



Notes of River Users Consultative Forum (Lower & Estuary) Meeting

23rd November 2017 @ 10.30 hrs at London River House

Chair

Cathryn Spain CS Harbour Master Lower – PLA

Attendees

Lyn Kindlen-Funnell	LK-F	Deputy Harbour Master Lower – PLA
Tim Corthorn	TC	Deputy Harbour Master Lower - PLA
Sandra Baker	SB	Executive Assistant – PLA (Notetaker)
Denise Rowley	DB	Environment- PLA
Gabrielle Galea	GG	Environment Project Officer - PLA
Rod Owen	RO	Pilot - PLA
Jon Beckett	JB	Manager, SMS - PLA
Kevin Boyd	KB	Commercial Manager, Svitzer
Richard Hart	RH	Assn. Thames Yacht Clubs
John Green	JG	RYA London & South East
Geoff Holland	GH	Harbour Master, Port of Tilbury
Tim Wood	TW	RYA Eastern Region
Brian Corbett	BC	Chairman MSBA
Fiona Craven	FC	Border Force
Rachel Marshall	RM	Kent Police Special Branch
Colin Maguire	CM	Kent Police Special Branch
Mike Sharp	MS	Shoeburyness Watermans Association
Neil Bixby	NB	Tate & Lyle Sugars Ltd, rep. London River Users
Mike Greenwood	MG	MCA
Alan Hurrell	AH	Shipserv Thames
Alex Hurrell	AH	Hurrell Shipping

1. **Apologies:**

Colin Middlemiss, David Gordon, Kelvin Arterton, Linda Potter, Mike Chambers, Peter Fitzsimmons, Philip Wilkinson, Gard Word, Simon Phillips, Stuart Strutton, T Read, Tanya Ferry, Terry Leach, Trevor Harris, Paul Rawson, Mark Hodgeson, Ian Clark, John Potter

2. **Minutes of last RUCF (Lower & Estuary) 18th May 2017**

Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

3. **Matters Arising:**

Thames Byelaws – RYA objection removed. **Closed**

Medway 350th Anniversary of Dutch Raid Commemorative Event – successful event attended by more than 200 boats. **Closed**

Leigh Buoy – is still on the agenda for Hydro to survey with regard to moving it (although nothing likely to happen over the Winter). Update to be provided at next meeting.

4a. **PLA Update - Marine Operations:**

Introduction of PLA Deputy Harbour Master Lyn Kindlen-Funnell who will lead on investigating incidents and accidents and communicating with recreational clubs.

Also new to the PLA a new Financial Officer, Julie Tankard has been appointed, who has taken over from Brian Chapman.

4b Navigational Incidents:

Lower District Navigational Safety Incidents May 2017 - November 2017 (including near misses and deficiencies): Appendix 1

- There have been 3 'serious' incidents in the last period compared with 2 'serious' incidents in the previous period.
- Near miss reports have plateaued. At the last RUCF there were 22 near misses for that period, for this period there have been 20 near misses in total.
- The reporting of incidents is getting better, although difficult to identify whether incidents are increasing or just reporting has improved – reporting via Polaris for pilots is now easier (which may have contributed to the increase in near miss reporting).
- Dangerous heaving line reports are not included in these figures, as these are navigational incidents.

Recreational Incidents:

- There have been a total of 22 recreational incidents for the period 1st May – 1st October 2017; 19 incidents, 2 near misses and 1 deficiency.
- Many recreational yachting incidents still go unreported – these are required to feed into risk assessments

SMS Quarterly Report - Tabled

Attention was also drawn to the SMS Quarterly report of the marine Safety Management System (SMS) performance and incident statistics, which is available on the website: www.pla.co.uk/Safety/Safety-Management-Systems. This shows how targets are being met and focuses on particular trend analysis topic, currently looking at human error, specifically in the commercial shipping sector. The proportion of all occurrences in 2017 which were labelled as Commercial Shipping is 45% - this has steadily increased since 2012.

Heaving Lines

It was confirmed that heaving line/mooring incidents were not included in these statistics (as these are navigational incidents).

Kevin Boyd tabled a dangerous heaving line – 'cannon ball' type which was replaced by the crew with a small nylon sand bag and noted that Svitzer are trying to raise the profile for brightly coloured sandbags to be used (which don't bounce). Svitzer have and will continue to prosecute offenders. CS confirmed that this problem has been raised by the UK Port Marine Code Steering Group and is now a national debate. There is a direct reporting line into the MCA for these dangerous heaving lines (although there is concern that there may be 'double reporting' to the MCA from the PLA and companies direct for the same incident and a requirement to look at consolidated reporting for these incidents in the future). Consolidated reporting to the MCA has been discussed and will be considered by the PLA.

RO mentioned a 'rubber coated' ball (cricket ball size) that is now being manufactured and would be ideal. However, some of the lines that are being specifically manufactured now are still too heavy.

MG confirmed that anything reported is highlighted for a surveyor to board a vessel and check deficiencies (not just heaving lines) and where it is not possible to board a ship before its departure, a note is made for inspection at the vessel's next port of call (even in Europe) and will involve a full inspection – not just of heaving lines.

