journey, I guess, we'd be really interested in.

Will Barnard: Okay. Well, as I explained earlier, my starting role with Thames was to build the provision that we've got here, which is the Angling Academy, for want of a better term. We've got a small fishing bond, with a classroom here. That was four years ago that that site was built, and then I was made aware of the potential for the Walthamstow Wetlands. It was way before any of the funding had been accepted or agreed, or anything like that, but everything was put into place here, with the Wetlands in mind.  
  
So my time at Thames, certainly with my interactions at Walthamstow, has always had the Wetlands as a proviso in anything that I do. It's a good thing. We mustn't forget that the site has always been open to the public, but they've never, necessarily, been aware of that.   
  
The fact that there will be staffing here once it is more apparent that it's open will help greatly. Because at any one time, even at the busiest period, there are only two Rangers on duty. It's a hard enough task keeping on top of the anglers; making sure they're safe, they've paid for tickets, they're behaving appropriately, etc.  
  
So the things that maybe caused a few initial worries for certain individuals have been allayed by the whole project anyway, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: \_\_\_[0:02:56].

Will Barnard: So a concern would be, "Well, there are going to be so many more people here. There are so many more entrances." But there will be extra staff to counter that, who'll be coming across from volunteers from the Wildlife Trust.   
  
From an angling point of view, the big noise and the really difficult part for me was, as the Wetlands started to move on and there were press releases about the funding and what's happening, the anglers made quite a lot of negative noises. They didn't know any better at the time, but an example quote was, "It's always the bird watchers above the anglers. Thames Water don't care about the fishermen, blah, blah, blah, blah."  
  
So I had quite a few face to face rows and consultations with some of the anglers, and I, in fact, helped them, or I gave them the opportunity, to set up a Friends of Walthamstow Fishing Group. The reason for that was that it would be easier for me to speak to one person who could relay all that. How many people turned up for that meeting? Two. But they all were back on the Facebook group: 'What happened? What was said?' etc.  
  
Now, the two people that did come were probably, initially, our biggest detractors over this. But once they'd had a chance to hear the facts, they were more than happy, and understood that everything made sense.   
  
Anything that's happening habitat-wise over there will really improve the fishing, because what's going to happen is, it's going to change the scape of the lake, and fish will find new areas to be in. It will make things better. We'll have better recruitment with all the reeds in there; there will be more successful spawning.

Interviewer: So \_\_\_[0:04:55] they will get more out of that. So as a non-fisherman, explain to me why that's better [Crosstalk].

Will Barnard: Yes, okay. People that have been fishing here for 20 years, they know, on a particular day, on a particular pressure system, that the fish will be in such and such a spot. With the changes, it will move them about a bit, and it will give some of them the challenge again, because we all like a challenge.   
  
Obviously, the recruitment is good, because there will be naturally recurring fish, as opposed to us having to stock every now and then. This is one the coarse fishing side I'm talking at the moment. It's always nicer to see more kingfishers or what have you when you're fishing. No matter how hairy arsed the anger is you're talking to, they get a kick out of things that are of an unusual nature. We're lucky, because no-one else is up at four o'clock in the morning to see that.  
  
The rest will be proof in the pudding for the anglers. The stance from us is quite clear, that angling isn't a poor relation; it's part of it. To stop making enemies, we've just got to embrace it hand in hand. It's all about change.   
  
Now, where I live, in Reading, we've got a number of prolific and famous carp fisheries that area already in public access nature reserves. So it's not rare for me to see something that this is going to be similar to. So we've got Dinton Pastures, which is run by Wokingham Council – it's got two big lakes there that people pay a fortune to fish – Wellington Country Park, California Country Park.   
  
So walkers walk around the lakes more so than we'll get here, and everyone gets on just fine. Now, because I'm used to seeing that, I don't have any fear. But because these guys have been so used to just coming here – their own bit of haven, their escape from work and all the stresses – I think their big concern is that they're going to have people running up to them every five minutes, saying, "What have you got? What have you got? What have you got?"

Interviewer: Yes, okay. So their major fear is the disruption.

Will Barnard: Yes. The major fears, if I'm honest with you, are all for very selfish reasons.

Interviewer: Okay. Because this has been theirs?

Will Barnard: I wouldn't jump too quickly to that conclusion. I think there's an element of that, but I think it's more about the disruption; more about them being there on a Saturday and having hordes of people coming up to them and standing next to them and putting them off, and undoing all the de-stressing, or whatever they're there for. I honestly think it's more to do with that.

Interviewer: Do you think there is a risk?

Will Barnard: Oh, that will happen, but it's not going to be as extensive as they make out.

Interviewer: Yes. My understanding is that there are things being done to mitigate that.

Will Barnard: Yes, that's right. There are going to be times of the year where certain paths are going to be closed off, where the public can't get round, but the anglers still can. It's almost an unfounded fear to the degrees that they're worried about, but they're just winding themselves up. That's all they're doing. Someone suggests something, and then that's a face.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. I suppose the rumour mill is alive and active.

Will Barnard: Mmm. But they know now that they can't air it so much, because I've already given them so many opportunities to be part of something. I'd have loved nothing more than them to set up a group that I could class as a stakeholder, as opposed to having to speak to individuals about silly things.

Interviewer: Yes. Because if they'd set themselves up, then you could have engaged them in the process more [heartily 0:09:16], and captured their intelligence around it, to help to develop the site and work together.

Will Barnard: Yes, quite.

Interviewer: As the facts have filtered through, has there been a sense of, "Mmm, actually, going forward, I would like to be part of the process," or, "I would like an opportunity to [Crosstalk 0:09:39]?"

Will Barnard: Yes. It's going to be an open invite. Once the Wildlife Trust volunteers are here, anglers are going to be invited to be part of that too. The way that we've recruited our volunteer bailiffs, it's been the right person asking, at the right time, if we need any help. So that door is never shut, because people are taking ownership. You can trust someone a lot when they take ownership of something.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. So, for example, the people that have become volunteer bailiffs, why do they do that?

Will Barnard: Well, most of them are old boys, like [Alden 0:10:29] in the lodge, there. They've fished here for 400 years, and actually, coming here has been part of their lives. So although a couple of them don't really fish anymore, they still come here. Because they're old faces, because they're old gangsters, they've got a respect. Things never kick off here, because [Joe's 0:10:57] here, or [Del Boy's] here, and they can talk them through it.  
  
I'll go as much to say this is probably one of the safest fisheries in the whole country, purely because people don't shit on their own doorstep. But we've also got people like Del and Joe and that, just to get them to wind their necks in, if there are problems. But those issues are rare anyway.

