



**Notes of River Users Consultative Forum (Upper)
5th December 2018 at 10.30hrs aboard the HQS Wellington**

Chair

Nick Evans	NE	PLA Deputy Harbour Master (Upper) (<i>chair</i>)
Joshua Rylah	JR	PLA Deputy Harbour Master (Upper)
Denise Rowley	TF	PLA Environment Officer
Nadine Collins-Smith	NCS	PLA Head of Thames Vision Delivery
Martin Garside	MG	PLA Deputy Director of Corporate Affairs
Darren Knight	DK	PLA Assistant Harbour Master, Recreational (<i>note taker</i>)

Attendees

Ray Blair	RB	Marico Marine (PLA Designated Person)
Ed Langley	EL	Complete Pleasure Boats
Peter Finch	PF	RTS
Roger Squires	RS	Inland Waterways Association
Scott McElwaine	SmE	Port Health
Adam Stratford	AS	MCA
Bill Mitchell	BM	TRRC
Mike Cole	MC	Thames Rockets
Barry Singleton	BS	The Barge Association
James Andrews	JA	Cory Riverside Energy
Terry Leach	TL	HM Coastguard
Robert Coleman	RC	Woods River Cruises
Richard Hart	RH	ATYC/RYA L&SE
Bob Prentice	BP	Crown River Cruises
Ted Manning	TM	Crown River Cruises
Steve Davies	SD	RYA North Kent
Chris Turner	CT	ATYC
Craig Brown	CB	MBNA Thames Clippers
James Gilbert	JG	TfL Rivers
Victoria Kettle	VK	Environment Agency

1. Apologies:
Mark Towens, PLA; Alistair Gale, PLA; Tony Reynolds TRRC; Derek Mann, Thames Clippers; Jake Lewis, Thames Clippers; Rod Craig, Westminster Boating Base; Chris Livett, Livett's Group; Colin Middlemiss, Watermen's Company; Pam Chart, ATYC; Kevin East, British Canoeing; Charlotte Thompson, Thames RIB Experience; James Thompson, Chas Newens Marine; Harry Whelan, London Kayaking Company; Graeme Faulkner, GPS; and Neil Withers, RNLI .
2. Minutes of last RUCF (Upper) – 25th April 2018
Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes
 - **Qualification Checks:** Reiteration of the ongoing action that all Operators to check the validity of all crew BML/LKEs (this can be done via the MCA).
 - **Passenger Vessel Timetables** – this remains an ongoing action for the PLA, LRS and the various passenger boat services to minimums clashes with each others timetables.

4. **PLA Update**

4a **Regulatory & Navigational SMS Update**

New SMS Manager - since Jon Beckett's departure in September to VTS the PLA has not yet made an appointment and will hopefully have someone in place shortly.

Quarterly SMS Report – the PLA would encourage all river users to review the incidents across the Port and we would encourage increased incident and near miss reporting. The report can be view here: <http://www.pla.co.uk/assets/q32018smsreport.pdf>.

Breakdowns Campaign – work currently on hold until a new SMS Manager is in post. However the PLA continues to look at reducing the amount of river debris and ropes on buoys, if you see any please report to London VTS for action.

Recreational User Guide – should be available by next week (10th) – all TTNC members will be mailed a copy with a copy of the 2019 Tide Tables –for any requests please email TTNC@pla.co.uk

4b **Port Security Update provided by TPSA Secretariat, Tim Corthorn**

The Thames Port Security Authority continues to meet on a regular basis and works closely with government agencies on security matters that may affect the River Thames. The current maritime security threat remains unchanged despite several changes to the national security level over the past year. Security is still a concern however and all river users are urged to report anything suspicious to LONDON VTS or the Police.

4c **Recreational Update – Darren Knight**

PLA Rowing Safety Awards/Tideway Code – on the 3rd December the PLA hosted the 12th annual safety awards at Mortlake, Alpha & Anglian Boat Club who was also this year's winner. It is great to see continuous strides to improve safety in the recreational community and to assist this further in 2019 the PLA will relaunch the Rowing & Paddling Codes as a new combined Tideway Code.

Tidal Thames Navigator's Club – Current membership stands at just under 1,800 and the PLA have hosted a number of events over the year, including; River Trips, Open Days, Tours of VTS and the Pre-Season Briefing – which will be held again on 20th March 2019. It's a free club to join and upon joining members receive a Recreational Users Guide and Tide Tables. To join visit: www.boatingonthethames.co.uk

Thames Vision - The PLA continues to work closely with a number of National Governing bodies (NGBs) to investigate and encourage further growth of sport and recreational activities along the tideway. The PLA continues to host the East London Watersports Forum; supporting clubs and centres in this particular area to hopefully grow their activities in a safe, responsible and sustainable manner.