Action: All – Any information on manufacturers of dangerous heaving lines (including in Europe) to be reported to the MCA and **ALL** incidents of irregular heaving lines to be reported to the PLA.

Sailing Yachts

It was reported that there is an increase in inexperienced sailors buying boats without having full experience and reported by RO that avoiding action has been required on a number of occasions – generally with yachts, where VTS have had to intervene. The RYA will be taking hold of this to promote the need for qualifications, experience and understanding of tides, reporting etc. All incidents do need to be reported – even limited information is welcomed and any incidents reported beyond port limits will be forwarded to the MCA.

Action: All recreational clubs and pilots to be encouraged to report incidents/near misses involving pleasure vessels to the PLA. Tim Wood and Rod Owen to follow up outside of the meeting.

Mooring Guidance

Since MS attended in 2016 he reported that he had done some research in developing a guide for new members for best practice at mooring up recreational vessels – highlighting the hazardous action of dinghy/boat transfer and would like to work with the PLA on developing further. To date, this year so far, there had been no reports of mooring break-outs.

Action: MS to forward a copy to JB for further development and promulgation to TTNC members and present at the pre-season briefing in March 2018.

Recreational Users Guide

MS is keen to promote the Recreational Users Guide – recreational users to be encouraged to sign up to the Tidal Thames Navigators club via the website: www.pla.co.uk or www.boatingonthethames.co.uk – a dedicated recreational users' website and for the RYA to promote this to new users. JB confirmed that the next edition will offer further guidance to recreational users with regard to byelaws and Colregs on the River and will extend further out to the Estuary. MS would like the clubs to be consulted with any future development of the guide.

At the end of Feb 2018 the RYA London and South East Region are holding a Racing & Cruising Conference and would like attendance from the PLA to speak at this.

Action: CS to suggest PLA attendance possibly volunteer a pilot.

Action: JS to consult with recreational clubs on future development of Rec User Guides.

4c Navigational Matters – Thanet Windfarm Consultation

The proposed extension to Thanet Windfarm commences formal public consultation online on 27th November and runs until 12th January 2018 (for online comment). The PLA will be putting in a formal response.

On behalf of the pilots RO thanked CS for addressing the problems at Oikos (regarding the approach).

4d Risk Assessments

Clubs will be contacted early next year for annual general risk assessments and dates of events. MS requested attendance from the PLA at the next Interclub Meeting to assist with format of Risk Assessments.

Action: MS to forward date/invitation to next meeting to Deputy Harbour Master Lyn Kindlen-Funnell

Action: LK-F to contact recreational clubs early next year for risk assessments.

4e Regulatory Update

(i)Thames Byelaws – consultation process still going forward with one objection still outstanding from British Marine (mainly with Class Vs) The RYA objection has been retracted (amended byelaw to exclude visiting commercial yachts).

(ii) Pilotage Directions – Please refer online for full amendments.

- there is now a requirement for PEC holders who wish to use tugs to have a tug endorsement (which they need to apply for and be assessed for).
- There is a PEC B for intra port tug and tow operators
- Soon to be a requirement to have specific berths listed on the PEC (for which they have been assessed.)

Red Tape Challenge – the vision for the next 12 months on regulatory framework is to reduce the volume by approx. 50% of byelaws, directions, codes of practice, etc and produce an online port information book.

4f Port Security

The Thames Port Security Authority met on 11th October 2017 attended by CS. There is a focus on marauding terrorists but maritime security levels and ISPS levels remain the same, although more focus from DfT at this point in time on maritime security. Rejuvenation of Project Kraken but no particular security issues raised.

4g Environmental Matters – Report provided in advance of Meeting:

- Air Quality Strategy – there is a consultation that will be released before the end of November – feedback appreciated
- Marine Mammals – (mainly upriver) – there are issues with seal behaviour – reminder for general public/dogs not to touch these mammals – a leaflet has been produced for general public offering advice which is available from the Environment Team at the PLA.
- Thames Vision – there are environment and heritage goals as part of the Thames Vision - the next conference will be held on January 24th 2018 – further details from Environment Team, PLA.

4h River Works

- Grays Terminal – dredging completed construction work – piling and steel erection to be completed by end of November. (For jetties to accommodate larger vessels in the future and development of the berth)
- Goshems Farm – Installation of temporary jetty in East Tilbury
- Oikos – Jetty 2 Project still ongoing to be completed by September 2018
- East Tilbury Flood Defence Inspection – drone survey of flood defence by Team 2100 – date to be confirmed.

4i River Events

No further events noted for the rest of 2017

For a full list of events for entire River please refer to the PLA website.

5 Members' Feedback & Questions

None noted

6 Members' Updates:

6a Maritime & Coastguard Agency – Mike Greenwood

MG reported that he had taken over from Andrew Rudge (who is now on secondment in Singapore for 3 years. Adam Stratford had taken over MG's previous role. Confirmation that the Orpington, Harwich and Norwich marine offices are due for closure – a new office has been bought and is being developed in Colchester to

move around January 2018. Harwich will move first, then Orpington in July and Norwich a year after. Recruitment is ongoing.