Interviewer: I think I've met Joe, have I?

Will Barnard: Joe, this morning, yes. A proper jack-the-lad.

Interviewer: Yes.

Will Barnard: Yes, he's got a very coloured history.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, it was interesting; he was saying that his wife, he doesn't feel, would feel comfortable down here sometimes, because of the issues around the litter, and that there is a risk that with more people comes more litter. How is that going to be managed?

Will Barnard: Well, currently, it's managed by the Rangers, but it is a tricky thing to deal with. You've got two tips locally. As you can see, it's a bit of a wind tunnel through there. We get an awful lot of litter off of the river, so it's something that needs keeping on top of. I presume that will be part of the Wildlife Trust's role to take care of that sort of stuff.

Interviewer: Yes. So there will be volunteer litter picking, and that sort of thing [along here 0:12:26].

Will Barnard: Mmm.

Interviewer: Okay. We've jumped ahead quite a bit, but that's brilliant, because I wanted to get that sense of experience so far. I guess I wanted to ask, as well, what you think Thames Water's aspirations are, or objectives are, in opening the site, from your perspective.

Will Barnard: Right. Well, we're very, very keen, as a company, to share what we've got and do good things. How selfish would it be to have sites like this that..? Unless there's, obviously, an extreme security issue, why can't we share them? We've submitted our plans to Ofwat to open up more. If you looked at the amount of sites that we do have public access on, either managed by us or through a third part, you'd be astounded.   
  
We've got four nature reserves that are run by Thames Water throughout the catchment, and we've got a further- blimey, I wouldn't even like to put a number on it, that are run by people like the Oxford Wildlife Trust, the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Then you take into consideration all the balancing ponds that we let out to fishing clubs. So it's not a new thing. We do what we can with what we've got.  
  
We've got recreational sailing on some of our bigger West London reservoirs. We've got exclusive access agreements with bird ringing and bird watching groups. We can't have some sites completely open to the public, especially if it's a reservoir site, because there are hazards of slips and trips and drowning. But where they're financially viable, where a site can wash its face, as it were, like the fishing here, at Walthamstow, and at Farmoor, we can afford to have staff there.  
  
But if we're opening up a remote reservoir site, we couldn't justify paying staff to be there, so we have other agreements, like the London bird watching group that have got keys to get onto the King George. They're there under their own agreements.

Interviewer: Okay. All the \_\_\_[0:15:13] agencies are land holders, so they are a remarkable stakeholder, I guess, across the country, in terms of mine and your access to nature. So I can see what we gain from it, but what do they gain from it, apart from the [sentiment 0:15:34]? How selfish would it be? Maybe that-

Will Barnard: Well, sometimes it's an Ofwat stipulation, but also, it's an opportunity to engage with our customers. Obviously, every resource that we have, every site that we open, is within our customer catchment. So being able to invite people along to our nature reserves for a bat walk, for example, they're going to see people working for Thames Water that aren't, probably, their only other interaction, which is over the customer service number or with a network engineer outside their house.  
  
I'm not going to make it sound as cynical as PR, but it is business, at the end of the day; we want our customers to like us.

Interviewer: Yes. I said I know what I would get from it. Certainly, just sitting in the car today, it was amazing. That light bouncing off the reservoirs is-

Will Barnard: Yes, you wait until you see it when it's green.

Interviewer: Yes, I want to see it [green 0:16:53]. I wondered if you could talk me through when you've had- and I'll ask you a little bit more about the Angling Academy and who comes here, and how they use it. But what do you think people get from being here?

Will Barnard: From being here? Right.

Interviewer: What values and benefits do you think they get?

Will Barnard: There's an extra uniqueness to here, because of where it's situated. It is this immense green space, and we know the values of green space in a hard part of London, and in a very grey part of London. So you've got that instant gratification of having nature and being in a green space, and all the destressing and the wellness and the mental wellbeing that that increases. That, in itself is super-vast.   
  
Some people will just get the fact that they can walk on grass. Some people will get the fact that they might be able to skim a stone down the stream. There are so many facets as to why people come, but obviously, the biggest draw is for the angling. I feel privileged to have been a part of the fact that Walthamstow is regarded as one of the best carp fisheries in the country. People will travel from all over the country to come here.  
  
We have all sorts of competitions here. We have all sorts of events. We have the Armed Forces' carp fishing matches here. Any other benefit that we could talk about would come from doing the activity. So all the benefits you get from angling, you'd get here. All the benefits you can get from bird watching, you can get here. But I think what makes it more unique is the fact that we are in London.

Interviewer: Yes. Is there anything specific about it being a water-based space? Do you think water makes, in any way, the space better?

Will Barnard: I can only speak for myself, I suppose. I love water, but I don't think you have to love water to enjoy this site; it's an added bonus. I can't cross a bridge over water without looking in it for 10 minutes. That's not just because I'm an angler; it's because underneath the water could be anything. It's the abyss. It's the same as star-gazing, almost.   
  
I guess if we looked into the research of how calming it is to be next to water, then yes, that would be relevant.

Interviewer: Could you talk to me a little bit about developments you see and witness in terms of the Angling Academy, and what that brings for you?

Will Barnard: It's my belief that every young person will want to try angling once. We all get to see TV shows or go to petting zoos, where we can have something tangible: hand feed a lamb. The only thing we can't ever get a grip on is what's underneath the water. So for young people, that's often the main interest, is just to actually see a fish.   
  
So the benefits of bringing young people to mind- We don't just have young people here; I've got a mental health group that come here, I've got an ex-prisoners' group, I've got St Mungo's Recovery College, which is like a rehabilitation college. But for young people, let's look at what I've used the academy for. I've used it, in some instances, as a reward for young people that haven't been behaving at school. If they have behaved at school, they get to come fishing here. So they're purely here just to fish and have a good time.  
  
Similarly, I've done a lot with respite care homes for young people with disabilities of varying degrees. They just come here purely because I give it to them as a free provision. It's in green space, and again, it's tangible. Some of them with less cognitive awareness, they're still getting something out of it, whether it's holding the fish or feeling the force of the fish pulling… There's all sorts to it.  
  
Then I've had mainstream school groups who have wanted to do something as part of a science project. So what we get into there, what's important to me out of it all, is, I talk to them about the aquatic environment. We talk about water as a resource. We get to understand where our water comes from and what else relies on the water in the immediate terms.   
  
So we look at the insects that are in the water that the fish feed on. They then catch a couple of fish and find out they're actually really interesting and cute and clever. Then we have a walk around the reservoirs, and I say, "This is your drinking water." Then I get them to look at their own behaviour with water. They turn on the tap at home and leave it running, and have 20-minute showers, and all the time, they're potentially depleting the homes of the fish. I'm almost putting in those sorts of layman terms, and they get it.   
  
