

MIDDLE AND LOWER DISTRICT PUBLIC MEETING 6 NOVEMBER 2025

- We held our combined middle and lower district meeting on Thursday, 6 November 2025. Based on low attendance levels of the lower district meeting in previous years and feedback we received, we merged this year's middle and lower district meetings and offered the ability to join online in order to increase accessibility.
- At the meeting, our CEO, Robin Mortimer, along with members from our Executive Committee, provided an update on a number of projects and initiatives relevant to the middle and lower district areas. These included publishing the new edition of the [Tideway Code](#), exploring a Thames RIB code of conduct and working with cruise operators to promote best practice and positive engagement with riverside communities. Robin also announced that, following a detailed survey of all 95 miles of Tidal Thames, plans are underway for significant investment in a number of access points, prioritising on the basis of safety and usage. Robin highlighted progress towards our [Thames Vision](#) strategy goals, such as last year's launch of the [Clean Thames](#) plan, developed in partnership with stakeholders, and the wet wipe accumulation restoration works at Hammersmith.
- Our presentation also included an update on funds available to river users in support of our [Natural](#) and [Destination](#) Thames priorities. Last year, we awarded £50,000 through the [Thames Environment Fund](#) to a variety of sustainability initiatives. Over £500,000 has been granted to clubs and groups by the [Active Thames Fund](#) to promote river access and inclusion, since its launch in 2021.
- Information was shared about the water safety campaign we ran earlier this year, along with our partners. The campaign was based around public safety information for young people, parents and carers with a clear call to action; stay back, stay out, stay safe - don't mess with the Tidal Thames.

- Lastly, Robin confirmed that PLA's growth remains positive and gave an update from our quarterly trade report. Please let us know if you would like to receive this quarterly report.

Key topics raised:

Harbour Revision Order (HRO)

- Queries were raised regarding the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)'s public inquiry on the Port of London Authority (PLA)'s Harbour Revision Order (HRO). Hearings to consider the PLA's case for safety and sustainability started on **Tuesday 25 February** and lasted four weeks.
- We are awaiting the outcome and recommendations from the MMO after public inquiry into the process.
- A review is underway into the balcony charges (an issue raised by stakeholders during the HRO inquiry process), with an independent surveyor appointed. Charges are paused during this review.

Robin's Wharf

- An update was sought on the demolition of Robin's Wharf (Ebbsfleet United Football Club).
- The planning decision is expected in March 2026.

Denton Wharf

- There was a query regarding the new electric charging infrastructure installed at Denton Wharf and whether this was available to other river users.
- This power is intended exclusively for tug boats; no other use is authorised at this time.

Mudlarking

- Queries were raised surrounding the mudlarking permit process.
- One-year permits were introduced to ensure more people get the opportunity to access the foreshore and experience this unique activity. The permit process also ensures the activity is carried out safely and sustainably, while protecting the river's heritage for future generations.
- We undertook an extensive evaluation and revision of the scheme and will periodically continue to do so as part of our responsibility for safeguarding the river environment.

Moorings

- A query was raised regarding locations and bookings of available visitor moorings.
- More information on visitor moorings can be found [here](#).

Noise

- We're aware of some noise concerns that have been raised relating to cruise and event boats. We are committed to working with local authorities and the London Port Health Authority on river noise. The PLA is exploring collaborative solutions and a potential code of practice to be developed with operators and relevant authorities.

Heat Barges

- Stakeholders present showed interest in Cory's river-based mobile heat project, capturing and moving waste heat along the River Thames via thermal batteries to a district heating system.
- PLA is supporting feasibility work for this decarbonisation measure.

Gravesend to Tilbury Ferry

- Support was raised for bringing back the ferry service.
- PLA is also in support of reinstating the ferry service and convened a party to explore sustainable funding and operational models.

Skills and Training

- A query was raised about skills and opportunities along the river and the port's role in promoting this.
- PLA is a main funder of Thames Skills Academy and works with local colleges and universities.
- We support apprenticeships, boatmaster training, engineering upskilling and have set up a CPD scheme for masters and deckhands.

Trade and Port Education

- Interest was expressed in the importance of engaging the community with the importance of the port.
- PLA funds Thames Explorer Trust, Thames Estuary Partnership and Thames Tide Fest. PLA also sponsors **Thames Festival Trust** programmes - Totally Thames and Thames Lens.
- PLA previously supported an exhibition at the London Museum Docklands.

Great River Race

- Local community members expressed interest in reducing pollution in the area following the Great River Race.

- We will raise this with the organisers so the issue can be reviewed and mitigation measures considered.

Speed Limits

- A request was made to review the current speed limits.
- More information and a summary of PLA Speed Limits can be found in the Thames Byelaws, under [Thames Byelaw 16](#).
- A PLA RIB Code of Conduct is in development to reduce wash and noise.

Sewage Discharge

- Concerns were raised regarding vessels discharging sewage in the river.
- Under General Direction 10, 92% vessel compliance has been achieved, with full compliance required by April 2026.
- Enforcement is already underway where evidence supports action.

Contacting the PLA

- During the meeting, we provided an update on how best to contact us, whether that be to raise a query, submit a complaint or provide feedback. You can do so by visiting our Contact Us webpage: pla.co.uk/contact-us. Alternatively, you can email our corporate affairs team at corporate.affairs@pla.co.uk or call us on **01474 562200**.
- We aim to get back to you within three working days. Please be assured that we will do all we can to investigate and resolve the matter as swiftly as possible. In some cases where we need further time to look into issues, we will keep you informed and will aim to respond within ten working days.

We look forward to seeing you all at next year's meeting.