

PLA HARBOUR MASTER'S RECREATIONAL NAVIGATION GROUP

Notes of the meeting held at Tower Pier on 24th March 2015

Present: Mark Towens, Simon Phillips, Jonathan Beckett (AHMR), Guy Underwood, Kevin East, Tony Reynolds, Bill Mitchell, Paul Hyman, Roger Squires, Michael Shefras, Pam Chart, Alex Hestor, David Beaumont, Banny, Mike Wardle

Apologies: Tom Sharpe, David Jones, Andy Soper, Mike Thomas, Darren Knight, Lisa Cockerill

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Minutes of the PHRNG held on 13th October 2014 were approved.

3. Actions from Last Meeting

- a. Kayak/Canoe/SUP Identification Marks – British Canoeing and SUP to report on progress of this request at the next PHRNG.
 - i. PLA previously met with British Canoeing, Paul Hyman and Harry Whelan to see if a Voluntary Id scheme could be introduced on the tidal Thames.
 - The meeting highlighted that it could be achieved however there would be difficulties in achieving it and extremely hard to maintain in the long-term. Therefore it was decided that the Local Clubs and Centres on the tideway would be encouraged to support having identification marks on their vessels, but not vessels owned by private individuals.
 - ii. Various sticker options were discussed, including the use of stickers designed for diving cylinders, as well as the preparation for applying the stickers. Paul Hyman agreed to give some test stickers to Chelsea Kayak Club.

Action: Chelsea Kayak Club to report on the effectiveness of the stickers at the next PHRNG

Action: It was agreed that AHMR would design a sticker, similar to the design used on rowing boats but with the number first, and send to the members of PHRNG for review.
- b. TRRC Coaching Qualification – to consider within British Rowing whether once a Coach has gained his Level 2 coaching qualifications that they are then assessed for their local knowledge operations.
 - i. Brian Mitchell gave a description of the Coaching Qualification, found in Appendix C
 - ii. It was suggested that the new revision of the rowing code should make this qualification mandatory for paid coaches.

Action: Continue development on this qualification outside of PHRNG to ensure that it is properly delivered and make mandatory for paid coaches.
- c. Shared Internet Calendar
 - i. AHMR updated PHRNG on the status of the online events calendar.

Ongoing Action: AHMR continues to work on this project with our IT specialists and Corporate Affairs team.
- d. PLA Ebb Tide Flag Warning System – AHMR to liaise with Environment Agency and Canals & Rivers Trust to understand the work they are currently undertaking and if needs be, establish a working group to ensure there is a consistent approach between all three parties.

Action: Liaison to be incorporated into the Ebb Tide System review at the end of the winter season.

- e. AHMR to break down the number of days at each level of the Flag Status for future PHNRG meetings. **Action Closed**
- f. Recreational River Users Guide – PHRNG members to liaise with AHMR by 7th December 2014 with any suggested amendments.
 - i. The new guide has been produced. **Action Closed**
- g. Boating on the Thames / TTNC – PHRNG members to liaise with AHMR by 20th December 2014 on these two topics.
 - i. Ideas for a TTNC forum have been discussed internally in the PLA, as well as production of an App or River Information Tool.
Ongoing Action: PLA to present progress at the next PHRNG.
- h. Thames Barrier closures – HMU to discuss these concerns with the Environment Agency.
 - i. HMU has liaised with the EA regarding their test closures occurring on Easter Sunday. The full annual test closure for 2015 is in September. **Action Closed**