So very often, they go home with an awareness of what is a sustainable use of water, if you like, and an appreciation that it's not just that you turn the tap on and there's water there. It's gone through a process. It's come from somewhere.

Interviewer: And it might not always be there.

Will Barnard: It might not always be there. So that's a big one for me. You can see, then, how a provision like this sits with Thames Water. Then you have the other benefits. So when I have the young people that are at risk of getting into gang crime, they don't have to kick around in their gangs; they can sit with me or Alden – he's one of my bailiffs – and have a great time interacting.   
  
Actually, what you do see is these hardened 13 and 14-year-old kids, they're behaving, now, while they're fishing here, like 13 and 14-year-old kids. You see the sense of wonder on their faces. They're allowing themselves to enjoy some part of childhood the whole time they're here, which is very brief. Then they get back home and they're dealing with whatever, and being threatened with whatever.   
  
So it's a leveller, and it promotes social inclusion, because you can be as good as the 60-year-old man that you're sat next to.

Interviewer: Yes, with all his experience.

Will Barnard: Exactly.

Interviewer: Where does that fit? Where does the Academy and some of these remarkable benefits fit in terms of the wider education plans for the Wetlands?

Will Barnard: Well, we've spoken quite a lot. Now, the Wildlife Trust did – and it was almost at my request – develop an angling policy. Because it is very much recognised that it's a really good tool for at least initial engagements within a natural environment. It's a reason to get kids outside. Now, for a lot of my friends, fishing is a reason for them to be out in the countryside, without being sat in the middle of a field, looking like a weirdo.   
  
The Wildlife Trust recognise this, so what we want to do… We've kind of done a few things like it anyway, but it will offer us a chance to take more young people in at one time. So when I spoke about the mainstream schools, obviously, they want to bring whole classes, which are 30. But with the smaller groups, it's easy, because I can have 9 or 10. You can see the size of it out there; it's just right for 8 to 10.  
  
So when we have 30, to be able to have – and we'll get on to who helps me here – 10 of them fishing, 10 of them doing a Thames Water educational tool, called the Network Challenge-

Interviewer: Yes, [Kirsty told me about that 0:26:17].

Will Barnard: -and then 10 come out for a walk with me. With the Wildlife Trust here, in situ, we're going to be able to exchange. We're going to be able to make much bigger education packages that will suit everyone. It will be a chance for Wildlife Trust to extend their downloading and funding, and a chance for me to reach more people. So I'm really keen for this.

[Background noise 0:26:46 - 0:26:57]

Interviewer: So you've spoken about, I suppose, very specific outreach, in terms of how it's experienced at the moment, both mainstream and non-mainstream, but how do you see opening up of the site affecting the wider communities in the immediate area? I know it's always been open, but most of them don't know it's open to them, or even if they do know it's open to them, how they'd go about doing that. So what do you anticipate will be the impact for the wider community of opening up this space?

Will Barnard: I do have mixed feelings. Be careful how you quote me on this one. I think it will be novel for two years, and I think that'll be it.

Interviewer: Why won't it become part of their \_\_\_[0:28:07]?

Will Barnard: I don't know. There's just something; it's a gut feeling. As I say, where I live, in Reading, I know how these provisions work. I know what makes them work in Reading, and a lot of it is to do with the affluence of people in the immediate area. There isn't much more to do here other than walk around and look. All the other places have got a park.   
  
I know we're going to have a café here. I'm not sure to what extent the provision will be there. I think more commonly, it will just be used as a bit of a rat-run; a way of getting from A to B, with the extra gates being opened up. That's the last thing I want to happen, but I sincerely think that.

Interviewer: \_\_\_[0:29:11].

Will Barnard: Mmm.

Interviewer: Yes.

Will Barnard: The worst-case scenario is the people that currently already enjoy it, plus maybe a 10% recruitment on extra people that will become regulars, it will be a better provision for them anyway.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. What sorts of activities and behaviours would Thames Water and yourself, [as someone present on the site 0:29:47], want to encourage on the site?

Will Barnard: Well, obviously, appreciating the environment. Whatever you bring with you, you take home. It would be nice to have opportunities to engage with people, to speak to them about angling, and have an opportunity to explain to people about the Angling Academy. We do have family days and weekends that get advertised locally. Invariably, we have 60 families coming along on those days.

Interviewer: They're local families?

Will Barnard: Yes.

Interviewer: So that is the local community engaging and valuing this space.

Will Barnard: Yes. But then I'm a little bit precious, because I've been doing that for four years, and that wouldn't have to change. Do you see what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes.

Will Barnard: That could still happen without the Wetlands.

Interviewer: Yes, okay.

Will Barnard: I suppose one phrase a lot of people have used, and I don't subscribe to it immensely, but, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." One of the big negatives, or the only big negative for me, is this car parking charge. Anglers have to use their cars.

Interviewer: Yes, because of the amount of kit.

Will Barnard: Yes, and they've been coming here for decades, parking here, obviously, buying their fishing ticket, and going fishing. With the introduction of a car parking fee, now, if you think about it like this, last year, a fishing ticket was £12 for the day. With this £5 all-day parking that's been mooted, that, instantly, would make their fishing £17 a day. That isn't competitive at all; that's pricing us out of the market, and it's bad PR.  
  
So what I did, this year, I raised the ticket money up to £15. As soon as the car parking charges come in, I'm dropping the actual fishing ticket to £10. So I'm taking a loss on my business, just so that my anglers [are going to stay 0:32:20]. Now, I think we'll have to be a little bit careful if you write this down, because I'm not sure if it's public domain yet.

Interviewer: Well, I'll just say, ["Having to respond to the 0:32:32]-"

Will Barnard: That I'm just giving you an example, yes.

Interviewer: -"challenges, [there was a cost implication]."

Will Barnard: Now, that's fine, what I've discussed about the day ticket, but if you've bought a season ticket- So we have day tickets here, or season tickets. If you've paid £380, which gives you right to come very day of the week, if you want to, and you've still got to pay £5 a day-

Interviewer: Yes, that's quite-

Will Barnard: -you're paying more for your parking than the fishing over the year. So I'm hoping something like a car parking permit, or a reduced car parking permit, will go into play for the anglers.

Interviewer: \_\_\_[0:33:07] making \_\_\_.

Will Barnard: Well, the council won't do that. So again, I might have to take a hit on the season tickets, just so they can pay £50 for a year's car parking permit.

