



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

10.30 a.m. Tuesday 21st May 2019 at London River House

Chair

Cathryn Spain CS Harbour Master Lower – PLA

Attendees

Miles Featherstone	MF	Assistant Harbour Master Lower – Notetaker
Simon Phillips	SP	Harbour Master (SMS & VTS) - PLA
Paul Evans	PE	Deputy Harbour Master SMS - PLA
Denise Rowley	DR	Environment Officer - PLA
Ian Yarnton	IY	Marine River Inspector - PLA
Charmaine Boswarva	CB	Metropolitan Police
Fiona Craven	FC	Border Force
Geoff Holland	GH	Forth Ports Tilbury
Neil Bixby	NB	ASR Group
Alan Kew	AK	Gravesend Pontoon Ltd
Anthony Slater	AS	Peel Ports
Linda Potter	LP	Armac Shipping
Tipu Parvez	TP	Cory Riverside Energy
Trevor Harris	TH	Trinity House
Gary Doyle	GD	Peel Ports
Richard Hart	RH	Assn. Thames Yacht Club
Sven Lumber	SL	Svitzer
John Green	JG	RYA London & South East
Brian Corbett	BC	MSBA
Tony Lavelle	TL	MSBA
Rachel Marshall	RM	Kent Police Special Branch
Phil Dulson	PD	Kotug
Alan Hurrell	AH	Shipservice Thames Ltd
Tim Wood	TW	RYA East

1. **Apologies:** Colin Hitchcock, Lyn Kindlen-Funnell, Philip Wilkinson, Tanya Ferry, Thurrock Council, Andrew Denton, Pete Roffey, Tim Read-Lamb, Sarah Broad, Chris Green, Ray Blair.
2. **Minutes of the last RUCF (Lower & Estuary) – 13/11/18**
Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.
3. **Matters Arising:**
TL requested an event risk assessment template. **Action:** MF to forward.

Note: Post meeting templates have been passed on.

4a. **Marine Operations**

CS gave an update that there were no changes to the Lower District team but that DHMU1 had departed Upper District and the position was currently being advertised.

Lower District Navigational Safety Incidents

PE Introduced himself as Deputy Harbour Master SMS and gave an update on incidents

1st May 2018 – 1st November 2018

- Incidents 67
- Near Misses 52
- Deficiencies 60
- **Total: 179**

1st November 2018 – 1st May 2019

- Incidents 51 (31% decrease)
- Near Misses 35 (49% decrease)
- Deficiencies 47 (28% decrease)

Total: 133 (35% decrease)

- There has been 1 serious Incident (Grounding) in the last period compared with 4 serious incidents in the previous period.
- From the Incident types the top 3 are currently: Pilot Ladder Deficiency, Navigational Hazard and Contact with Machinery Deficiencies also having a large increase in the last 6 months.
- It is difficult to identify if near misses and deficiencies are decreasing or if the reporting has decreased
- There has been a steady increase in Incidents/Near Misses due to 'Navigational Hazards'. These are mainly due to compliance failure and failure to follow procedures & rules. This is followed closely by lack of ashore staff when a vessel is attempting to berth.
- A sharp rise in Incidents under the 'Contacts' category is also a cause for concern. The major issue being identified within the Commercial Shipping sector.

Recreational Incidents:

1st Nov 2018 – 1st May 2019

- Incidents 8 (down from 15)
- Near Misses 0 (down from 4)
- Deficiencies 2 (up from 1)
- **Total: 10 (down 50%)**

RYA pointed out that it would be expected to see a decrease in recreational incidents during the winter period. BC questioned why a snapped oar was recorded as an incident. MF clarified that the PLA records all known recreational navigational incidents and that the oar incident in question was a good example of best practice in operation.

4c. Navigational Matters

CS gave an update on shoaling of the Mouse Channel which may require shifting of the buoyage.

4d. Risk Assessments

CS stated that there were no specific updates to Risk Assessments but explained about recent work by the PLA to tackle issues around safe access to berths. LP asked if this work would be addressing upriver berths. CS stated that the PLA was not aware of issues with upriver berths. LP stated that at some smaller berths there was no facility for gangways. CS asked for these issues to be reported so that the PLA could address them.

4e. Regulatory Update

MF gave an update on Regulatory matters, giving details of two recent prosecutions of jet-ski riders by the PLA and showing the new Personal Water Craft Code of Conduct to attendees. MF also explained that the Byelaw amendments were currently stuck with the DfT with no prospect of approval – this had affected the Red Tape Challenge proposals, but work was underway to implement changes through General Directions.