6b Team 2100 – no representative

6c Trinity House

Report provided in advance by Trevor Harris:

I can report that Trinity House have not moved, or plan to move in the near future, any of the aids to navigation in the estuary.

Further to the item at the previous meeting regarding the Long Sand Head routing scheme, the changes were put to the IMO by MCA in June and were accepted. The changes will be made on 01/01/2018. Currently they do not involve any changes to the buoy positions, just the charted two way route.

Action: Any concerns or queries relating to nav. aids should be reported to the PLA, and will be passed on to Trinity House.

6d Port of Tilbury – Geoff Holland

Tilbury 2 – Ongoing – planning permission submitted to Government – which will take approx. one year.

6e Medway Peel Ports – no representative

No representation due to current workshop to review relocating Medway VTS to Liverpool. The PLA has also been invited to join the workshop.

6f London Gateway Port – no representative

6g Police

Introduction of the Frontier Engagement Team from Kent Police Special Branch – Colin Maguire and Rachel Marshall who have a responsibility on the Kent and Sussex coastline from Rye Harbour to Dartford to reduce the risk of terrorist attack via the Kent Coast, working closely with Border Force. They are working closely with Project Kraken. They reported that together with ‘back of lorry’ attempts, some migrants are transferring from bigger ships to ribs/smaller vessels. Also OCGs (Organised Crime Groups) of which there are approx. 20 in the Medway area are operating to bring in migrants (some of which could potentially be terrorists).

They are currently building a database of contacts including leisure/sailing/dinghy clubs to communicate the message through local people noticing anything suspicious. Any theft or sale of boats/ribs to ‘non sailing type’ people, to be reported, especially if it is a cash sale. ISIS is on the backfoot as a result of which they are expecting an increase in return of ‘terrorist’ individuals - in a clandestine manner, using small craft, or light aircraft (Project Pegasus).

Attached is a leaflet with full contact details which can be promulgated amongst all recreational clubs and they are happy to give presentations.

Action: Any suspicious activity (unusual sale of boats) to be reported – see poster attached

Border Force

Introduction by Fiona Craven, Central Region Intelligence covers Teddington to Crouch and will forward a 24hr emergency number.

Call local police on 101 or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 – Quote KRAKEN

Two border force RIBs will be stationed at Gravesend – also Fiona Craven is happy to be contacted to give presentations to recreational clubs.

Action: Fiona Craven to provide a 24 hr community contact number which will be circulated.

MS mentioned that he would like to see presence from Essex Police at the RUCF meetings. (They are invited but unable to attend on this occasion). RO questioned if there is corresponding Frontier Engagement Team on the Essex side – As far as terrorism is concerned, it is regionalized - CM and his team will try to cover as much as possible – other regions are looking at what is being provided on the Kent side and coverage may be extended.

At the Channel Tunnel there is a Ports Control Room – for any act of terrorism please call on 01303 297320 (quote Kraken or Pegasus)

Action: BC will liaise with Police (Kent and Essex) to extend invitation to attend Conference in February 2018.

6h RNLI – No RNLI representative present

6i Royal Yachting Association – John Green

Reported that the RYA are happy that Stoneness light is to be retained (although structure may need to change). The RYA London and SE region conference will be held in Maidstone 2nd December 2017.

6j Recreational Clubs & Associations

MS reported that Leigh Fishing Community have secured some funding to encourage fishing and have set up an academy for fishermen training, RYA courses and looking for suppliers and also some funding for infrastructure improvements.

6k Vessel Operators - Kevin Boyd - Svitzer

Svitzer are investing for the future and undergoing a fleet review. With the addition of two new tugs – Monarch and Ganges working as a pair, the Kent has joined her 'sister' boat in Felixstowe. In the last few months there have been 3 new tugs in the UK, which are smaller and more compact but still with an 80 ton bollard pull. Currently Svitzer are attending an 'operational' conference in Dubai looking at tug design for the future.

6l Others

Neil Bixby requested a pilotage update – recruitment is ongoing and increasing to 18 new pilots being recruited yearly – 3 groups of 6 (increase on 12 yearly) and are at maximum capacity for training which will continue for the future. The limits have also changed with more junior pilots accommodating larger ships - it takes 4 years to be fully trained. Also there is ongoing work looking at rostering.

GH queried the necessity of 2 pilots at LGP, compared to 1 pilot at Felixstowe - CS confirmed that there are risk assessments ongoing, looking at all mitigations for the 2nd pilot at London Gateway. RO advised that to become a Havens Pilot there is another training scheme and assessment to become that level, which is a high standard and a significant step up to work on these larger vessels. KB highlighted the number of incidents on the continent with groundings etc of larger vessels – with excessively high costs of resolving.

7. Any other Business

If anyone is interested in a days sailing on the Bloodhound next year or chartering – contact Brian Corbett.

9. Date of Next Meeting – 22nd May 2018 PLA London River House.