Interviewer: The council manage the car parking?

Will Barnard: Yes. Basically, the council needed to show that they could raise fund for when the funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund runs out. So they've looked at my figures for anglers that come here – 18,000 a year to- well, last year, it was 21,000 – and gone, "Alright, well, if they all pay £5 a day…"

Interviewer: Yes, that's…

Will Barnard: To me, that really stunk. I didn't like that at all.

Interviewer: Yes, because the [leveraging 0:33:50] \_\_\_[users].

Will Barnard: Yes. So even if the Wetlands fails and doesn't bring anyone in, they're still making a mint out of… So that's the bug in the throat for me, and that goes back to if it's not broken, don't fix it, sort of thing. I just feel that's a little bit unfair. Sorry, that went off track a little bit, didn't it?

Interviewer: Activities and behaviours you expect. So you said you want people to appreciate the nature, and take home what they bring. You'd like the opportunity to talk to them more about angling, and the offer here is that the Academy-

Will Barnard: Yes. Well, because again, if a family are walking round, and they see someone catch a big carp or what have you, it gives more of an awareness of what happens here on these family fishing days. Because what we've got here is a really good pathway. We've got this tuition pond, and then all of the reservoirs – I don't know if [Cliff 0:34:59] explained – they've all got their levels of difficulty.

Interviewer: They're all different. Okay.

Will Barnard: So you could cut your teeth here, then move on to the number one reservoir, get more knowledge, more skill, and in ten years' time, you'll be fishing the Lockwood, which is an extremely hard fishery, but the rewards are just superb.

Interviewer: And with all the benefits that come with that for improvement and self-improvement, through, potentially, two groups of people and young people that aren't used to identifying areas of self-improvement, or even wanting to be part of something like that.

Will Barnard: Got it, yes.

Interviewer: What about behaviours that will be discouraged on the site?

Will Barnard: As they are now. There's a strong health and safety element, so I'm not sure what's going to happen about people bringing alcohol onto the site, but at the moment, that's banned. Lighting fires is banned. Anything that's going to detract from what's here will be banned, like aggressive behaviour, obviously. Nothing more exceptional than what you would expect anyway, and obviously, an awareness of water safety, and abiding to no-go areas.  
  
One thing we do have trouble with is people coming onto the site to swim. That's very, very dangerous in these, because they've got such bit culverts.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. You've spoken about the fisherman that have been coming here for decades, and they know the rules. With this potential increase from 21,000 fisherman, plus \_\_\_[0:37:03] and aspirations of up to 100,000 people, how are all those people going to know what the rules are?

Will Barnard: What we had to make sure was that what we're doing becomes – crikey, I'll get the wording in a minute. When you buy a ticket, you're accepting the fact that you're here under your own volition, and anything that happens to you or what have you, unless it's neglect on our behalf, it's kind of your own fault.

Interviewer: Yes. So you're engaging in some form of contract.

Will Barnard: Yes. It's also an acceptance when you buy a season ticket. Signing it is an acceptance that you've read and understood the rules too. Obviously, whatever happens from the Wetlands' point of view will be down to how the Wildlife Trust manage that. It's going to be their ticket; it's going to be their baby. Payment will only be for the fishing, still, which my Rangers will still carry on- that'll still be their baby.

Interviewer: Yes. So this pool of new users-

Will Barnard: Yes, that will have to be communicated by either us combined, as a brainstorming session, and the rules of the site will be made available either on interpretation boards or some sort of ticket.

Interviewer: So if it's [regulating how that works 0:38:50] for the fisherman, there is an explicit process that goes through to try to encourage a certain type of behaviour. But with an open access site, that's much more challenging.

Will Barnard: Yes. It will just be heavier policing, I guess. You expect people not to misbehave. As it stands now, if the Rangers see someone swimming in the reservoir, they drag them out: "Out you come," and then education thereafter.

Interviewer: I wondered if you could talk to me a little bit about this being a nature reserve, and not a public park, and whether people understand, and are likely to understand, the difference in terms of how they behave and how you want them to behave here.

Will Barnard: Yes. It's a fine line between them both anyway, really. Yes, interesting. I'' have to think on that one a bit. I've not really put the two into different camps. As I say, the places we've got round my way, they are reserves, but people can go there and use the picnic benches.

Interviewer: But they've been there, presumably, for quite a substantial period of time-

Will Barnard: Yes, that's right.

Interviewer: -and people have [learnt how to be 0:40:41] around that space. You also just spoke about a different demographic, who maybe have had [Crosstalk] in terms of how to behave being in and around water.

Will Barnard: Well, I think it's going to have to be through interpretation. It's going to have to be through signage. If that's the most consistent thing people are going to see when they're new onto the site, and if you're allowing it in such a way that people can just walk off the street at any time…   
  
If you're having arranged groups, then of course, you'll have a group leader that would explain it all, and off you go. But if it's 9:00 to 5:00 Monday to Sunday, it's going to have to be through interpretation, and then whatever interaction you can gain as your volunteers are out and they see a family. They can talk to them, if required. Then it will have to be fact sheets, I guess. There will be leaflets.

Interviewer: Yes. We've spoken about the challenges and the potential [for stopping tensions 0:41:56] around- or rather, we've spoken about what your fears are for the anglers, in terms of why they have some anxieties about it. Are there any other areas of tensions that you anticipate with the additional \_\_\_[0:42:19] numbers, but different types of uses?

Will Barnard: Well, a lot of our wildlife watchers – they're not just bird watchers, because we have people here that come and watch the foxes. We've got loads of foxes here – don't agree with nature reserves that have too much public access. They like it here because it isn't terribly public, and the wildlife isn't disturbed too much. Everything sits happily in this balance. So a lot of the bird watchers and a lot of the other wildlife watchers, their concern is that there's going to be an influx of people, which will create scarcity of what they come and look to enjoy.  
  
There have always been frictions between the birding community and anglers. That's being going on since time immemorial. But through interacting with each other as closely as they do here, the birders appreciate why anglers angle. It's not just to stick a hook in a fish, drag it out, and that's that. A lot of anglers appreciate birders' worries about if a line gets caught up in a tree, and a bird's going to get, potentially, caught up in it. Anglers appreciate that.  
  
So anglers phone the bailiffs when their line gets stuck in a tree. It's a good balance. I'm quite happy with how this site works in that respect. And birders appreciate that anglers are as enthused about the fish they're catching as they are about the birds they're watching. I think a lot of birders appreciate that bird ringing happens when birds are caught in nets, to ring and set free. They can see that anglers are doing a similar thing.  
  
