



**Notes of River Users Consultative Forum (Upper)
25th April 2018 @ 10.30 hrs Watermen's Hall, London, EC3**

Chair

Mark Towens	MT	PLA Harbour Master (Upper District)
Nick Evans	NE	PLA Deputy Harbour Master (Upper)
Josh Rylah	JR	PLA Deputy Harbour Master (Upper)
Jon Beckett	JB	PLA SMS Manager
Denise Rowley	TF	PLA Environment Officer
Darren Knight	DK	PLA Assistant Harbour Master, Recreational
Sandra Baker	SB	PLA Executive Assistant (notetaker)

Attendees

Peter Finch	PF	RTS
Roger Squires	RS	Inland Waterways Association
Patrick Schulenburg	PS	The Barge Association
Tipu Parvez	TP	Cory Riverside Energy
Terry Leach	TL	HM Coastguard
Kevin Maynard	KM	RNLI
Ted Manning	TM	Crown River
Harry Whelan	HW	London Kayak Company
Steve Davies	SD	RYA North Kent
Sarah Gaventa	SG	Illuminated River Foundation
Ciron Edwards	CE	Illuminated River Foundation
Richard Hart	RH	ATYC
Pamela Chart	PC	ATYC
Bill Mitchell	BM	TRRC
Lesley Tait	LT	Thames Water
Atzal Ginwalla	AG	Thames Water
James Thompson	JT	Chas Newens Marine
Ed Livett	EL	Livetts Group
Graham Faulkner	GF	GPS – FLO
Mark Robinson	MR	S Walsh Limited
Ian Crabb	IC	Thames Barrier
Jake Lewis	JL	Thames Clippers
Mike Greenwood	MG	MCA, Colchester
Geoff Symonds	GS	MBNA Thames Clippers
James Gilbert	JG	TfL Rivers
Kevin East	KE	British Canoeing
Mark Towes	MT	Thames Leisure

1. Apologies:

Alistair Gale, PLA; Ray Blair, Marico; Tony Reynolds TRRC, Scott Neicho, CPBS; Jane Commons, TfL; Brian Clark, British Marine; Adam Stratford, MCA; Mark Berry, EA; Derek Mann, Thames Clippers; Hugh O'Byrne, Westminster Boating Base; Chris Livett, Livett's Group and Mike Chambers.

2. Minutes of last RUCF (Upper) – 30th November 2017

Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

- **Qualification Checks:** Reiteration of Action for all Operators to check the validity of all crew BML/LKEs (this can be done via the MCA).
- **Documentation:** Clarification that the **MCA have confirmed that the minimum requirement on board for BML documentation would be a photocopy of the BML Licence with LKE endorsement (preferably with electronic back-up).**
- **Enforcement Action:** Work in progress between PLA/MCA with regard to increasing enforcement action and giving higher media attention to this.
- **Illuminated Bridges Project:** Consideration for pink lighting to be given due consideration as evidence suggests this can help reduce self harm - this will be covered by the Thames Water Safety Forum workshop on May 17th with bridge owners and local authorities.
- **Passenger Vessel Timetables** – Overtaken by events – the process of passenger boat services submitting timetables will be formalised and taken forward by the PLA.
- **Communications** – Feedback from VTS indicates that there has been some improvement on use of Channel 14.
- **MCA Document MGN432** – message promulgated for risk assessments to be in place for passenger transfers to/from small boats
- **Increase in Operator Fees** – Request for sympathetic consideration of operator fee increase of 2.9% (in conjunction with reduced business down by 7%) was passed on to PLA CFO – This could be raised directly by Operators with the Chairman at the PLA AGM.

4. **PLA Update**

4a **Regulatory & Navigational SMS Update**

➤ **Quarterly SMS Report**

The review and amendment of the PLA byelaws and directions has now been completed (following withdrawal of British Marine's objection to changes to Byelaw 49) and awaiting approval from the DfT. The quarterly report of the Marine Safety Management System (SMS) performance and incident statistics has now been issued showing a breakdown of incidents so far this year:

<http://www.pla.co.uk/Safety/SMS/Incident-Investigations-Reports-and-Data>

➤ **Breakdowns Campaign**

The Report also details a trend analysis of breakdowns on Inland Waterways vessels with 40% being caused by floating river debris. The most common type of debris is rope (accounting for over half of the debris recorded) and the PLA will be looking to campaign to reduce river residue with workshops (involving river users) looking at ways to eliminate marine litter.