4d **Environmental Update – Denise Rowley**

The Air Quality Strategy was published in June and the full document can be viewed here: <http://www.pla.co.uk/assets/airquality2018.pdf>.

There has been an unusually high level of seal carcasses reported in the river in recent weeks. While the PLA is not legally obliged to deal with carcasses in the river,

we are reviewing our processes and risk assessments to ensure that we have an appropriate cause of action to deal with this issues moving forward.

5 MCA District Safety

The new MCA Office in Colchester (with a dedicated exam centre) opened in September and Orpington has now closed. The revised contacted is:

MCA Colchester Marine Office
Iceni Way
Colchester
ESSEX
CO2 9BY
Tel: +44 (0) 20 390 85165
Email: MOColchester@mcga.gov.uk

Survey fees are currently £120 p/h and in 2019 it will be £145 p/h, it should also be noted that the BML exams will also increase.

5a DMSC

MCA are looking to amend the legislation for construction standards of older passenger vessels. It is strongly recommended that all those that will potentially be affected respond to the consultation as the amendments are significant. However; it was noted that responding solely on a cost basis will hold minimum sway in amending the proposed regulations. The consultation can be sourced here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-results-of-the-review-of-standards-for-older-uk-passenger-ships> .

5b BML/LKE Update

All National BML exams will only be conducted in MCA Marine Offices; however endorsements will be conducted at suitable local examination centres, in London this is going to be at Watermen's Hall.

It was noted that the application forms are legal documents and BML applications must be completed fully or they will be returned to the applicant.

Question raised about 'Double Plating' on recreational and houseboats and whether this was acceptable or not. Both the PLA and the MCA do not consider 'Double Plating' acceptable on commercial vessels, barring for short voyages to rectify the hull issue subject to Harbourmaster and MCA Surveyor acceptance. Neither the MCA or PLA have any regulatory powers over any form of recreational or houseboat vessels, though both organisations would not recommend 'Double Plating' on such vessels.

6 Navigational Safety – Refer to Incident Review attached.

In addition to the attached report in the appendix, it was noted that 'RY Flag' issues are still being tackled by the PLA to ensure that they are only flown when necessary and in accordance of the Permanent Notice to Mariners. The PLA is also looking to see whether a minimum size of 'RY Flag' needs to be introduced. All non-appropriate Pass with Cautions are being challenged by both London VTS and Harbour Service Launches to ensure that this procedure remains effective and efficient.

It was disappointing to note that near miss reports have reduced further – the importance of near miss reporting needs to be promulgated and any ideas to improve

reporting would be welcomed. **Action: Near Miss reporting to be encouraged and ideas to improve welcomed by the PLA.**

7 Other Updates

7a Police – no representative

7b Coastguard

- Brian Johnson has been appointed the new CEO of the MCA.
- Incidents numbers are very similar to 2017, which is pleasing as in recent years incident numbers have only ever been increasing.
- Robust plans are in place for NYE.

7c RNLI – no representative, but noted that:

- The Thames Water Safety Forum and London & Thames Water Safety Forum continue to meet to improve safety in and around London's waterways.

7d London River Services

- Matt Hack has been appointed as the new Operations Director.

7e Fire – no representative

7f Environment Agency

- Flood Defence closures at are down since January 2018.
- Future test closures for 2019 are either published (as per the Events Listing) and the rest are currently being finalised.
- There is currently ongoing low fluvial flows and not expecting to see this change in the near future.
- Models for winter 2018/19 are not indicating any long-term closures this winter.
- Scheme of Operations – this is currently being consulted on for the next three years which looks at span closures or durations. If you have not received this consultation please speak with Victoria Kettley from the EA directly.

7g Port Health – no representative

8 River Works

8a Central/Navigational Channel Arch Closures / Bridge Arch Lights:

- The PLA are currently working with the Thames Tideway Tunnel to see whether a revised Bridge Arch arrangement could be introduced. This will be based on a traffic light system; however prior to introduction this will be consulted on with operators to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The PLA hopes to introduce this new system in some locations early in 2019.

8b Proposed Rotherhithe/Canary Wharf Bridge for Pedestrians/Cyclists

- Proposal is for a pedestrian cycling/footbridge – TfL have undertaken preliminary work & looked at proposed costings. This has been discussed with the Mayor who has advised to continue with the work and any future options.
- There are a number of areas PLA does not agree with TfL mainly with the alignments.
- Work needs to be carried out on navigational risk assessment for bridge – to be able to get cruise ships and war ships through, recreational vessels and masted craft. Air draft is another issue.
- Consultation is currently delayed as TfL are re-evaluating all of the options.

