

PLA RIVER USERS CONSULTATIVE FORUM (UPPER)

Notes of the meeting held at HQS Wellington at 10:30 on
Wednesday 16th November 2016

Present:

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Mark Towns (<i>Chairman</i>) | PLA, Harbour Master Upper (HMU) |
| Terry Lawrence | PLA, Harbour Master (Thames Tideway Tunnel) |
| Ryan Hall | PLA, Deputy Harbour Master Upper 1 |
| Nick Evans | PLA, Deputy Harbour Master Upper 2 |
| Darren Knight | PLA, Assistant Harbour Master Recreational |
| Denise Rowley | PLA, Environment Officer |
| Jon Beckett | PLA, SMS Manager |
| Sarah Broad | PLA, Navigational Safety Systems Coordinator |
| Sandra Baker | PLA, Team Support Officer |
| Chris Healy | PLA, Marine River Inspector |
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| Terry Leach | HM Coastguard, London |
| Charmaine Boswarve | MPU |
| Jane Commons | London River Services (LRS) |
| Mark Galdard | London River Services (LRS) |
| Andy Batcheler | Environment Agency (Thames Barrier) |
| Kevin East | British Canoeing |
| Chris Livett | Livett Group |
| Mark Tower | Top Sail Events |
| Craig Brown | Thames Clippers |
| Charlie Telfer | City Cruises |
| Graeme Faulkner | GPS Marine |
| Steve Davies | RYA / North Kent Yachting Association |
| Bill Mitchell | Thames Regional Rowing Council (TRRC) |
| Pamela Chart | Association of Thames Yacht Clubs (ATYC) |
| Richard Hart | Docklands Scout Project and ATYC |
| Peter Finch | River Thames Society |
| Brian Clark | British Marine |
| Roger Squires | Inland Waterways Association |
| John Salter | Company of Watermen & Lightermen |

Apologies for Absence

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|--------------------|--|
| James Trimmer | PLA, Director of Planning and Environment |
| Lucy Owen | PLA, Deputy Director of Planning and Environment |
| Tanya Ferry | PLA, Environment Manager |
| Phil Wilkinson | London Home and Water Safety Council |
| Bob Prentice | Crown River Cruises |
| Charlotte Thompson | Thames RIB Experience |
| Neil Caborn | Cory Environmental |
| Andy Soper | The Barge Association |
| Jason Jones | LFB Lambeth Fire Pontoon Manager |

1. Matters Arising and Review of Action Points from the Minutes of the River Users Consultative Forum (Upper) held on Thursday 28th April 2016

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted and there was no actions arising.

2. PLA Update

a. Regulatory and Marine SMS

i. Thames Byelaws

The revised Byelaws were 'made' at the September PLA Board meeting, having completed two Informal Public Consultations. The Formal Public Consultation on the proposed amendments was undertaken between 12th October 2016 and 14th November 2016. Most of the representations during this final consultation period have been in relation to the proposed amendments to Byelaw 49, which the PLA are now liaising with the DfT regarding these concerns.

ii. General Directions

The revised Directions came into effect on 1st July 2016 and are available to download only from the PLA website.

iii. Passenger Vessel Code of Practice

The revised Code was published on 16th June 2016 and are available to download only from the PLA website.

iv. Code of Practice for Paddling on the Tideway

The PLA is at the final stages of creating a new Code of Practice for paddling activities on the tideway, as we currently have a number of Guides/Codes for various paddling activities. We anticipate that a Public Consultation on this new Code will be promulgated before the end of November 2016, for six-weeks and we would welcome your comments on this document.

v. Recreational Users' Guide

The PLA has recently published an update to the very popular Recreational Users Guide in advance of 2017. The new guide includes a number of updates for mariners and detailed information on Visitor Moorings on the tidal Thames.

vi. Pilotage Directions

The proposed revisions to the Pilotage Directions are currently out for Public Consultation and this closes on Friday 25th November 2016.

