



**Notes of River Users Consultative Forum (Upper)
10th April 2019 at 10.30hrs at Waterman's Hall**

Chair

Mark Towns	MT	PLA Harbour Master (Upper) (<i>chair</i>)
Nick Evans	NE	PLA Deputy Harbour Master (Upper)
Joshua Rylah	JR	PLA Deputy Harbour Master (Upper)
Darren Knight	DK	PLA Assistant Harbour Master, Recreational
Molly Tucker	MOT	PLA Assistant Environment Officer
Luke Barlow	LB	PLA River Works Enforcement Officer
Nick Tennant	NT	PLA Head of Communications
Sarah Broad	SB	PLA Nav Safety Systems Coordinator (<i>note taker</i>)

Attendees

Ray Blair	RB	Marico Marine (PLA Designated Person)
Nicholas Dwan	ND	Complete Pleasure Boats
Peter Finch	PF	RTS
Roger Squires	RS	Inland Waterways Association
Scott McElwaine	SmE	Port Health
Adam Stratford	AS	MCA
Mike Greenwood	MG	MCA
Bill Mitchell	BM	TRRC
Francis Piesse	FP	Thames Marine Services
Tom Davis	TD	Thames Shipping
Fiona Craven	FC	Border Force
Colin Middlemiss	CM	Watermans Company
Peter Hammond	PH	Cory Energy
Terry Leach	TL	HM Coastguard
Chris Livett	CL	Livett Group
Richard Hart	RH	ATYC/RYA L&SE
Sam Archer	SA	Barges Association
Steve Davies	SD	RYA North Kent
James Gilbert	JG	TfL Rivers
Mitchell Thorpe	MIT	Thames Clippers
Victoria Kettley	VK	Environment Agency

1. Apologies:
Paul Evans, PLA; Cathryn Spain, PLA; Derek Mann, MBNA Clippers; James Thompson, Chas Newens; Mike Cole, Thames Rockets Ltd; Pam Chart, ATYC.
2. Minutes of last RUCF (Upper) – 5th December 2018
Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes
PLA are still encouraging the reporting of any Near Misses.

4. PLA Update

4a Regulatory & Navigational SMS Update

Paul Evans has now taken up the role of Deputy Harbour Master (SMS) replacing that of Jon Beckett (SMS Manager)

- i) The quarterly report is complete, but will need approving by the Chief Harbour Master at a meeting on the 11th April. Once approved it will be uploaded to the website, hopefully by the end of this week. The Quarterly SMS report can now be viewed here - :
<https://server1.pla.co.uk/assets/smsquarterlyreportapril2019.pdf>
- ii) The Breakdowns Campaign should be kick started again this week (8th April). There will likely be a press release by Friday 12th April into some local magazines /papers. Contact Gareth Dorrian (Corporate Affairs) if you need specifics. There will also be a social media campaign initially focussing on Rope Debris in the river.
- iii) Work on the Red Tape Challenge stalled somewhat following the departure of the SMS Manager from the SMS Team in August 2018.

Current status of Red Tape Challenge:

- All regulations were reviewed and draft consolidated to Thames Byelaws, General Directions & Pilotage Directions only.
- Dangerous Substances & Vessel Licensing Byelaws proposed to be abolished and residual regulations incorporated elsewhere
- Proposed new General Directions saw a cut of around 50% volume from existing and have been internally consulted on
- All guidance documents were reviewed with proposal of consolidating in a Port Information Guide

With the introduction of the DHM (SMS) to the SMS team in January 2019, the Red Tape Challenge will once again begin to see progress in the near future.

It was encouraged that members of the RUCF view and share the Safety Management page on the PLA website to keep up to date with SMS reports and safety initiatives/campaigns -
<https://server1.pla.co.uk/Safety/SMS/Safety-Management-Systems>

4b Port Security Update provided by TPSA Secretariat, Cathryn Spain

The UK threat level currently remains at SEVERE and the Maritime Security Level remains unchanged.

The Thames Port Security Authority continues to meet regularly, with representatives from the berth operators and other organisations along the Thames in attendance. The next meeting of the Thames PSA is on 11th April and the PLA will be holding an ISPS level 2 security exercise on 25th April.

In October members of the PSA undertook Project ARGUS training, which was delivered by Kent Police.