- If the bridge is developed further it will be vertically lifting – PLA in a position of having a bridge of a reasonable height – Potentially Tower Bridge in style but will have a larger opening than Tower Bridge. The PLA will be going to Wallingford simulator to test the bridge. To close the bridge it could potentially take a long time, air draught needs to be high enough.
- An electric ferry proposal has been proposed as another option. The bridge would primarily be for commuters and would be operative for the majority of the day.
- The PLA would encourage members of the forum to make representations on this proposed project. For the Consultation Report please visit the following website: www.tfl.gov.uk/R2CW-crossing. Contact: consultations@tfl.gov.uk

8c Nine Elms Footbridge

This project has been re-initiated as a potential project, however it is unlikely that this will commence fully until Thames Tideway Tunnel has been completed.

8d Illuminated Bridge Project

The full project area covers 15 bridges from Tower to Albert Bridge. Phase 1 of the project is to commence in January 2019 until April 2019, which involves works on London, Cannon, Southwark and Millennium Bridge's. The PLA continues to work closely with this project and will greatly enhance the tourism pull to London and the River Thames.

8e Fulham Football Club

Construction works due to commence in May 2019, currently out for tender. PLA have had meetings with some of the companies tendering for the project, but there isn't much detail at this stage. PLA will be engaging throughout the process and will be encouraging barges movements through the night.

Question raised regarding the effects the project would have on siltation in the area. PLA confirmed that this has been considered as part of the planning and licensing process and are content with this aspect of the project.

8f Thames Tideway Tunnel – Report prepared by Terry Lawrence

- Putney Drawdock. Sheet piling and construction of shaft ongoing.
- Deptford Creek. Sheet piling and berthing piles off Phoenix Wharf completed.
- Victoria Embankment No 1 arch of Charing Cross Bridge is now predominantly open.
- Kirtling Street. Tunnelling started 22 November. West Bound machine initially.
- Chambers Wharf Shaft excavation resumed this week following completion of the acoustic shed and gantry crane for segment handling.
- KEMP1500 ground mixing holes to stabilise the top 11 metres of hinterland ongoing. Cofferdam tie rods are distorting and a solution is being investigated.
- Blackfriars. Construction of the single pile wall for the East cofferdam ongoing. Ground preparation works for shaft excavation also ongoing.
- Chelsea Embankment. Filling of cofferdams with aggregate nearing completion. Expect to bring welfare units to site by river before Christmas.
- Carnwath Road. Preparations for receiving the TBM to the bottom of the shaft in January are ongoing.

The contractors Christmas break will run from 21 December to 02 January. Arches will be opened and Marine Plant will be located to minimise impact on River users during this period.

In 2019 Current programs indicate peaks of 7 barges above Tower Bridge PER 24 HOURS from February to October and within that 9 barges per 24 hours for July and August. It should not be beyond expectations that this July/August peak actually appears some what later.

Question was raised as to whether Enderby Wharf had been cancelled or not. The PLA confirm press reports that due to air quality concerns the project has now been cancelled and cruise ships will now only continue to serve Tower Bridge Upper Moorings and Greenwich Ship Tier.

Question was raised regarding three potential bridges in the Upper Reaches by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and what the PLA's views are. It was noted that the one of the plans was outside of the PLA's jurisdictions. However if any new bridge's are proposed it will need to be in line with the specification of the bridges in the surrounding area.

It was noted by some operators the randomness and non-compliance of navigation lights by some tugs and freight operators. The PLA noted the concern and are currently reviewing what options are available and will work on the tidal Thames. It is observed that a number of tugs pushing are not complying with the local directions as they are potentially impractical and the PLA may look at introducing the CEVNI standards for such vessels. Prior to any amendments by the PLA, it will undertake a full consultation and promulgated to all Port users by Notice to Mariners.

9 Commercial Vessels

- i. Conduct of Vessels in Kings Reach
 - It should be noted that the river is busy in this section of the river and there have been some reports of Reporting Vessels being blocked by other Port users. London VTS and the Harbour Service Launch have been tasked to look into this issue further and take appropriate action where necessary.
- ii. Reporting Points
 - It has been noted that there is a need to review some of the reporting points to improve situational awareness. The PLA are currently review various options and will undertake a consultation with Port users in the coming months.
- iii. Waiting Areas
 - Operators were reminded of the importance of the waiting areas as designated in the [Passenger Operations Code of Practice](#). London VTS and the Harbour Service Launches have been tasked to ensure compliance and are conducting regular Compliance Monitoring in these areas.
- iv. Freight Operations – Safety Notice issued
 - Operators have been reminded to remove ropes from buoys and if any Port users see non-compliance, please report to London VTS who will take appropriate action to get them removed.