vii. Houseboat Mooring Guidance

A new guidance document has been developed for owners of houseboats along the tidal Thames and is currently out for Public Consultation, which ended on Tuesday 22nd November 2016 and we would like to thank everyone for your feedback.

b. Port Security

i. ISPS Security Level

UK Ports ISPS Security Level remains at Level 1 (low).

ii. Threat Level

The national overall threat level has been increased to SEVERE and the current threats seem to be predominately around crowded spaces, so extra caution should be maintained during busy central London events.

iii. Port Security Authority

The Thames Port Security Authority met on 12th October 2016 at which Tony Catling advised that Julian Parkes had officially resigned as Chair, succeeded by Cathryn Spain.

iv. **Project KRAKEN**

Project KRAKEN is a National Crime Agency, Police and Border force initiative to increase vigilance along the UK's coastline and maritime environment and is being re-invigorated to encourage the public to report suspicious or unusual activity to local police on 101 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 (quote "KRAKEN").

c. **Recreational Update**

i. Recreational incident numbers continue to be on a downward trend looking at the same period as 2015 where we have witnessed a 60.5% reduction. Thanks to the representatives from the leisure sector for their continued efforts.

ii. **Paddling Code of Practice**

This new document combines all current various paddle sport guidance into one document, very similar to the Rowing Code in style. The consultation for this commences shortly.

iii. **Visitor Moorings**

The PLA have recently been making improvements as to where you can find information about visitor moorings on the tidal Thames; this is for both PLA and stakeholders moorings. The new Recreational Users Guide has a dedicated section and we will shortly be uploading all of this information onto the PLA's dedicated recreational user's website (www.boatingonthames.co.uk). We believe this will improve the awareness and visibility of them to all Port users.

iv. **MAIB Safety Bulletin 2/2016**

The PLA wanted to bring this to your attention as this Safety Bulletin was in relation to Carbon Monoxide Poisoning on board a cabin cruiser, resulting in two fatalities. A simple carbon monoxide alarm would have potentially saved the lives involved and we strongly encourage all rivers users to invest in an alarm at their earliest opportunity.

d. **Environment Update**

i. **The Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) Marine Plan**

The MMO continues to consult and gather evidence in relation to the Marine Plan for the South East Inshore area, which includes the tidal Thames. The MMO and PLA encouraging anyone with an interest in the marine area, or whose business relies on it, to get involved. If stakeholders do comment on this Plan, could you please share these observations with the PLA Environment Team.

Question raised whether the PLA could share its comments with interested stakeholders?

Action: RUCF members and PLA Environment Team to share comments on the Marine Plans so that a joined up response is achieved.

3. **MCA District Safety**

No MCA Surveyor was present and a briefing was given by Ryan Hall:

a. Boatmasters Licence

The MCA has released 15-dates for examinations in 2017 at the Orpington office. Please book in early to ensure your place.

b. Local Knowledge Endorsement

The LKE revalidation process continues to be overseen by the PLA on the MCA's behalf. There were approximately 300 endorsements that required revalidation before the 30th December 2016 and there are approximately 100 more to do before the deadline. Therefore the PLA are trying to accommodate and assist this process by providing an additional 7-days for examination. Operators were advised that they should check Boatmaster Licences prior to employing Masters on New Years Eve, to ensure that they have been revalidated, as spot checks will be conducted.

c. MSN 1823 (M) - Safety Code for Passenger Ships Operating Solely in UK Categorised Waters

A consultation will be launched shortly on proposed amendments to MSN 1823, which will apply to all Class V vessels whether they are new build or had any modifications made to the vessel. It is likely that the new MSN will come into effect on 1st January 2017. Also within this new MSN will be regulations restricting crews to a 48-hour average working week.

d. Pre-1992 Passenger Vessels

There is a review of the standards which govern pre-1992 passenger vessels. A working group has been meeting throughout 2016 and the practicalities of implementing the recommendations will have massive repercussions nationally. It was requested that the PLA make the details of this consultation available to stakeholders in the Port.