4. Publications Update

- a. **PLA Ebb Tide Flag Warning**
 - i. The Ebb Tide Flag Warning System is due for review at the end of the winter season.
Action: AHMR to include CRT and EA in the review to ensure consistency between the various systems.
 - ii. It was also noted that information about the Ebb Tide Flag System was not easily available. (Now included within the Permanent Notice to Mariners)
Action: AHMR to look at where the information can be promulgated
**Post-meeting note: The online widget for the Ebb flag status has been updated to include description of flag warning as a 'View More Details' button*
- b. **Safety Bulletins** – 2 safety bulletins have been issued since the last PHRNG meeting
 - i. No. 5 of 2014 – Class V Safety Improvements
 - ii. No. 1 pf 2015 – Entering Void Spaces – Harmful Gasses
- c. **Rowing on the Tideway Code of Practice**
 - i. AHMR and TRRC discussed the progress made on the Rowing Code of Practice. An early draft was passed around the group, and the general wording and layout was well received. The services of Neil Pickford have been employed to improve the wording and images, with work looking to be completed by the start of the coming season. It should be noted that the ethos of the code itself would not change, only the way it is presented. The new code is intended to be much easier to digest, shorter, clearer and easy to reference. The code is intended to be produced in an A5, landscape format, with an online webpage to make viewing the code on mobile devices easier.
 - ii. It was suggested that the review should include other river users, so that paddlers and motor boaters can present their views
Action: AHMR to include members of the PHRNG in the review of the code
 - iii. It was suggested to make it clear that the code does not apply to paddlers, only rowers. The paddling guidance was quoted to say that the rowing code applies to paddlers.
Action: Amend paddling guidance and ensure appropriate guidance in the rowing code.
 - iv. A question was raised as to what the coaching launches should do – adhere to the code, or navigated as a motor vessel? It was suggested that guidance on coaching was included in the code.

d. **Vulnerable River Users Campaign**

- i. HMU described the PLA's new Vulnerable River Users Campaign, which is due to be launched at the Annual Reception on 24th March 2015. This campaign is aimed at increasing the awareness of the vulnerability of some river users and includes a variety of messages, including:
 - Use of lights and high viz clothing
 - being mindful of wash
 - use of a buoyancy aid / life jacket
 - communicating with London VTS
 - traffic in Central London
 - knowledge of sound signals
 - giving way to deeper craft.

The campaign is aimed at both the users of small craft to give them guidance on how to keep safe, and also at users of larger craft to keep a good lookout and highlight the vulnerability of small boats.

e. **SUP guide**

- i. The Risk Assessment for Stand-up Paddle boarding on the Thames below Putney has been resolved and passed to the Navigational Management Team for approval. It is envisaged that a Code of Practice for all paddle sports will be produced.

f. **Boating on the Thames website & Tidal Thames Navigators Club**

- i. AHMR explained various ideas to improve Boating on the Thames, and how to keep river users coming back to the website for updates and latest news, etc. An online events booking page was suggested, to allow event organisers to easily keep the PLA informed on event plans, as well as an app or River Information Tool. The group was asked what they would find valuable on an app – tides, tide time and height differences and bridge clearances were discussed, as well as events on the river.
- ii. PLA Corporate Affairs team are currently reviewing the Boating on the Thames Website and are also looking at the production of a forum for the TTNC, so that river knowledge can be shared amongst the members.
- iii. Kevin East from British Canoeing passed on environmental guidance to the group (Included as Appendix D), and suggested that these are put up onto the Boating on the Thames Website

Action: AHMR to publish these guidance documents on the website.

**Post-meeting note: 'You, Your Canoe and the Marine Environment' has been added to Boating on the Thames website <http://www.boatingonthethames.co.uk/Paddling>*

5. **Events**

- a. **Spring/Summer Rowing/Paddling Event Calendar** – NTM U4 and M8 of 2015 have been published
- b. **Annual Sailing Events Calendar** – NTM 5 of 2015 has been published. This is a port wide notice, but is expected to be the last notice of this type due to the production of the online events calendar. This would allow the list of events to be regularly updated, rather than a notice which can easily go 'out of date'.
River events for the next 6 months can be found in Appendix B

6. **Incidents**

- a. Incident review from 1st October to 24th March was circulated at the meeting, and AHMR ran through the review. (Included as Appendix A)
- b. The recent fatality at Putney, involving a coaching launch was discussed and the outcome of the investigations will be highlighted in a safety bulletin.