When you're looking at more wild waters – not somewhere like this, but on a wild bit of river – it's only anglers that know what's happening. They share that information with the Environment Agency. So on a stretch of the River Kennet that used to produce lots and lots of a particular species, it's an angler that regularly fishes there that can say to the EA, "These fish are depleting in number."   
  
So the EA can then go and electrofish it and do some tests. Invariably, it could be a species-specific virus or something.

Interviewer: Or pollutants.

Will Barnard: Or pollutants, yes. So I think birders are getting to appreciate that, actually, without that element within angling, their own enjoyment would go down the pan. Because if it is a pollutant and the invertebrates are disappearing, then the birds aren't going to hang about. So there's a synergy there.

Interviewer: So the \_\_\_[0:45:12] sense of stewardship.

Will Barnard: Yes. So I think any of those worries can be allayed. I think the good move in all of it is to have this seasonal blocking of access on certain parts.

Interviewer: Yes. So that's where they learn to rub along together and have some sort of a grudging mutual respect. Where do you anticipate, with no pollutants, the tensions arising?

Will Barnard: I think there's always the risk of anglers being challenged by people that don't necessarily understand or agree with fishing. You do find cases of anglers being pushed into canals, and all sorts of stuff, by militants. Not long ago, two members of PETA put an axe, or a little ice-pick, or whatever it was, in someone's head on the banks of the River Trent.   
  
While he was night fishing, they snuck up upon him, put a bag over his head, [strangled him 0:46:21], and cut his head open with a blunt blade. So there's always that fear, I suppose, but that isn't new due to this site being open.   
  
I suppose from a birding point of view, if you're just settled there and the black caps have just appeared, and then someone comes through with a buggy and screaming toddlers, that's going to… But these things are just about tolerance, really.

Interviewer: Yes, okay. If it is as successful as everybody wants it to be, is that a potential \_\_\_[0:47:07] for the site? Do people that wouldn't ordinarily-

Will Barnard: There will be a lot of people.

Interviewer: -come across each other?

Will Barnard: Possibly, because I suppose any of the immediate locals that know about this place probably think it's just a fishing place, and it holds no interest for them. So I should imagine that probably everyone in Walthamstow will come here at least once, just to see. That's what I mean about the novel factor. I think the first couple of years will be extremely busy, and then it will be for some people, and it will not be for others. So yes.  
  
The thing is, there are already people from every walk of life mixing on this site anyway. We've got very affluent people, certainly within the fly fishing club, mixing with the Irish navvies that come and pay to catch a trout out of the High Maynard to take home for the table.   
  
The fly fishing club itself, Walthamstow Fly Fishing Club – and I think you should speak to them at one of their AGMs or something – is a diverse mix. You've got cabbies; you've got brickies. It's a good club. They're a really good club, and they use the fly fishing over here for the trout. If I had to represent, in a group, the type of people that fish at Walthamstow, you'd have them there. That would be-

Interviewer: Yes, so you have that mix.

Will Barnard: Yes.

Interviewer: It's a mix, mainly in terms of-

Will Barnard: The clients, certainly.

Interviewer: -the clients, but maybe not in terms of the ethnicity, and certainly not in terms of gender?

Will Barnard: Yes, gender, I'll give you that; 5% of anglers are female, currently. It's going up, because there are a lot of high profile female anglers, which is something I'm quite passionate about. Ethnicity is very diverse here, not necessarily in colour, but we have an awful lot of Eastern Europeans here. We do have a couple of Jamaican guys that fish here quite a lot.   
  
Because we opened up the provision for… There was a big problem in 2006, when we first started to get the first economic migrants, because in the Eastern Bloc, they catch for the table. As a result, most of their rivers are ecologically unsound. Now, most rivers, most bodies of water in this country, are controlled by fishing clubs, to a degree.   
  
So what was happening, just to give you an example, someone from Poland who had just taken residence here in Reading had seen the River Kennet and thought, "That looks good." He turned up and tried to catch a load of fish for the table. He was absolutely breaking the law there, and that law has changed since. Now, it counts as 1968 Theft.   
  
A lot of the education took place in the angling community, and that's all fine. But we've got a provision here where we purposely stock the High Maynard with a few trout, so that they can come and catch to take home. So that place in particular is where we get a lot of the diversity: Lithuanians, Poles, Romanians.

Interviewer: And they know that's where they can go and do that?

Will Barnard: Yes, now.

Interviewer: And they know that by purchasing their day ticket or whatever, it's okay to take as many trout as they want.

Will Barnard: Whatever they've paid for, yes. They know the rules.

Interviewer: Do they come back here and say, "I've got..?"

Will Barnard: They know the rules on it, and the thing is, they don't want to lose this. That's the key. When they realise what they've got, they don't want to lose it, and they police each other.

Interviewer: In terms of \_\_\_[0:51:27], so that is a considerable diversity around ethnicity, but potentially not in terms of colour. Where we are in London has a particularly large BME community. Is there hope that it will broaden out to be of interest to the people in the community? How could they possibly benefit from the site?

Will Barnard: We can always hope, but it depends on a cultural group's interest in nature and being outside.

Interviewer: So someone like [Rachel Smith 0:52:28] is doing a lot of outreach work with groups like that to try to introduce them to the site and make them aware of it. I guess that's one of the key purposes of the community, in terms of introducing nature to people that really aren't very familiar with nature. I wonder how that might play out here, like how successful that outreach can be, and how various faith groups, for example, might want to be involved in the Angling Academy.

Will Barnard: Well, funnily enough, I did two wonderful courses with an Islamic home schooling group. I used to have just the boys on the Wednesday, and just the girls on the Thursday. That was an eight-week programme I put together for them. That was fantastic. They loved it. Again, it's the outreach stuff I've done from here that's always been all-inclusive, and by the diversity of the people that have come and represented where they've come from, institute-wise.  
  
I'm not keen, if I'm honest with you, on… When I use the term 'all-inclusive', I mean all-inclusive. To me, all-inclusive means – I hate even having to put a word on it – everyone is an equal. Therefore, I do not make special approaches to the Caribbean community or the Jewish community. It's all-inclusive, and whoever wants to come along can come along and integrate.   
  
I think once you start- and this was a big argument I had in the early days, with working with some deprived young people in Reading. By saying, "It's for deprived young people," I'm segregating more, because the kids that are doing well… It's much better that this kid here, with a mum on heroin, that's having to stay in the house, is mixing with this kid. It's much better, because they form a friendship, and that's what matters.  
  
So I don't think it would be any different here as it would be outreach working anywhere else. We have a lot of Jewish people come here anyway; an awful lot that come and walk. We have to stop them sometimes, because I think they use willow for binding books and stuff. We find them climbing out over the river, trying to get the willow branches down. It's a health and safety nightmare.