Project ARGUS is an initiative developed by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office which aims to raise awareness of the threat from terrorism.

4c Recreational Update – Darren Knight

Tideway Code

Work commenced in November 2018 on combining the rowing and paddling codes into the aptly titled Tideway Code. The final draft is being reviewed by the National Governing Bodies and we hope to finalise the document by the end of April, for promulgation in May 2019.

Tidal Thames Navigator's Club

Since 2012 we have been running a free to join club which enables the PLA to promulgate key safety messages to recreational river users. This year we hosted our 6th Pre-Season Recreational Briefing last month which was well attended and we are currently hosting a number of river trips for the members highlighting the work of the PLA and providing general advice with recreational mariners for them to consider when planning their passage. Current membership of the club stands at approx. 1850, which we aim to continue to grow.

Thames Vision – Sports Promotion Fund

The PLA continues to work with the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and hosting the East London Watersports Forum to support clubs and centres on the tideway to grow.

The PLA have recently launched a small fund of around £40,000 to assist clubs on the Thames with projects that will enable them to make watersports on the Thames more available to a wider range of people. Applications for small grants of up to £10,000 for projects that will increase sports participation on the Thames are open for two rounds in 2019; Friday 29th March and Friday 27th September.

To be successful, bids will need to demonstrate:

- i. The need for the investment and what obstacle to participation it will help address;
- ii. The impact the investment will have on increased participation, providing measurable targets where possible;
- iii. Local community support for the proposal;
- iv. Other sources of financial support that have been sought and/or obtained; and
- v. How the impact of the investment will be maximised in the longer term.

The grant application form, which sets out criteria for successful bids, can be found here: <http://www.pla.co.uk/assets/sportssmallgrantapplicationform.docx>. If you need more information, please contact nadine.collins-smith@pla.co.uk.

Tideway Regatta – Andrew Triggs-Hogg has been employed by the Thames Tideway Tunnel to create a legacy event. The aspirations are for 1,800 vessels, which will be a mix of Rowing Eights, Kayaks and SUPs. The aspiration is for the event to follow roughly the length of the Tideway Tunnel; Hammersmith to Greenwich and will be held on the full day Thames Barrier closure in September. Subject to Tideway Board approval and PLA consent, it is envisaged that the event will be supported by a river closure in the event area. It may in time encompass other events such as the Great River Race and become the London Marathon of watersports.

One operator was quite concerned that this would turn the river into a 'playground' and would hinder operations. If the event does go ahead the closure would be early, before operators were to start, however, the event hasn't been agreed yet and may not go ahead.

There was some confusion over the Tideway Regatta and London Regatta, it was confirmed that the London Regatta is a different event which takes place at Greenwich.

4d Environmental Update – Molly Tucker

Air Quality – Environment Team have now kick-started projects working with the operators. Litter is still an on-going problem – the Environment Team are currently running a survey to see what is already on River. Natural Capital account – the team have just completed this for the protected sites on the Thames.

5 MCA District Safety

a DMSC

Consultation for changes to Passenger Vessels has concluded and a second consultation will commence shortly. A meeting was held with the passenger vessel operators last week in relation to this. The MCA have now settled in the new Colchester offices.

b BML/LKE Update

Four LKE's were undertaken in the last week, all candidates passed.

6 Navigational Safety (provided by Nick Evans) – Refer to Incident Review which is below.



190404 - NE - RUCF
incident review.pdf

There has been an increase in incidents and decrease in near misses.

Breakdowns – there has been a significant rise in machinery deficiencies. Ropes/Foreign items seem to be the main culprits. The Harbour Service Launches are currently conducting checks on worksites, and ropes that are on buoys are being removed by PLA Marine Services. Many of the issues are down to poor house keeping PLA doing what they can. Near Miss reporting faces same issues, an internal campaign has started within the PLA to encourage all staff to report Near Misses, a new reporting form has been developed. It was encouraged that all operators report any near misses this can be done via the PLA website here - <https://server1.pla.co.uk/assets/incidentreportformfm0221.pdf>

The question was raised as to why there has been an increase of 33% of freight incidents – the main issues being tugs, increase in freight, Thames Tideway Tunnel sites, works and the sheer increase in volume of traffic. A question was then raised as to whether there were more incidents because of Tideway, volume of traffic or new tug skippers. The answer to this is no, as the rise is down to machinery deficiencies. It was noted that the recent freight related incidents are minor in nature.