7. River Works

a. Central/Navigational Channel Arch Closures at:

i. Battersea Rail Bridge

- i. NTM M15 of 2015 has been published.
- ii. Currently arches 1, 4 and 5 are closed to navigation. On or around 4th April, No. 4 arch will open and No. 2 arch will close and 24-hr Local Traffic Control will be conducted whilst works commence in this arch, likely to last for four-months.

ii. Chiswick Bridge

- i. NTM U3 of 2015 refers to the works being carried out in this location.
 - No 2 arch will be closed to navigation until 27th March
 - No 3 arch will be closed to navigation from 30th March to 27th April (Works being removed for the Boat Race and surrounding events, however.)
 - No 1 arch will be closed to navigation from 28th April to 19th May
 - No 2 arch will also have overnight closures between 20th and 25th May.

iii. Kew and Twickenham

- i. Overnight arch closures are in the early planning stages, but are expected to last only 1 or 2 nights.

b. Garden Bridge

- i. HMU explained that it is likely to be built in 5 sections which would be towed upriver and lifted into position. This would have a reduced impact compared with on-site construction. Planning meetings are being had with regards to moving moorings and vessels to allow the bridge to be built.

c. Thames Tideway Tunnel

- i. The development consent order has been given approval by the UK Government. Initial works are due to commence in 2017 with bulk of the works commencing in 2018 until 2021.
- ii. The 3 contractors for the works have been chosen and are in discussions on how they can best work together on the project.
- iii. After various road incidents during the Crossrail project, Thames Water have begun a 'More By Water' campaign, with the view to using the river wherever possible to transport

d. Nine Elms Reach – Battersea Power Station/Northern Line Extension

- i. Northern Line Extension is expected to begin in May, with 1 barge a day at Battersea Power Station, increasing to 5000T a day (around 3 barges), peaking mid-2016.
- ii. Tony Reynolds suggested that Chelsea Bridge should be the limit of rowing activities until the project is completed.
Action: TRRC to advise clubs not to row down river of Chelsea Bridge until the project is completed.

e. Baynard House

- i. Works to move the intake to accommodate the move of Blackfriars Pier is ongoing. The works have been delayed, but are expected to be complete mid-summer.

f. Fulham FC

- i. A PLA river Works Licence has been issued. The exact construction details have not yet been submitted to the PLA and should the construction affect any stakeholders then the PLA will attempt to consult with all those potentially affected.

8. Commercially Hired Narrow Boats

- a. HMU explained the situation of the restriction on hired narrow boats. Their operation has been suspended as they are not currently licenced to a suitable level to be hired out on the tidal Thames and the hire company in question has never approached the PLA to gain approval of their operations. Various meetings have been held with the hire companies, APCO, BMF on the way forward. A solution is near agreement to allow hireboats to operate between Brentford and Teddington, including the requirement of a 440mm safety clearance. This will also include improved handover guidance to the hirer for added guidance on navigating on tidal waters, as well as the requirement for previous hireboat experience. Journeys between Limehouse and Brentford will require full compliance with IWSPC category C requirements. A press release has been issued.

<https://www.pla.co.uk/The-PLA-and-BMF-agree-requirements-for-hired-narrowboats-on-tidal-Thames>

9. AOB

- a. Alex Hestor from Chelsea Kayak Club highlighted their recent work on testing the ODEO flare. The outcome of their work is included as Appendix E
- b. A question was on the suitability of a CCBM (Certificate in Community Boats Management) to be extended for use on Cat C waters
Action: HMU to review and respond
- c. Kevin East presented some guidance on preventing the spread of Invasive Species. These can be found here:

For boaters - <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/documents/A3-boat-sign.pdf>

For anglers - <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/documents/A3-angling-sign.pdf>

Action: AHMR to relay this to the Environment Department, who will look at fixing signs up at access points. (AHMR will also distribute Appendix D to kayak clubs.)

- d. Barge house Causeway is being refurbished

DONM: 13th October 2015 11:00-13:30 (TBC)