Interviewer: [Crosstalk 0:55:37].

Will Barnard: So there is a spiritual connection to the site – I think that's the point I'm getting to – but what can you do, really, without isolate individuals? What can you do to encourage people to come here? I don't want it to get to the point of Muslim day at Walthamstow reservoirs. Do you see what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes, \_\_\_[0:56:01].

Will Barnard: It doesn't work for anyone. It's condescending to the people you're trying to reach out to. You either like nature or not. I think with it marketed well, when it's open, you go to community groups, you go to Scout groups, whatever, and you say, "This is the provision. Why don't you come along and have a great time?"   
  
So that's why I made that point about, as a cultural group, if they're connected to nature. Because some of the young Afro-Caribbean boys that I dealt with in Reading didn't want to be out in it. They didn't like the bugs. It was very much a dirty thing to be out, and I did find that exclusive to that-

Interviewer: Yes, that group.

Will Barnard: -late teen… If a fly was around and it was dirty, it was filth and they didn't want to know. I presume that was a cultural thing. Some people just aren't interested, and that's come from their parents, right through to [Crosstalk 0:57:17].

Interviewer: That may, if they start coming with their schools and \_\_\_.

Will Barnard: For sure. The amount of kids that come here – and again, the higher number in that are probably young, black boys – they don't want to touch a fish. They give it all this big stroll on, like… but they don't want to touch this fish. But then they do, and then they're cool, and then they're well into it. So it's barriers 0:57:44]. If you had remits to fill and boxes to tick, then I suppose an effort could be put in harder to engage a demography, just to get them over the barrier.

Interviewer: Yes. Can we talk about the different barriers to getting engaged with this site? Because it will be self-evident to some people to want to come here, and then to others, really, quite a challenge. What sorts of barriers do you think [you'll see 0:58:16]?

Will Barnard: Well, again, some people just do not have an interest in nature. If we're willing to bring people in from out of the area, then the fact that it's in north east London puts some people off.

Interviewer: Okay. You mean reputation and perceptions of…

Will Barnard: Yes. That's something that, in four years, I've worked very hard with, with new anglers dropping me emails saying, "Will my car be safe? Will I be safe?" I say, "It's the safest fishery in the country. No problem." But that is a massive barrier, already, there, for people that want to come here for the first time.   
  
I don't think it's so much barriers as people's awareness. Do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes.

Will Barnard: Again, it's down to marketing. If you wanted to make a marketing push, you would say, "Did you know that being in a green space is good for your mental wellbeing? Did you know, at Walthamstow, you can see this, this, this and this on a regular basis?" So I think it's more about having less triggers.

Interviewer: Yes, [to raise that communication 0:59:37] \_\_\_.

Will Barnard: I don't think you could go up to anyone in the street and ask what the barriers to them coming here would be. I don't think they'd have any.

Interviewer: They wouldn't know how to articulate it, necessarily.

Will Barnard: No, that's right.

Interviewer: I have questions around whether the private ownership – so we're looking at here, and we're looking at \_\_\_[1:00:06] – affects how people would experience the site, and also their perception of the site.

Will Barnard: Possibly. Two things spring to mind. People are amazed because I offer this provision for free, the Angling Academy. I do a lot with Get Hooked on Fishing, which are a massive, nationally recognised fishing charity. Now, they obviously do stuff here that they get funding for, but anything I do is for free. So I'm very close to this respite home for disabled kids, who have now had their funding cut and have closed.   
  
I'm absolutely distraught about it, because these kids were ill. I don't know where they go now. I used to give that provision for free, and their carers used to come. They couldn't believe that Thames Water did this for free. They went away thinking, "Thames Water are brilliant."   
  
I don't think I've ever come across a point where someone's not come here because it's a Thames Water fishery. Their disagreements with it are focused on Thames Water. So if they're not happy about something, the Wetlands, for example: "Bloody Thames Water don't give a monkeys about the anglers." I think if you were to say to me, "Would it be better or worse?" I think it's better, because it takes people away, potentially, with a much more positive feeling about Thames Water, even if it's only by 0.5%. Therefore, feeling good about something makes you feel better.  
  
So I really don't think that there's any detriment to it being Thames Water run or controlled. I think, more, you'll go away thinking that Thames Water is part of your community, which is a message that we're trying to… "We're part of your daily life," and let's ramp that up a bit more.

Interviewer: Yes. So \_\_\_[1:02:49] the Walthamstow Wetlands is a \_\_\_; there are a range of stakeholders involved. How do you think that balance of NGO, public sector, private company plays out in terms of what happens here, and how this bit of space is experienced?

Will Barnard: I can only really talk from the Thames Water side. Throughout all of this, any delays, barriers, or halts to plans are from purely an operational and a health and safety point of view. At the end of the day, this is an operational site, and its most important function, even above the fishing, is getting that water to 500,000 people in north east London. Anything that looks like it's going to impede that, we will have to adapt to suit us, or stop or prevent. To me, that makes absolute logical sense.  
  
Obviously, the council want to offer everyone as much as they can on their behalf, and I think they've made a habit, in the past, of just saying, "This is what's going to happen. You deal with it." It's caused a lot of conflict, right from the get go. LWT, not an issue with. It's not new to us to run nature reserves, and it's not new to us to work with LWT or any of the wildlife trusts.  
  
My opinion – and again, I'd rather you didn't quote me on it, just in case people can attribute it to me – is we should try to do this without… Now, initially, this was going to be so grand. It's been scaled back, scaled back, scaled back. We could have afforded to have done this ourselves with London Wildlife Trust, and I wish that had happened. From what this was going to be, due to the council, it's been \_\_\_[1:05:10].

Interviewer: Because they [couldn't budge]?

Will Barnard: Yes. Every five minutes, "We need this much more money. We need this much more money." People at \_\_\_[1:05:19] that were dealing with this project were getting balled out in the CEO's office, because certain people were changing the goalposts. So in my heart of hearts is, with what we're actually getting now, we could've funded, and just worked with the LWT.

Interviewer: So that complex partnership has been proven to be a challenge.

Will Barnard: Yes, but it doesn't matter what council you're dealing with, and no matter what incidence it's in, whether it's a home issue or what have you. Now, I'm talking from someone that's worked for the NHS and Thames Water. Both are very bureaucratic, but it's the bureaucracy that \_\_\_[1:06:01].

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think the opening up of the Wetlands will affect, or is there a hope that it will affect [our connection with the water here]?

Will Barnard: Yes.