Action: SMS to share the consultation document on pre-1992 passenger vessels with stakeholders in the Port when it becomes available.

4. Navigational Safety

a. Incident Review

The Incident Review was circulated in advance of the meeting and attached as Appendix A.

i. Machinery Breakdowns

There have been a large number of various types of machinery breakdowns and operators need to tackle these issues swiftly, as they could have been avoided.

ii. Wash Complaints

Wash complaints are still being made to the PLA and therefore the following measures have been implemented to ensure that a reduction can be achieved; revised passage plans, instigating speed traps in London VTS, more patrols in hot spot areas and providing better/new guidance to houseboat owners.

iii. Prosecutions

The PLA continues to take robust enforcement action where it is deemed necessary and have completed 4 prosecutions in 2016. To ensure that the rest of the river community are aware of what is being achieved, the PLA are now promulgating news releases following prosecutions.

iv. Fouled Props

Question raised as to whether the PLA believed they were doing enough to collect Driftwood and other obstructions, such as ropes, from the river with their Driftwood vessels. HMU advised that, while additional Passive Driftwood Collectors (PDCs) would be good they need a lot of room to swing safely on their moorings and require sufficient underwater clearance. With pressures on increasing moorings for vessels and the range of works there isn't any additional space available to install any new PDC's. However; the PLA has recently looked at developing a new smaller version and we continue to investigate their potential suitability upriver. The PLA own and operate two Driftwood craft and both have Discfloaters (these are basically PDCs but something they can attach to the front of the vessel to proactively collect driftwood), however these vessels are constantly under pressure to undertake other works.

Action: HMU to discuss with the PLA Marine Services Manager if the Driftwood vessels could be dedicated more to their primary focus in the future.

Action: All – if you see any large bolts of timber, please inform London VTS so that we can secure it somewhere until a Driftwood can collect it from the river.

5. Other Updates

a. Police MPU

- i. It was noted that London was currently on a Severe security level.
- ii. The MPU will be conducting, in partnership with the PLA, the usual Drink/Drugs Campaign.
- iii. New Year's Eve Risk Assessments are starting to be submitted by the operators and the MPU will be conducting some Licencing visits throughout December.
- iv. The MPU advised the forum of the Lord Harris Review and that there is a large section in this review on the maritime sector, highlighting potential vulnerabilities. The MPU will be looking to see if additional funding will now become available to assist in reducing these vulnerabilities.

b. Coastguard

- i. The Coastguard believes the Lord Harris Review shows a lack of understanding about activities on the tidal Thames. The London Resilience Forum was hosting a special meeting on this report on Wednesday 15th November 2016 and it was noted that no one from the PLA or MPU had been invited.
- ii. It was noted that there had been 340 threats to jump into the Thames to date, 77 of which were suicide attempts, 51 actually entered the river and 37 fatalities.

c. RNLI

- i. There was no representative from the RNLI and no update given

d. London River Services

- i. Mark Geldard has replaced Andy Thompson who took early retirement and is also the manager for Victoria Coach Station.

- ii. The Thames reached 10.3m passenger journeys in 2015 and 2016 is showing that passenger figures are up 2.5%.
- iii. There have been three major infrastructure developments during 2016, namely; extensions at Westminster and Bankside Pier's and the new larger Blackfriars Pier.

e. Fire

- i. There was no representative from the Fire Brigade and no update given, however Darren Tulley has now moved on and Jason Jones has since replaced him.

f. Environment Agency

- i. There was no representative from the EA and no update given

g. Port Health

- i. There was no representative from Port Health and no update given

6. River Works

a. Central/Navigational Channel Arch Closures at:

i. Hammersmith Bridge

This project is in the early stages of scoping and planning. Concept and feasibility works are due to be completed by November 2017, with the bidding process for contractors commencing in January 2018 and the works due to commence in July/August 2018 however all these dates are quite fluid at present and the PLA will keep all river users informed as we have a firm project plan.