There will be a proactive approach by the PLA to remove ropes left on buoys.

4b **Port Security Update provided by TPSA Secretariat, Tim Corthorn**

The UK threat level currently remains at SEVERE and the Maritime Security Level remains unchanged. The Department for Transport and the Thames Port Security Authority are keen to reinforce the importance of all river users to maintain high levels of vigilance and report anything suspicious to the Police or London VTS.

The Thames Port Security Authority continue to meet regularly with representatives from berth operators and other organisations along the Thames, in attendance. The last meeting was on 12th April 2018 and the next is planned for the 9th October 2018.

HMC Coastguard confirmed that currently the Maritime Security Level is Moderate.

4c **Recreational Update – Darren Knight**

Skills – One of the PLA Harbour Service Launch crew has developed a ‘Skills Reminder’ for rowing coaches to provide key safety advice and reminders about what they should be doing when overseeing their crew’s activities.

Tidal Thames Navigator’s Club – Current membership now stands at 1,700 and has just hosted its 5th Pre-Season Meeting. Free membership is available online: www.boatingonthames.co.uk and enables the PLA to promulgate key safety messages to recreational river users. TTNC Events:

- 1st June 2018 Tideway Tunnel River Trip
- 2nd June 2018 PLA Open Day – Royal Terrace Pier, Gravesend

Thames Vision

The PLA continues to work closely with a number of National Governing bodies (NGBs) to investigate and encourage further growth of sport and recreational activities along the tideway. The PLA continues to host the East London Watersports Forum; supporting clubs and centres in this particular area to hopefully grow their activities in a safe, responsible and sustainable manner.

4d **Environmental Update – Denise Rowley**

The Air Quality Strategy Consultation closed in January and the responses have been collated with the final results due to be published next month.

5 **MCA District Safety**

The new MCA Office in Colchester (with a dedicated exam centre) opened on the 12th March and the Orpington Office is due to move in the summer – Aug/Sept for which a new MIN will be issued with Norwich making the final move next year. MIN566 has been issued with relocation contact details.

5a **DMSC**

Legislation: Changes to the Inland Waterways Working Time Regulations came into force Jan 18 – MSN1876 - for compliance by all passenger vessels (Class 5) and introduces requirements for daily/weekly rest hours, keeping logs and annual health assessments. Compliance for new waterways time logs will be a top priority for the MCA with a third of vessels being checked and inspected, predominantly targeting companies not completing self-assessments

Code of Safe Working Practices – Reminder that a second set of amendments was published last year and can be found on the MCA website – MIN539.

TM requested clarification from the MCA if electronic submissions/signatures would be acceptable before investing time and money on new online systems – advice from MCA is to check first directly with the MCA.

5b **BML/LKE Update**

MT advised that some variation will be introduced into the LKE assessments (to ensure full knowledge of the River – in both directions)

6 **Navigational Safety – Refer to Incident Review 1.11.17 – 1.4.18**

Incidents – There have been 38 reported incidents since the last review.

Wash Complaints – Commercial - Of the 6 reported wash complaints, 5 involved vessels with a Certificate of Compliance (COC). This has led to the revision of technical requirements for the COC - updated on the website - which clarifies the process for suspending and removing the COC in the event of a serious incident or repeated failures.

Wash Complaints – Houseboats - An increase to 157 compared with 47 previously – partly due to 2 residential locations east of Tower Bridge now reporting. The HSL is also conducting extensive wash monitoring – not restricted to CoC vessels.

Note: All operators to be mindful of wash east of Tower Bridge

Contacts - 5 of the 7 reported contacts were caused by human error, 3 of which attributed to failure to follow the COLREGs or Byelaws.