Interviewer: [And help with] \_\_\_[1:06:22]?

Will Barnard: Yes, absolutely, and again, that's up to us to use interpretation, as a by the by, or have engagement programmes not just organised, but have the ability, on a Sunday, for a speaker to take a group round and do what I do now with these kids. Maybe do a bit of fishing first, or have some fish in tanks, whatever, and explain the provision. Explain the treatment process, where this water comes from before it gets treated, how it's treated, how it's distributed. It's a fascinating story.   
  
Yes, absolutely, my charity of choice is WaterAid, so I am very passionate about it, and I am passionate that people understand it. One day, someone's going to monopolise water, and we're all going to be screwed. \_\_\_[1:07:26].

Interviewer: Do you think Europe can help with the water market in the UK in 2017?

Will Barnard: I think it's good.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you explain why?

Will Barnard: Just because competition is good; monopolies aren't good. I think it's good from a Thames Water point of view, because we're the second cheapest in the country. I think a lot of customers that are unhappy with Thames Water now, if they shop around, they'll actually come to understand, even if it's from a fiscal point of view, they're better off with Thames. And I think we do more good.

Interviewer: [More purpose 1:08:11]?

Will Barnard: Yes, and I think when it comes to it, if that's what floats your boat when you're picking your brand… If you're an angler, if that's the only thing you give a toss about, and you're faced with a choice of four water companies to get your water from, if you're an angler in Yorkshire, but you've come fishing at Farmoor or come here, to Walthamstow… Do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes, \_\_\_[1:08:34] it becomes \_\_\_.

Will Barnard: Yes. So I think it's a good thing. That, really, from me, from my own social background, to actually buy into a corporation like I have with Thames – not just because it pays my mortgage – I wouldn't be here if I didn't believe in them. I have principles. The good stuff that Thames purports to do, I wholeheartedly believe in, so I'm proud to be at Thames. That's my indicator, basically. That's why I think it will be a good thing, because I think people will want to have their water from Thames Water.

Interviewer: Yes. You think people don't have that awareness at the moment, about what they're doing?

Will Barnard: No, because why look it up? Everyone knows the comparisons with their gas or their electricity, because they shop around. There's no point shopping around, now, for water.

Interviewer: \_\_\_[1:09:31].

Will Barnard: So I think competition in retail will be great, and then it won't be long before it's competition outside. It will encourage people once they see those comparisons. Because all people know now is we've built this Thames Tideway Tunnel, and people in Gloucestershire will have their bill go up a little bit to pay for something that they'll never, ever see or appreciate. With that in mind, their bill is still lower than all but one water provider in the country.

Interviewer: So you've explained if this is an exchange, if this is what Thames Water is giving, what are our responsibilities when we come to take part in the site, or we come to experience the site? What are the-?

Will Barnard: Sorry, what are whose-?

Interviewer: [The users' 1:10:28].

Will Barnard: So from Thames Water's point of view, what are your responsibilities? Responsibility is the wrong word. Obviously, everything that would be expected of you with whatever the LWT stipulate, and you, as a decent human being. Responsibilities is wrong, but my expectation would be that you would come away… Well, it depends how you come in. If you come in as a tour group or an education group, then I'd want you to come away with, as discussed earlier, this understanding of water and all that.  
  
If you're just someone visiting off the street, then I'd want you to come away with, "What a great provision Thames Water has got there." Nothing more than that; just more positive than… Okay, let's look at it from a customer satisfaction point of view. If everyone came into the site at the medium, at 3, I don't think anyone will leave here below 3.   
  
You might get people saying, "I'm a 3," because they just couldn't care less, but if anything, you're going to get 4.5s. They'll be happier about it. So responsibility is wrong, but an expectation that those subtle changes will occur.

Interviewer: Okay. So you've spoken about the benefits that people get; do you think that if affects the identity of the area? \_\_\_[1:12:11]. We've talked about areas; we've talked about the perception in north east London is you're having challenges with safety.

Will Barnard: Perception of the area.

Interviewer: Once people know that this Wetlands exists and it's an asset to the area, will that affect its identity?

Will Barnard: If I'm truthful, I think we've noticed we've been attracting a lot of middle-class families, because Walthamstow is slowly becoming a bit more affluent. It's a bit hip, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes.

Will Barnard: I think if people from out of the area come here with this expectation that London's on its arse, but they come and they see mummies pushing round the kids in posh prams, there will be a change in their thought about the area. But I think that will be as far as it goes, because we've already got Lee Valley Park up there, and we've already got Hackney Marshes there. I don't think anyone would necessarily think it's greener or rustic. But I think if they came and saw the demography walking round it…  
  
I think more people will come to Walthamstow from further afield. No-one's going to come to Walthamstow shopping, but you will have people from out of the area coming purely because of the Wetlands. Then they might have a walk around Walthamstow Village.

Interviewer: So does the Wetlands become part of the regeneration [scheme 1:13:52]?

Will Barnard: It's up to the locals. I suppose the fact that the council have got a hand in, then yes. It's hard to see how the council are promoting it. I think that's more up to the locals to embrace. Now, if this was in the middle of Walthamstow, then yes, absolutely, but because it's on the edge, it does make a difference. Literally, half the site is in Tottenham, and half of it is in Walthamstow. With it being on the perimeter, it does make a difference.

Interviewer: Can we pull that apart a little bit more? Because a number of people have spoken about it being on the edge, geographically, but also, from other perspectives, do you think that it's true of the site, that it-?

Will Barnard: What do you mean by other perspectives?

Interviewer: They think that, actually, it's never been included in any sort of planning as a prime site. So it's never been included in any sort of cultural planning or [nature 1:15:07] planning, or anything like that. All the councils around it are therefore pointing not towards it, but away from it.

Will Barnard: I don't know about that so much. I just know that there are blurred lines within responsibilities from the councils about the road out the front, even, and who empties the bin by the bus stop, and the post code. \_\_\_[1:15:40], who's my Head Ranger, who lives in that house, he has trouble getting his post. Because it's a Tottenham post code, but it's just over the line, in Walthamstow, he has murders.  
  
I understand your point, what you said about it's never been included by any one party. That kind of ramps up my own belief of my limited knowledge. It's just the fact that it was on the edge of everyone; it's not in the centre of something. Even if it was three miles further up there, it would be a hell of a difference.

Interviewer: Yes. [I'm worried about using up your time 1:16:25], so let me just double-check.

[Background noise 1:16:29 - 1:16:48]

Oh yes, we've spoken a little bit about the consultation when we spoke about the angling communities at the beginning. You said there was a real challenge getting people to come out.