b. Garden Bridge

The Trust is currently trying to resolve a number of issues regarding lease and land permissions. They are aiming to have a resolution by the end of 2016 and to re-engage with the PLA and all stakeholders early in 2017 with proposed bridge construction in Autumn 2017.

c. Thames Bridge

Following a recent announcement from the Mayor of London, it is likely that further design ideas for this proposed lifting bridge in Limehouse Reach will progress shortly. The current proposal is to build it with a 20m air draft at MHWS to ensure that larger craft can safely transit without requiring a bridge lift, however there is constant pressure to reduce this from TfL, which is something that the PLA is still resisting.

d. Fulham Football Club

The new owners of the club do not like the current design and wants a more inspiring design considered. Therefore the PLA are not sure when any further works will commence.

e. Silvertown Tunnel

PLA are currently engaged in discussions regarding this proposed river crossing and have three main areas of concern.

- Proposed to be only 3.7m below the riverbed, which could affect future scouring and the protection of the tunnel in this area.
- TfL are looking for an exclusion zone around the construction side, including the river, for 11-years; although it is anticipated that this is a mistake.

- A number of wharfs nearby would be affected by the proposed scheme and these issues will need to be resolved before permissions will be granted.

f. Thames Tideway Tunnel

King Edwards Park – diving application for a UXO Survey is currently being considered.

Chambers Wharf – sheet piling is due to complete by mid-November, following the completion of this then spoil will be delivered to infill the land to convert it into a working wharf again.

Blackfriars – the old pier has been removed and the new pier opened recently. The piles from the old pier and of President 1918 will be removed shortly.

Victoria Embankment – piling work for the new Tattersall Castle mooring is due to be completed shortly and a small dredge programme is scheduled for the Tattersall Castle to sit in once moved in early 2017.

Putney – a new temporary slipway will be constructed shortly; however not all the consents have been completed yet. It is anticipated that initial construction works will be completed before the 2017 Boat Race.

Jack-up Barge – there is currently an application being considered by the PLA for a jack-up barge to be positioned in the river at 18 different locations and this work will commence in January 2017.

TTT Barge Moorings – a number of new temporary TTT barge moorings will be installed at various locations along the river during 2017 and mariners will be advised of these in due course via Notice to Mariners.

7. Commercial Vessels

a. Thames Vision

i. Waterspace Management

The PLA is considering how to utilise the waterspace available more effectively moving forward. The first step of this is looking at operators timetables in more detail this winter with TfL.

ii. Timetable Review

The PLA and TfL are reviewing the timetables for 2017 carefully to ensure that vessels do not all depart at the same time and that there is a bigger spread of vessels through Central London in particular. Deadline for timetable requests is soon, so that there is adequate time to promulgate the information for March 2017.

iii. Wash Monitoring

The PLA is undertaking proactive wash monitoring exercises to look at the impact of wash on both recreational river users and houseboats.

8. Events

a. Review of events from 2015

Nick thanked the group for their cooperation for the various events and filming that has taken place on the Thames this year, Particular thanks to all for the Great Fire event, the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of London, without your assistance and

willingness to work around that extended closure the event couldn't have gone ahead, instead I believe the event exceeded expectations.

b. Forthcoming events for 2015/16

The Events Review was circulated in advance of the meeting and attached as Appendix B.

2nd December see's the Evelina Zip-wire, a Zip line will be rigged from the roof of St Thomas hospital to Victoria Gardens, all rigging and dismantling will be completed between midnight and 0400 to minimise disruption. The actual event will cause minimal delays, the crossing on the Zip Line will take approximately 45 seconds and only 20 candidates taking part, it will be a case of waiting for a gap in the river traffic to allow an individual to 'Zip line' across, rather than delaying vessels to allow a crossing.