It was asked if the PLA Marine Services department still provide a service to pick up driftwood and ropes. The answer to this was that they do not as the amount of material collected would be limited, this would not be collecting the key debris that would attribute to incidents i.e. timber and rope, but plastic bottles etc. and this would not be the best use of the Marine Services team's time. However, the Harbour Service Launch will be carrying out spot checks in relation to poor housekeeping.

7 Other Updates

7a Police – no representative

7b Coastguard

- Rotherhithe Crossing
- Looking into helicopter evacuation from London Eye
- Involvement in various Health & Safety groups
- Medical assistance on the Class V vessels, resilience and planning is taking on some form of structure in relation to this.
- Awareness was raised around the potential Tideway Regatta event in September on the day when the barrier is closed – 1,500 vessels.

7c RNLI – no representative

7d London River Services

- Woolwich ferry has now returned to full operational duties.
- Charter license being reviewed, more focus on safety on licensing element.
- Bankside dredging – On 7th May 2019 dredging will commence at Bankside Pier – this work will continue for three weeks. Pier will not be in use during this period. The need for this dredging is that the pier is on the ground at low water and is tipping up.

7e Fire – no representative

7f Environment Agency

- Two flood defence closures – both spring
- High Spring Tide Risks
- Annual test closure is on 29 September, if the Tideway Regatta goes ahead on this day, it could pose a risk.

A Question was raised around the Barrier closures, as work has had to be cancelled due to low water levels. – In the first instance contact London VTS and ask any questions.

Another question was asked as to whether the EA aware that there is a certain amount of water that operators need in order to work. EA operate at low tide, if requirements have changed those affected need to be made aware. It was also noted that closures can be different – High Fluvial flows.

This issue has been raised by Cory's a few times, for more water. Communication is the key with EA and operators. 4.5 metres needed at Tower to be able to carry out operations/works. VTS will ask the operators to pass on to EA.

7g UK Border force – a significant amount of work has been carried out in lower region. It is now the intention to focus more on the upper region and potential risks and issues. It was encouraged that if anything suspicious is seen to contact Border Force on the following email address/number BFTILBURYINTEL@HOMEOFFICE.GOV.UK or **07900 056 435**
It is the intention to continue to work closely with marine unit.

7h Port Health – nothing to report

8 River Works

8a i) Smart Bridge Control at Blackfriars - Due to the works taking place at Blackfriars Thames Tideway Tunnel site, No. 1 and No. 2 arches at Blackfriars Bridge's traffic were closed with inbound traffic through the centre arch. Therefore the PLA with Tideway have been looking at how it could ease the traffic situation at Blackfriars by permitting certain vessels, at appropriate times, to navigate through No. 2 arch.

A new 'Smart Bridge Control Sign' has been installed (Notice to Mariners M19 of 2019 refers), which will address these concerns and alleviate some the traffic issues in this area. Essentially it is based on the red cross and green arrow system used at the Thames Barrier, namely; Red Cross – closed to all, Green Arrow – open to all and Amber Cross – open to 'Permitted Vessels' (at present these are mainly; Thames Clippers, RIB operators and workboats going to/from the Tideway site). The PLA would not expect to see recreational mariners using the No. 2 arch of Blackfriars when on an Amber Cross.

It was raised that it would be useful to ask Lock Keepers at Limehouse for information for the recreational vessels going upriver – PLA are amending the 'Top Tips' leaflet to incorporate this. A tweet to go out from the PLA on Good Friday – Corporate Affairs Department to facilitate.

ii) Hammersmith Bridge – Some minor works are to commence from 1st April for approx. 8-weeks. The PLA still expects more prolonged works to take place but are awaiting confirmation from the owners of the bridge as to when these issues will be addressed.