Collisions – 3 reported of which 2 are ‘near miss’ reports one of which has instigated a review of the racing rules of the club in question and a review of the PLA recreational advice. The second near miss was caused by failure to follow COLREGs with a workboat crossing the head of a commercial vessel in heavy snow.

Groundings – 3 reported of which 2 occurred during significant tidal cuts.

Mechanical Failure – An increase to 12 highlighting the importance of keeping maintenance schedules under review.

Breach of Regulations – 2 A reduction in breach of regulations although Masters are reminded to keep up-to-date with rules and regulations and responsibilities between vessels.

Despite incident numbers remaining constant, near miss reports have reduced – the importance of near miss reporting needs to be promulgated and any ideas to improve reporting would be welcomed. RS requested clarification on what constitutes a ‘near miss’ and would welcome the opportunity to be involved in future discussions, suggesting increased sound signals from larger vessels to sailing boats (which don’t always have the radio activated).

Note: Near Miss reporting to be encouraged and ideas to improve welcomed

Of concern is the fact that incident numbers for non-passenger vessels has overtaken passenger vessel incidents bearing in mind that Tideway movements are yet to increase.

7 Other Updates

7a Police – no representative

7b Coastguard – Terry Leach

From 1st April there has been a new commander for London, based on South Coast

- 3 members of staff relocated back to their original stations
- Incidents in the last year: approx. 900 calls/incidents (similar to last year)
- 20 deaths (Down from 32)
- Increase in suicide attempts (less succeeding)

7c RNLI – Kevin Maynard

- 171 calls this year in Central London (slight increase on 2017)
- Exercises scheduled with Corys and GPS to include safety advice.
- London Boroughs encouraged to adopt new life buoy containers (with support from LRS and Thames Clippers) which contain a grid ref. number giving exact location details.
- The Thames Water Safety Forum (Chaired by Terry Leach and attended by PLA, RNLI, and Met Police) will today be signing off a strategy to reduce self harm/downing and there will be a workshop on 17th May where the RNLI will giving a talk on community safety together with various presentations (Samaritans).
- There is news from the London Assembly that the Mayor is giving his backing to reduce self-harm drowning on the Thames.

7d London River Services – James Gilbert

The organisational transformation at TfL is no resulting in London River Services becoming part of a new Sponsored Services Directorate. There have been a number of changes in personnel with the departure of Jane Commons, Business Development Manager for LRS, headed up instead by Jonathan Fox – there will still be 9 Pier Controllers with Danny Price as the new General Manager and Dave Fisher, Head of London River Services and Emirates Air Line.

7e Fire – no representative

7f EA – Ian Crabb

In Jan/Feb there were 3 closures with a monthly low water test (all notifications advised on the Thames Barrier website). The next high water annual closure will be Sunday 23rd September.

7g Port Health – no representative

8 River Works

8a Central/Navigational Channel Arch Closures at Hammersmith Bridge

- Potential works to start Spring next year – details to be advised in due course.

8b Proposed Rotherhithe/Canary Wharf Bridge for Pedestrians/Cyclists

- Consultation finished in January 2018 – no final decisions have yet been made
- Response to issues raised during the consultation will be published in the Summer
- Feedback proposed a high level, opening bridge (for pedestrians/cyclists) that doesn't open often
- Location still under consideration with 3 possibilities - high priority will be driven by the impact for cyclists on height of the bridge
- For Consultation Report see website: www.tfl.gov.uk/R2CW-crossing
- Contact: consultations@tfl.gov.uk

8c Nine Elms Footbridge

- No further update on the proposal by Wandsworth Borough Council

8d Fulham Football Club

- Information and detail with regard to the revised proposal is still under consideration.

