



# Notes of PLA Harbour Master's Recreational Navigation Group (PHRNG)

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at Pinnacle House, 23-26 St Dunstan's Hill London, EC3N 8HN

## Chair

Mark Towns Harbour Master Upper – PLA

## Attendees

Darren Knight	Assistant Harbour Master Upper (Recreational) – PLA ( <i>Notes</i> )
Alex Mortley	Hydrographic Conservancy Manager - PLA
Nadine Collins-Smith	Head of Thames Vision Delivery - PLA
Banny	NCBA
Kevin East	British Canoeing
Russell Smith	British Canoeing
Nick Edmunds	Richmond Canoe Club
Peter Finch	River Thames Society
Pam Chart	ATYC
Richard Bates	Putney Bridge Canoe Club
Bill Mitchell	TRRC/PLA Liaison Officer
Tony Reynolds	TRRC Regional Water Safety Advisor
Peter Finch	RTS
Patrick Schulenburg	DBA – The Barge Association
Roger Squires	Inland Waterway Association
Mike Wardle	Shadwell Basin Activity Centre
Chris Winnington-Ingram	London Corinthian Trust
Theo Thomas	London Waterkeeper
Paul Hyman	Active 360

1. **Apologies:** Sarah Broad, Paul Evans, Ray Blair, Richard Hart and Nick Paul
2. **Minutes of last PHRNG – Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018**  
Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.
3. **Actions from Previous Meeting**
  - Tidal Stream - flow measurement control and the possibility of providing tidal stream data at various points along the tidal Thames. This had been a long-standing action point and to answer a number of questions Alex Mortley attended this PHRNG meeting to provide an overview. **Action Closed.** Copy of the presentation is attached.
  - Water Temperature Info – no data held, data would not be uploaded onto the PLA App as it is external data that would be hosted. Alex Mortley was attending this PHRNG meeting and was to provide information. **Action Closed.** Copy of the presentation is attached. Copy of the presentation is attached.
  - AHMR to discuss British Waterways Marinas proposed changes at Limehouse Marine at the Mooring & Marina Operators Meeting. Prior to this meeting British Waterways Marinas had

been refused planning permission for their proposed changes and was now reviewing their options. **Action Closed.**

- Due to the cancelation of an event in 2018 it was request whether there was a way this could be communicated from the PLA using the PLA App and Online Events Calendar. AHMR discussed various options with PLA Corporate Affairs and IT, which has now resolved this and if an event is cancelled, both these platforms will highlight that the event will not take place in 'red' highlighted. **Action Closed.**

#### 4. PLA Hydrographic Presentation



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p\_March2019.pdf

Alex Mortley presented the attached presentation, which highlighted the work of the PLA Hydrographics team, detail on fluvial flows, live tidal data and water temperatures. The PLA noted that tidal diamonds had been requested for the upper reaches of the tidal Thames, but due to a number of variables it is likely to be more confusing and less helpful than the 'guidance currently provided (i.e. [Ebb Tide Flag Warnings](#) and [Live Tides](#)). It was noted that in the main due to the nature of the riverbed in the upper district, the area is stable.

The following questions were then raised;

- a. *Are the Thames Tideway Tunnel structures going to have an affect on the river and the depths in the river?* It is a potential that the project will have an affect, however as part of the consents Tideway have to monitor what the effect is on the river and have contracted the PLA Hydrographic's team to conduct this work. Initial reports are showing that due to the clay nature of the riverbed, it is proving resilient and stable. It is noted that the tidal flow near these structures have increased slightly. Tideway and the PLA will continue to monitor and if there are any effects then this will need to be addressed by Tideway.
- b. *Fulham FC Stadium will that have an affect on the river?* The completed structure is predominately a piled structure and it is expected that siltation might occur underneath the structure but should not have a huge effect on river flows.
- c. *In the vicinity of Kew Bridge parts of the river build and collapse on a regular basis, creating some creators.* The PLA highlighted that there is a regular programme to monitor shoals throughout the Port and this is not something that has been observed in these surveys. It is possible that the siltation had occurred on stone riverbed and following a strong fluvial flow, this washes the silt away and may look like different but essentially nothing of any significance has occurred. However if members do have evidence of this, please report to the PLA.
- d. *It was noted that siltation was occurring at Kew Bridge No. 3 Arch due to debris being caught on the foreshore in this area.* The PLA noted these concerns and advised that the PLA's Marine Services team attend this area twice a year to tackle the debris that accumulates there. Unfortunately the 2018 autumn clean-up hadn't occurred due craft availability and the PLA are still working towards a date for the spring clean-up in this area. Unfortunately due to the lack of fluvial flows over the winter, the accumulation of silt in this area has not aided the issue.
- e. *What is the chance of a tidal surge breaching the Thames Barrier and flooding London within the next 10-years?* The Thames Barrier is owned and operated by the Environment Agency and they believe that it has capacity until 2070. Therefore there is a fair amount of resilience already built in, but the Environment Agency are constantly reviewing their models as trends can move forward or backwards in time accordingly. However the PLA, Environment Agency

and other parties have identified sites where a 'Thames Barrier 2' could be built before land gets developed.