8b Proposed Rotherhithe/Canary Wharf Bridge

a) Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf Bridge –

- i. First consultation was conducted in 2017/18 which had 6000 responses and 93% in favour of the proposal.
- ii. Various alignments have been considered (and still being considered with the PLA), taking into account landownership, underground tunnels and concerns of how shipping will be able to pass through the bridge, etc.
- iii. The current proposed design has the centre arch at a 12m air draft at MHWS and curving towards the edges/buttress. When raised the air draft will be as high as QE2 Bridge and the centre span will be approximately 181m wide.
- iv. It is anticipated that the raising of the bridge will take approximate 4-minutes to open or close (without the time to clear the bridge or other contingency measures) and could have various heights to which it would be lifted, though it is likely to have four set positions (Low, Low-Middle, High-Middle and High).
- v. It is likely that the bridge lifts will be operated remotely with local officers on site to ensure that it is safe to lift and will be operated 24/7/365. There are no plans to restrict shipping but a smart booking system will need to be developed with stakeholders to ensure that it is not lifted excessively – however it should be noted that these procedures are yet to be developed and will look relatively similar to the procedures for Tower Bridge. It was noted that when large ship movements were bound for Tower Bridge Upper or Sea, then both Tower Bridge and the proposed R2CW Bridge will need be opened together to mitigate the concern of a large ship being stuck between two bridges, which will lead to the bridge being opened for a considerable amount of time.

- vi. Ship impact protection will extend approximately 5m around each buttress, but will ensure that the current authorised channel is maintained.
- vii. Gradient on the spans for pedestrians/cyclists will be below 1:20.
- viii. Still working and considering the following items; legal status of the bridge, abort points, temporary moorings, missed booking procedures, emergency operations/events, group bookings, pro-active bridge operations, construction and maintenance programmes (it is anticipated that when maintenance needs to be conducted the bridge will be left in the lifted position).
- ix. The next steps are as follows: Second Consultation – April 2019 (tbc), Planning Submission – End of 2019 (tbc) and Construction (2021-2025 subject to approvals). For the Consultation Report please visit the following website: www.tfl.gov.uk/R2CW-crossing.
Contact: consultations@tfl.gov.uk

One operator hopes PLA will support a ferry option rather than a bridge this as it is another object that gets in the way of navigation for vessels/passenger boats.

It was also noted that at a recent Conference another proposal had been put on the table from Thames Clippers, which would see three electric ferries operate in the area and would have fewer overheads.

It was requested that Thames Clippers share this proposal with the PLA and operators to view.

8c Nine Elms Footbridge

This project is still slowly progressing, nothing else to feed back on. It will be post Tideway before anything is seen; this will be in the Cringle Wharf area.

8d Fulham Football Club

a) Fulham FC – consents are already in place for the second version of the new stand and the PLA are meeting with contractors next week to discuss both the build programme and completed works. It is expected that works will commence on 20th May 2019 but a Navigational Risk Assessment will need to be completed and a number of local stakeholders will need to be consulted on this and before any works commence. The completed structure will extend from the current wall 9-11m into the river and during the construction phase a further 12m for cranes to build the new stand. PLA are due meet with river users shortly in relation to this.

8e Thames Tideway Tunnel – Report prepared by Terry Lawrence

- Victoria Embankment - Shaft construction to commence before month end.
- Blackfriars - It is hoped to operate the signal light at permitted vessel status over the Easter weekend. Although No 2 arch will remain predominantly closed for the remainder of this year. Dredging operations ongoing on the upstream side No 1 and 2 arches.
- Chambers Wharf TBM delivery due Dec 2019. Launch TBM March/April 2020. Carnwath Road / Hurlingham Wharf/Trinidad Wharf TBM Launch expected April 24.

- Kirtling Street - West bound TBM 1200m completed, 3300 m to go. ETA Carnwath Road October 2019. East bound TBM launched and slowly increasing output.
- Putney Embankment - Construction of shaft ongoing. Surface TBM launch end of April will take a month to get to no 5 arch at Putney Bridge where the current CSOs discharge.
- Albert Embankment - Work continues at cofferdam 2. Bed levelling for campshed for four days from 11 April. Another special signal light will be installed on the upstream side of No 4 arch at Vauxhall Bridge.
- King Edward Memorial Park - Soil mixing continues in the hinterland. Hope to complete by the end of June.
- Greenwich Pumping Station (Deptford Creek) - Campshed and dredging scheduled for autumn 2019.
- Chelsea Embankment - Close cofferdam end March, now desilting from the Hinterland.
- Heathwall Pumping Station - Cofferdam complete and back filled. Preparation for shaft construction ongoing

There will be a Gradual increase in TTT traffic from now until Nov 2019, 11 barges per day and then 8 and then 4 until March 2022. In the next 12 months there will be a significant increase in barge traffic.