8e Thames Tideway Tunnel – Report prepared by Terry Lawrence

- **Victoria Embankment** – Cofferdam construction ongoing. No 1 Arch Charing Cross opened on 23rd March and not envisaged to close again.
- **Blackfriar's** – Deconstruction of pumping station - No. 2 Arch remains closed (although looking at limited opening)
- **Chambers Wharf** – continues as an operational berth.
- **Kind Edward Memorial Park** – Construction ongoing
- **Kirtling Street** – Works continuing
- **Albert Embankment and Cofferdam** – works ongoing, due to complete in July
- **Carnworth Road** – Completion of dredging for campshed planned for 30th May
- **Putney Embankment** – works ongoing – hope to start main site river works June 2018 (to be confirmed)
- **Cremorne Wharf** – Bed levelling planned for May 2018 followed by berth operation
- **Blackfriars/Vauxhall No. 4 Arch** – there are proposals for dynamic lighting and interactive open/closed signs (controlled via London VTS) – costs and implementation currently being considered – if works allow

8f Illuminated Bridges Project – Illuminated River Foundation

Presentation by Sarah Gavanta, Director and Ciron Edwards

- This is a 10 year project which is a part-funded legacy of the Olympics, after which the lighting will be “gifted” to the local authorities

- Planning and building applications currently with 7 Boroughs requiring approval
- The first phases will commence in Feb/Mar 2018, working East to West (planning approval required before commencement)
- Some colour (including pink) will be used, together with reflection under the bridges. No direct lighting onto the water to avoid affecting marine life.
- Rail bridges will also be lit up
- Light fittings will be disguised and sympathetic with the historic landmarks (including 9 listed structures)
- Approx 80 stakeholders have been consulted with, together with 'Pop Ups' and 'Drop-in Venues' to promote the project.
- Engagement with over 500 people – 96/7% of which are supportive
- No Public money is being used – Phases 1 & 2 are completely funded. Phase 3 funding will commence at a later stage.
- Lighting times will be kept to current restrictions (dusk to dawn) although West End may have lights out at midnight
- There will be fewer lights with less intensity (than currently used)
- Environmental assessments were undertaken prior to application submissions
- Further information on website: www.illuminatedriver.london
- Future queries can be channelled via Josh Rylah, PLA

8 Thames Water–Water Resources Management Plan for Changes in level of Water

Presentation by Lesley Tait and Atzal Ginwalla

- Every 5 years Thames Water produce a water resources management plan which sets out how they will continue to provide a secure and sustainable water supply according to demand
- Draft plan sets out proposals for water supply over next 80 years
- Closing date for consultation is 29th April.
<https://corporate.thameswater.co.uk/Media/News-releases/Consultation-to-shape-the-future-of-water-for-next-80-years>
- Measures in place to reduce leakage by 15% and control demand management by installation of 400,000 smart meters, home audits and water saving gadgets
- Current consideration is for a new abstraction above Teddington Weir by 2030.
- Future proposals for 'new water' include Abingdon, Oxfordshire; Oxford Canal and Beckton – refer to Thames Water website for full detail
- Thames water are looking to mitigate the impact on the depth of water available in the future
- Concern was raised as to the salinity and quality of the water and the impact for species living in the River with less fresh water available and also the impact of silting.
TW Response: There would be no impact – from surveys undertaken– the water from Mogden Sewage Treatment works would be treated to a higher standard that would not affect the environment.
- There is also concern for the net loss of fresh water flowing into the Thames and the impact on the level of water in the upper reaches and how far down would it extend?
TW response: Worst case scenario would be that it would equate to approx. the difference of an extra 1 hr per day of low water.
- Would there be any dredging when abstraction is at its highest level?
MT response: Dredging would not make any improvement to the water level, the issue that this scheme would cause is the fundamental lack of water.
- Why wait 40 years before including the proposal at Abingdon?
TW response: The revised management plan and timing is scheduled according to the predicted deficit plans.

9 Commercial Vessels

- i. Passenger Vessel Timetables – already covered
- ii. Freight Operations – Safety Notice issued

10 Events – Post Meeting Note provided by Josh Rylah:

The PLA have had a wide variety of events from New Years Eve celebrations and the Boat Race to motorbike stunts and sailing events. We aim to learn from these events to make them more efficient, for example the timing of the installation of moorings for the Boat Race. It is important to note that we support these events whilst aiming to maintain daily operations. It is a busy summer on the river and the events are listed on the events handout <http://www.pla.co.uk/Events/Annual-Events-Calendar>

(Also issued with the Agenda)

11 AOB – None

Date of Next Meeting: HQS Wellington – Thursday 22nd November 2018