- f. *When paddling upriver of Richmond Lock with the weir gates in, the fluvial flows are relatively steady but all of a sudden paddlers can get caught out on the fast flowing flood tide when the weirs are lifted. Is there any advice or guidance that can be promulgated about this?* The PLA would recommend reviewing the '[Live Tide](#)' feed on the PLA website as this is the most accurate tool to assist with know when the weir may lift or consulting with the Duty Lock Foreman at Richmond Lock on the landline (0208 940 0634), as they are equally suitably placed to provide local guidance.

## 5. Review of Action arising from the TTNC Pre-Season Briefing 2019

From the perspective of the PLA and those that attended the event appears to have been well received. There were no actions arising from this briefing session, though the PLA would always welcome feedback on them and how they can be improved in future years. **Action:** PHRNG members asked for feedback or improvements to be emailed to AHMR.

## 6. Verbal Updates on:

- a. **Mooring & Marina's Operators Forum** – PLA hosted a meeting in February with Mooring & Marina Operators, nothing to note from the meeting with the majority of it focused on the proposed Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf Bridge.
- b. **Tidal Thames Water Safety Forum** – the focus of the group has been on developing a strategy for suicide prevention from London's bridges. The document will be launched in the near future. The group has also been reviewing the guidance for riparian lifesaving equipment, which also be relaunched in the near future.
- c. **London & Thames Water Safety Partnership** – the partnership has been looking at areas of opportunities to improve the general water safety messages and ensuring that these are joined up in approach. The partnership includes; Environment Agency, Canal & Rivers Trust, London Coastguard, RNLI, RLSS and the London Fire Brigade. Through this partnership we have supported each others events, most recently at the National Junior Indoors Rowing Championships at the Copper Box Arena and looking at other opportunities throughout the year.

## 7. Publications:

- a. PLA App – nothing to update on at present, anything you would like to see in this in the future please feed into the PLA.
- b. Red Tape Challenge – Work on this project had stalled somewhat following the departure of the SMS Manager from the SMS Team in August 2018.

However the current status of the work undertaken so far, is as follows:

- All regulations have been reviewed and a draft consolidation of Thames Byelaws, General Directions & Pilotage Directions has been considered internally.
- Dangerous Substances & Vessel Licensing Byelaws is proposed to be abolished and residual regulations incorporated into other consolidated regulations as above.
- The proposed new General Directions saw a cut of around 50% volume from existing and have been consulted on internally.
- All guidance documents (excluding the recreational guidance documents) have been reviewed with a proposal of consolidating in a Port Information Guide.

With the introduction of DHM(SMS) - Paul Evans to the SMS team in January 2019 the Red Tape Challenge project will once again be progressing in the near future. The PLA anticipates having further news on this project before next scheduled PHRNG meeting in the autumn.

- c. Combined Paddling & Rowing code – Work commenced in November on combining the two codes into the aptly entitled Tideway Code. The current draft has been reviewed by the National Governing Bodies and others in recent months, and following this initial feedback some minor amendments have been made. The PLA would like to thank all of those involved in this process and as this is essentially the same Codes but combined we will not be conducting a public consultation. The PLA is hopefully getting the final draft completed in early April, with the aim of getting all NGB's to sign off on it by the end of April and promulgated in May 2019.

- 8. **Events (refer to Future Events on the River List)** – thank you for the notifications and 2018 saw just under 400 events take place on the tidal Thames. We would encourage all event organisers to advise of their activities so we can get a better and fuller picture of what is taking place in the Port of London.

- a. **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.

Paul Hyman advised that London Crossing held in September 2018 was a taster event for this and that the SUP Big Ben Challenge is hoped to be incorporated into the Tideway Regatta in 2019 with those that can go through London complete the entire distance and those that can't return back upriver to Putney before the river closure concludes.

The PLA are still working with the organisers and have consented to holding the date for this event, not permitting anything else to take place on this date. However the PLA was looking to see the numbers reduced, to something which is more manageable and grown more naturally over a number of years.