8f Illuminated Bridge Project

Project is now all underway, the NtM sent out in February 2019, detailed the works, this will be a rolling notice to mariners. As dates and closures change, there will be another notice issued in May 2019. In 2020 phase 2 of the project at Blackfriars, Waterloo and Charing cross. Plans are still to be discussed with PLA as there is currently a lot of work being carried out in that particular area. PLA will try to support works, for the project, where they can.

The current notice for the Illuminated Bridge Project can be viewed here – [M21of 2019](#)

9 Commercial Vessels

a) Passenger Vessels

- i) Certificate of Compliance (CoC review) – This has been prompted by the recent incident at Greenwich ship tier involving a high speed RIB (traffic not a factor in relation to this incident, because of time of day). This was highly concerning, prompting the immediate review of the COC. In process of making changes to CoC will not affect getting the compliance, but will introduce the ability to revoke as well as suspend a CoC as well as amendments to the technical requirements. This will be discussed further with operators at a meeting in April.
- b) Freight - Other issues have been identified with freight – use of stern anchors and lookouts above Thames barriers – operators are to remind master of their operations.
- c) Revised Vessel Licensing Requirements – Thames freight standards – licensing vessels on Thames – internal reviews are to be done. PLA encourage operators to also review the standard with a view to offering any suggested changes into this process.
- d) Refurbished Woolwich Grid – change to licensing no extensions provided. Woolwich grid available fro 3rd party booking – contact Dave Newcomb for bookings Dnewcomb@briggsmarine.co.uk

10 Events – provided by Josh Rylah:

a) Review of events from 2018:

- Events showcase river at best – Doggett’s and boat race Etc.
- Boat Race – this event went very well thanks to operators and all those involved was extended, and we appreciate that this is a long closure.
- A flotilla took place at the end of 2018 to celebrate 100 yrs. since end of WW1
- A Pride flotilla took place and all blue light services supported this.
- Cruise ships/super yachts; there will be fewer than 50 this year visiting moorings in London – summer season – Operators are reminded to please keep an eye on movements etc. Buoy at TBU
- NYE 2018 – this went well, although heavily congested Westminster bridge and the PLA are already looking at how to manage this year to make it easier for blue light services to access river. The Recreational vessel licensing through MPU was introduced in 2018. Recreational Vessels will need to be licensed going forward for NYE, a notice will follow towards the end of 2019 detailing this.

It was raised by the operators that a more structured approach needs to be taken in relation to NYE going forward or it will be the case that everyone will be fighting amongst themselves. Class V vessels are prepared and know the drill, but it is the ‘unknown’ and unfortunately it is usually the recreational vessels that cause the issues. Segregation between the operators and recreational users would help. Alcohol consumption does play a large factor with rec users; however vessels do get visited during the night, and are monitored in relation to alcohol etc. This is also addressed in the yearly Portwide notice to mariners - Drink &

Drugs Awareness Campaign which is sent out around late November.
Any feedback needs to go to the MPU.

b) See events list, attached here – (April 2019 – November 2019)



190314 - DK -
RUCFU Event List.pdf

- 2019 events – Doggett's, Thames historic barge race, Steve Faldo & Dave Pope races – PLA would appreciate support with these.

11 AOB

- Tideway architects tweet finished designs – online – 3 ½ acre land grab into Thames. There was a statement that it connects river with London but there is no access, no facility for freight etc. comments need to be feedback to tideway for better facilities.
- Issues – new barge mooring below Victoria rail – two barges – Polla Rose, cannot see through the arch until they have passed the barge mooring inward bound to no 2 arch. HMU to feedback to Harbour Master (TTT)
- Jet Ski Court Case (publicised in a national newspaper) – in court today 10/04/19–. One jet- ski rider was successfully prosecuted by the PLA under Port of London Thames Byelaw 14, Byelaw 16 and Sections 111, 117 & 108 of the Port of London Act resulting in a combined total of £6320 in fines and costs.

Date of Next Meeting: Watermen's Hall – Wednesday 20th November 2019 at 1030hrs.