Will Barnard: Yes. What was difficult for me there, because I'm quite a well-known angler nationally – I write a lot of articles, and I've done a lot of telly work – I was speaking to them as an angler. I really stuck my neck on the line by getting them to buy into me. That was a really nervous time for me, because at the time, I didn't 100% believe it all. So I used my reputation to benefit the Wetlands, and at the time, I don't think anyone really appreciated what I was doing.  
  
I wasn't doing it because I had a Thames Water hat on; I was doing it because I knew the whole thing had to go through smoothly. But it ended up that they were pinning their hopes on not \_\_\_[1:17:49] for me, but they were reading it as my reputation as an angler and an activist. I'm politically active in angling, so my reputation was quite heavily on the line, and still is, I suppose. But enough water has gone under the bridge that subtleties have been forgotten about.  
  
But anyway, yes, I just wanted to fill out that consultation bit for you.

Interviewer: So there was an effort to try to include parts of the fishing and angling community; a fair amount of resistance to that. Who was involved in the consultation? Whose voices did get heard?

Will Barnard: From a Wetlands side, or from the users' side?

Interviewer: From the users' side.

Will Barnard: The Walthamstow Fly Fishers, the club that do the fly fishing, all of them, they were well active. They were really good. They spoke to me and Dave Mooney at the LWT, and understood it where they could. They didn't shoot their mouths off at things they didn't agree with. They asked honest questions; we gave honest answers. No problem.  
  
The coarse anglers were consulted, but it was very limited. Thereafter, even though we had these arranged consultation meetings, I was getting phone calls at eight o'clock on a Friday night, and I was getting privately messaged on my private Facebook account, and I would answer it. So the consultation, whoever's taken an interest, even up to today, the message is the same.   
  
The Rangers are on hand the whole time to speak to people about it. I know that LWT spoke to various community groups: neighbourhood groups and all that sort of stuff. I wasn't privy to it, but I presume people that have got bird watching season tickets were invited along, as well, for something. There was a whole couple of weeks of consultations that were, first and foremost, set up by the LWT.

Interviewer: Yes. Okay. Who do you feel has been the most influential stakeholder in terms of shaping this space and the vision for it?

Will Barnard: The \_\_\_.

[Background noise 1:20:46 - 1:20:57]

Aside from, obviously, Thames Water, the council. Then, I think, the anglers. The anglers were considered more in the shaping. They weren't necessarily influential as a voice, but because they've been here since time immemorial, the fact that there are 18,000 to 21,000 anglers here a year, the fact that [although there are 4m] anglers, the angling community is small, my argument was, "If we upset the anglers, you're going to have 4m people and the Angling Trust giving you grief."  
  
This is a historically important place for fishing. The pub over there, that was mentioned in Izaac Walton's book, The Compleat Angler, in 1677. It's the most re-published book in the UK; there are more editions of that than the Bible. So for a lot of people, they come here and the first thing they do is have a good look around that pub. Because the opening chapter in the book is the three characters sat in the pub, talking. So it's a big deal for people.

Interviewer: So this is seminal to fishing heritage.

Will Barnard: Oh, yes, absolutely. It's up there, and the history of it as a fishery in the '60s and the '70s, before the cormorant predation and things like that. The big names in angling were here a lot, and that's why people come for the strain of carp that are here, for example, because they're as British a carp as you're going to get. Yes, it's a massive important of angling heritage.   
  
So with upsetting the anglers, their sob story could be vast; it could be big. So I was consulted on behalf of the anglers, just to lay out what mustn't change. It's been a very good compromise on paper.

Interviewer: Can you [talk a bit about 1:23:21] \_\_\_?

Will Barnard: In the first instances, the people that the council got in to make the management plan just had no care or anything for anyone else. It was just, "This is the objective," and they just did it. From that, everyone was able to claw back what they needed to.   
  
An area that an angler fishes is called the swim. Now, reservoirs two and three are the most sought after fishing reservoirs here, and with their plans, they just wanted to wipe out half the fishing swims on there. But what we've been able to do is scale back down that plan, so that the fishing swims could remain in situ, and get a few moved, where required.

Interviewer: Right, okay. Because the council's priority… Well, maybe I should ask, actually, why did [Sita 1:24:29] do that? Why were they seen to make those changes? What has motivated [Crosstalk]?

Will Barnard: Well, the motivation is pretty much all about the financial support they get from the Heritage Lottery Fund over the environment stipulations, which were to plant 600 hectares of reed bed.

Interviewer: So they wanted to \_\_\_[1:24:50] the reed beds.

Will Barnard: Yes. Not listening to us about the fact that the number one reservoir hasn't got any rushes in it. They could have planted all that they needed in the number one reservoir. So yes, that would get to just like, "That's where it's going to go."

[Background noise 1:25:09 - 1:25:20]

Then, obviously, the big compromise I've done my end is to reduce my income by way of the fishing tickets, to suit the council and the anglers.

Interviewer: Yes.

Will Barnard: So there have been lots of compromises.

Interviewer: Have those compromises been across the board, do you think? Do you think the main stakeholders [Crosstalk 1:25:42]?

Will Barnard: No, I think so. I'll be honest: yes, I do.

Interviewer: Yes. So from the council perspective, as well as an LWT perspective.

Will Barnard: I think certainly with an LWT perspective, and I think LWT have seen what we've tried to do, and given that support to the council.

Interviewer: Yes.

[Background noise 1:26:03 - 1:26:21]

The last question is whether you think there are \_\_\_- Broadly, do you think there are disbenefits in opening up the site for any of the existing potential users, or even the wider community?

Will Barnard: I think in the rare event that a line snaps off in a tree and a bird gets tangled in it, it's a rare event, but if it happens to be on a day when you've got 20 families out with their kids, they're not really going to understand or appreciate that. So I think there will be odd conflicts arising, if you like.   
  
I can see there could be some conflict, going forward. The reservoirs require integrity checks every now and then, and I can see that a major works that's required, from Thames Water point of view, will have to go ahead regardless. I guess if we've got a load more visitors that have fallen in love with the place, it'll be harder for Thames Water to explain that.

Interviewer: Yes. So [they're in charge of 1:27:50] the operational side.

Will Barnard: Mmm. But other than that, I don't really see any- The perceived disbenefit, I suppose, for the anglers, is that they're going to be disturbed a lot more and enjoy less of their fishing. But that's only a perceived one.

Interviewer: Yes. As it plays out, do you think that will dissipate? Yes, okay. [I think that's all my questions 1:28:22]. Thank you very much.

Will Barnard: No probs.

Interviewer: I really, really appreciate it.

END AUDIO

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