- 9. **Incident Report** –The incident report was discussed and is attached. There was no comments received on it, with the PLA highlighting the 'A luck escape...' case study asking members to promulgate to their members and that we would encourage more incident and near miss reports.



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Incident Review 2703

## 10. River Works

### a) Smart Bridge Control at Blackfriars

Due to the works taking place at Blackfriars Thames Tideway Tunnel site, had restricted access to No. 1 and No. 2 arches at Blackfriars Bridge's traffic was being funnelled at times just 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 or all vessels, at appropriate times, to navigate through No. 2 arch.

A new 'Smart Bridge Control Sign' will be installed this week (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' (these are mainly; Thames Clippers, River Thames Services, 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.

Concerns were raised that some recreational vessels may follow a 'Permitted Vessel' through an arch with an Amber Cross. The PLA noted that this was a risk but as the Port is taking a more dynamic approach to traffic issues in the vicinity, it was worth trialing the system and if someone did make this mistake then they should be able to take appropriate avoiding action of the worksite on the upriver side of Blackfriars Bridge's in sufficient time. However all member were asked to share this information, especially after the promulgation of the Notice to Mariners.

**Action:** all members to share the Blackfriars Smart Bridge Control Notice to Mariners to those that you represent for their advise and guidance.

**b) Hammersmith Bridge** – Some minor works are to commence from 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

### c) 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 MHSW and curving towards the edges/buttruss. When raised the air draft will be as high as QE2 Bridge and the centre span will be approximately 181m.
- 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](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/R2CW-crossing). Contact: [consultations@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:consultations@tfl.gov.uk)

Peter Finch noted that at a recent Recreation and Navigation 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.

- d) **Nine Elms Footbridge** – This project is still slowly progressing, as reported at last meeting, nothing else to feed back on.
- e) **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 in 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.

Peter Finch noted concerns that the lights emanating from the new structure could affect navigation. The PLA advised that studies had been conducted and were satisfactory. However what is acceptable is on paper does not always translate so the PLA will continue to monitor on this aspect.

- f) **Tideway Tunnel** – 2019 is the year of the major tunnelling programme, however 70% of all movements will take place over night to reduce the impact others navigating in the Port.
- g) **Illuminated Bridges** – work have started on phase 1, which includes; London Bridge, Cannon Street Rail, Southwark Bridge and Millennium Footbridge. Phase 2 will commence early 2020, includes; Blackfriars Bridges, Waterloo Bridge, Charring Cross Rail Bridge.

## 11. **British Canoeing – Paddle Points and Personal Performance Awards** **Paddle Points**

An overview was given by Russell Smith from British Canoeing on [www.paddlepoints.net](http://www.paddlepoints.net) which is a site which is still being developed with information about; access, egress, parking concerns, what routes are best, etc. This is populated by paddlers from good and experiences. British Canoeing is hoping to provide better insights on the tidal Thames, so paddlers can get more out of it. Mark Towens suggested that this type of site should be linked from our own recreational guides and websites, with the Paddle Points also directing paddlers in the Port back to the Tideway Code.

**Action:** NCS, AHMR and Russell Smith to work together to ensure that these sites are linked appropriately and that the Paddle Point website for the Thames is populated further.

British Canoeing highlighted that they now have a new reporting tool online and this is being regularly used.

### **Personal Performance Awards**

British Canoeing has revised the awards system for members and non-members. The awards allow paddlers to improve their skills, working towards the award of their choice, developing their decision making and fundamental skills. The three Paddle Awards are for those getting into a boat for the first time, enabling them to feel confident in their chosen craft in a sheltered water environment. The awards help empower the paddler, enabling them to start their lifelong journey into paddlesport. After these initial awards there are a full range of personal performance and coaching awards for; canoeing, sea kayaking, touring, stand up paddleboard, rafting, racing and coaching award to name a few. After these awards there British Canoeing Coach Award in specific disciplines. Full details can be found at: [www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk](http://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk)

## **12. Thames Vision – Sports Promotion Fund**

The PLA have 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 available to more 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 29<sup>th</sup> March and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> 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/sportsmallgrantapplicationform.docx>. If you need more information, please contact [nadine.collins-smith@pla.co.uk](mailto:nadine.collins-smith@pla.co.uk).

The PLA are also working with Sport London to see where funding gaps are and where NGBs could direct clubs/centres to gain funding opportunities.

## **13. AOB**

Patrick Schulenburg asked whether there was a site or organisation which dealt with lost property discovered in the river or on the riverbed? The PLA advised that there was no organisation setup for this purpose but would encourage using the [TTNC Forum](#), as this seemed a adequate place to highlight items discovered.

## **14. Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 at 1030