4f. Port Security

CS reported that a recent port security exercise had been successful. CB highlighted that Project Griffin Counter Terrorism Training packages were available. SP suggested that this be included with TTNC events. CB reported that cross-agency working was underway with joint Met Police/Border Force high visibility patrols. FC gave an update on the current channel migrant situation. **Action** – PLA to investigate Griffin presentation for the next TTNC Briefing.

4g. Environmental Matters

DR gave an environmental update and mentioned the launch of the Air Quality and Litter Strategy. DR also highlighted that the PLA had published an Environment Report for the first time on the website.

4h. River Works

CS stated that the main river works underway were at the Tilbury 2 site. GH gave an update on this project stating that tubular piling would continue to September and that dredging had started and was expected to continue to January or February. CS gave details on the Lower Thames Crossing preparatory works starting in August explaining that this would involve sampling across the river using a jack up barge that will be in position for 7 days at a time. This will require one-way traffic working when positioned in the channel. CS also mentioned the Gridlink Connector Cable surveys taking place – there will be some disruption but this will be managed.

4i. River Events

MF gave an update stating that there had been an increase in events notified to the PLA and highlighted forthcoming events such as the Thorney Bay Raft Race, Round Canvey Race and Thames Barge Match. MF explained that all events were published on the PLA website and available through the PLA Tidal Thames App which also provided Notices to Mariners and tidal information. AK noted that the Waverley paddle steamer would not be visiting the Thames this year.

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

5. Members' Feedback & Questions

None noted.

6. Members' Updates:

MCA – no representative

6b. Team 2100 – no representative

6c. Trinity House – Trevor Harris

TH gave an update on Trinity House activities mentioning that the Princes Channel and Long Sand Head would not require any buoyage changes. The ongoing proposals to extend wind farms may require a review of buoyage in the Estuary.

6d. Port of Tilbury – Geoff Holland

GH gave a brief update on Tilbury matters including forthcoming lock closures and forthcoming cruise calls.

6e. Medway Peel Ports – Anthony Slater

AS gave an update on the Medway Marine Team and stated that recruitment would be underway for a compliance position and part of this role would include liaison with recreational users. Recent incidents included a commercial vessel grounding in the Swale, a number of near misses with yachts, and pilot ladder deficiencies. Various river works were scheduled including surveys of the SS Richard Montgomery, Rochester Bridge arch closures and jack-up barges at Kingsnorth. There had been an increase in LNG traffic and a reminder was given on adherence to the LNG exclusion zone.

6f. London Gateway Port – no representative

6g. Police

Metropolitan Police - Charmaine Boswarva

CB gave an update on the Met Police and stated that the threat level remained at Severe and that increased operations were underway through the Project Servator principle, including high visibility patrols and boatyard visits. CB to forward the ACT presentation. BC asked if they could be assured that calls would be routed correctly when calling 101 etc. RM advised that trigger words such as 'Kraken' and 'boat' should be used during calls. FC stated that work was underway to educate control room staff and Border Force were hoping to attend community events to spread awareness. AK asked about the 'Country Eye' App. RM confirmed that this was available in Kent to report issues. TL expressed concern over the cross-boundary nature of maritime policing. FC stated that Border Force was a national agency with no distinction between Police force areas.

Action: CB to forward link to Chair

Note: Post meeting CB forwarded the link, which can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/act-awareness-elearning>

Kent Police – Rachel Marshall – RM gave an update on the work of Kent Police CT work.

6h. Border Force – Fiona Craven

FC gave an update on Border Force and explained that much multi agency working was underway including cross-crewing of vessels. Border Force has other powers available which complement the Police during cross-crewing.

6i. RNLI – no representative

6j. Royal Yachting Association – John Green

JG gave a brief update on the work of the RYA.

6k. Recreational Clubs & Associations

MSBA gave an update on Medway matters including the bid for heritage harbour status and a push for greater competence amongst recreational mariners.

6l. Vessel Operators –

Svitzer

SL gave a brief update on Svitzer

Armac Shipping - Linda Potter

LP gave a brief update and raised concerns over the availability of assessing pilots. CS stated this would be taken up with the pilotage department.

Action: CS to take up with Pilotage Manager

Note: Post meeting the subject was raised with the Pilotage Department, who are looking into the issue.

7. Any other Business

None Noted.

9. Date of Next Meeting:

21st November 2019 @ 10.30 a.m. London River House