Planning have already started for 2017 boat race, taking place on 2nd April 2017. 2017 will also witness the Tall Ships returning between 13th April to 16th April, which will be much larger than 2016. The plans will see approximately 40 ships, moored in both Greenwich and Woolwich, with marine services laying temporary moorings in both locations. The usual river trips and evening firework displays will take place, with a parade of sail on the final day, Sunday 16th April 2017. The PLA will endeavour to ensure minimal disruption to your regular services, and a Notice to Mariners detailing all events associated with the Tall Ships will be promulgated in due course.

9. AOB

a. PLA App

The first version of the PLA App is currently in Beta testing stage with some PLA employees. It is hoped that the new App will be released as a phase 1 in early 2017 and the PLA aims to continue to develop the App throughout the coming year.

b. Greenwich Enderby Wharf

There is no update on this project at present and the PLA remains engaged with the developers. There have been a number of issues delaying this process due to air quality concerns.

c. Illuminated Bridges Project

There is a project to illuminate all of the bridges between Albert to Tower in the same style throughout. The PLA is keen on the concept as an attraction to bring people closer to the river, however some of the proposals need to be carefully considered and the PLA is actively engaged in ensuring that they are not a hazard to navigation. The winning proposal is due to be announced on 7th December 2016, however the winning design might not necessarily end up being implemented but that team being appointed to work up the final design ideas.

Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 20th April 2017 at 10:00. Watermen's Hall

INCIDENT REVIEW 1st APRIL 2016 TO 31st OCTOBER 2016

Monthly Incident Numbers

| 2014 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
| 9 | 4 | 7 | 15 | 14 | 18 | 17 | 22 | 18 | 11 | 13 | 8 | 156 |
| 2015 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
| 6 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 18 | 13 | 25 | 12 | 14 | 19 | 10 | 20 | 167 |
| 2016 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Total | |
| 6 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 11 | | 116 | |

MAN OVERBOARD - 1 (1) One reported MOB this reporting period at Greenwich yacht club

WASH COMPLAINTS COMMERCIAL- 7(5) Seven reported cases of wash caused by commercial vessels in central London

WASH COMPLAINTS HOUSEBOATS – 39 (0)

| Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Total |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| 10 | 14 | 7 | 10 | 6 | 15 | 7 | 69 |

Over the reporting period the PLA has introduced speed traps, a new passage plan and briefing session for the vessels known to be creating wash whilst passing houseboats. The PLA has also produced guidance for those that live on the river in safe mooring of vessels so as to minimise the effect of wash from passing vessels.

CONTACTS – 14 (4) 14 reported contacts mostly caused by vessels manoeuvring for piers or moorings. Two major contacts occurred in the reporting period, one of which was a ship making contact with the Barking Barrier and the other was a Class Five vessel making heavy contact with the river wall after a catastrophic engine failure.

COLLISIONS AND NEAR MISS COLLISIONS - 9 (18) The 9 reported collisions all involved recreational craft engaged in rowing upriver or cruising vessels in Central London.

GROUNDINGS - 0 (2)

FIRE / EXPLOSION – 0 (3)

MECHANICAL FAILURE – 14 (38) Over the reporting period 14 incidents were caused by machinery failure. Four of the reported incidents were due to fouled propellers.

BREACH OF BYELAWS & GENERAL DIRECTIONS – 3 (5) Three reported incidents showed that appropriate legislation was not followed. One of these has resulted in the prosecution of a master for navigating without due regard to his wash and speed.

FUTURE EVENTS ON THE RIVER NOVEMBER 2016 – APRIL 2017

NOVEMBER

| | | | | |
|------------------|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
| 12 th | Lord Mayor's Flotilla & Fireworks | Westminster Boating Base to HMS President | 08:30 – 10:00 and 17:00 – 17:30 | M80/2016 |
| 12 th | Fuller's Head of the River Race | Kew Railway Bridge to Fulham Railway Bridge | 12:15 – 15:45 | U10/2016 |
| 13 th | Dinghy Winter 3 | Bugsbys Reach | 11:00 – 13:00 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 13 th | Veteran's Fours Head of the River Race | Fulham Railway Bridge to Kew Railway Bridge | 09:30 – 13:00 | U10/2016 |
| 14 th | Gun Salutes | Tower of London | 13:00 | M7/2016 |
| 26 th | Vesta Scullers' Head of the River Race | Kew Railway Bridge to Fulham Railway Bridge | 12:30 – 16:00 | U10/2016 |
| 27 th | Barking and Dagenham Canoe Club | Barking Creek | 10:30 – 14:00 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |

DECEMBER

| | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2 nd | Evelina Zip Wire | St Thomas to Victoria gardens | 1230 - 2000 | NTM to be promulgated |
| 3 rd | United Hospitals Novice Regatta | Chiswick Bridge to Kew Railway Bridge | 09:00 – 15:30 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 5 th | Thames Barrier Closure | Woolwich Reach | 09:40 – 12:10 | 20/2016 |
| 11 th | University of London Allom Cup | Chiswick Bridge to Kew Railway Bridge | 09:00 – 15:30 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 13 th | Tower Hamlets Christmas Paddle | tbc | 18:30 – 22:00 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 17 th | Remenham Challenge | Chiswick Pier to Putney Bridge | 10:00 – 11:00 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 18 th | Plum Puds | Chiswick Steps to Putney Bridge | 11:00 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 31 st | New Year's Eve Fireworks | Charing Cross Railway Bridge to Westminster Bridge | 23:40 – 00:20 | NTM to be promulgated |

JANUARY

| | | | | |
|------------------|--|--|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3 rd | Thames Barrier Closure | Woolwich Reach | 09:40 – 12:10 | 20/2016 |
| 22 nd | United Hospital Winter Regatta | Chiswick Bridge to Kew Railway Bridge | 09:30 – 15:40 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 28 th | Quintin Eights Head of the River Race | Kew Railway Bridge to Barn Elms Boathouse | 11:15 – 14:45 | U10/2016 |

FEBURARY

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1st | Thames Barrier Closure | Woolwich Reach | 09:35 – 12:05 | 20/2016 |
| 19 th | United Hospitals Head Race | Syon Pavilion to Chiswick Bridge | 11:00 – 15:00 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 19 th | Greenwich Head | tbc | tbc | Refer to Online Events Calendar |

MARCH

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2nd | Thames Barrier Closure | Woolwich Reach | 09:25 – 11:55 | 20/2016 |
| 5th | Hammersmith Head of the River Race | Kew Railway Bridge to Barn Elms Boathouse | 08:30 – 12:00 | U10/2016 |
| 11th | Women's Eights Head of the River Race | Kew Railway Bridge to Fulham Railway Bridge | 14:30 – 18:00 | U10/2016 |
| 15 th | Varsity Race | Kew Railway Bridge to Boat Race Pole | 13:00 – 17:00 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 23rd | Schools' Head of the River Race | Kew Railway Bridge to Putney Bridge | 12:00 – 15:30 | U10/2016 |
| 25th | Head of the River Race | Kew Railway Bridge to Fulham Railway Bridge | 13:15 – 16:45 | U10/2016 |
| 26th | Vesta Veterans Head of the River Race | Barn Elms Boathouse to Kew Railway Bridge | 10:00 – 13:30 | U10/2016 |

APRIL

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2nd | Universities Boat Race | tbc | tbc | NTM to be promulgated |
| 2 nd | Oxbridge Watermen's Challenge | tbc | tbc | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 12th | Thames Barrier Closure | Woolwich Reach | 08:40 – 11:10 BST | 20/2016 |
| 14th to 17th | Royal Sail Greenwich | Gallions Reach to Upper Pool | tbc | NTM to be promulgated |
| 14 th to 17 th | Devises to Westminster Canoe Marathon | Teddington Lock to Westminster Bridge | tbc | Refer to Online Events Calendar |
| 23 rd | Tudor Pull | Teddington Lock to HMS President | 12:30 – 16:00 | Refer to Online Events Calendar |