10 **Events – Post Meeting Note provided by Josh Rylah:**

- 2018 had been another busy year with a variety of events, such as; Royal Marine & Dutch Navy Demonstrations, traditional events, increase in cruise ship calls and we expect to see further increases in all activities in 2019.
- The annual Christmas Drink & Drugs Campaign has been published in Notice to Mariners 19 of 2018 - <http://www.pla.co.uk/assets/19of2018-railwaytransport-safetyact2003-drinkdrugsawarenesscampaign.pdf>.
- New Years Eve Fireworks, lots of planning currently being undertaken and a Notice to Mariners regarding the fireworks display will be promulgated shortly. It should be noted that the PLA are considering to introduce a vessel holding plan to ensure appropriate separation between recreational and commercial vessels.
- Notice to Mariners – [M67/2018](#) – relates to changes in relation to recreational vessels and licensing. Commercial vessels are vetted through met police for safety and security. However the river police have been challenged by Met Gold regarding recreational vessels which attend and the potential security risks. Therefore the Met Police and PLA have introduced a new process which requires recreational vessels wishing to attend the NYE celebrations to apply for a license, which has been based on the same process as Olympics. PLA are supporting this. It is noted that there are no caps on number of vessels to be registered.

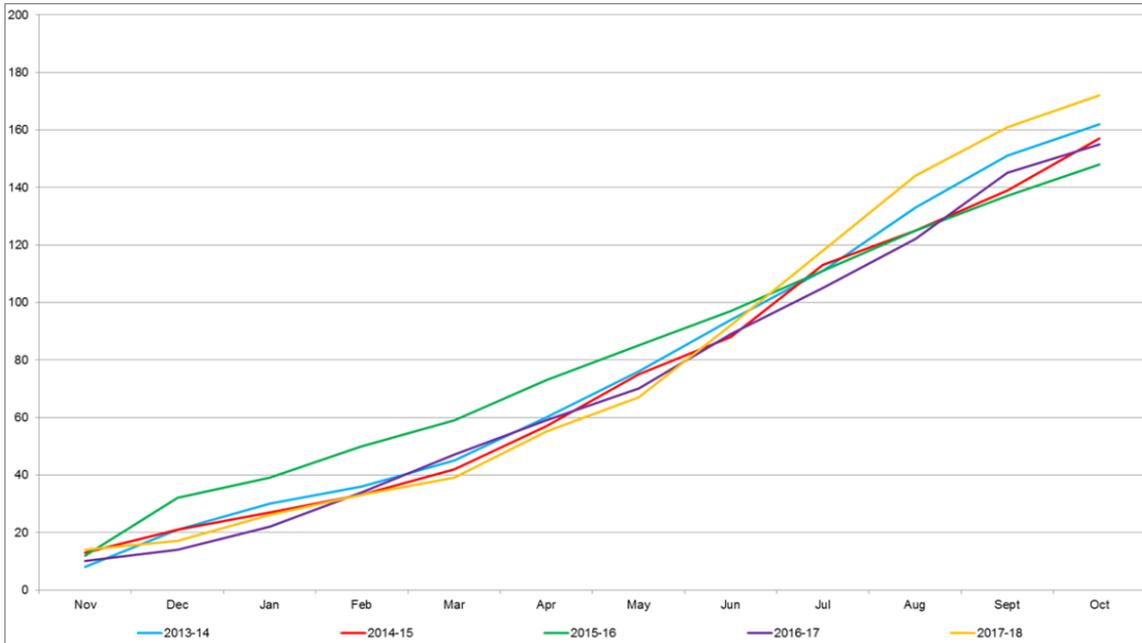
11 **AOB**

- Request for the PLA Charges to be circulated with the minutes and the latest terms and conditions, including charges can be sourced here: <http://www.pla.co.uk/About-Us/PLA-Charges>.

Date of Next Meeting: Watermen's Hall – Wednesday 10th April 2019

ANNUAL RUCF(U) INCIDENT REVIEW 1st NOVEMBER 2017 TO 31st OCTOBER 2018

Accumulative Upper District Incident Statistics



11% increase in the number of reported incidents and near misses in 2018 compared to 2017.

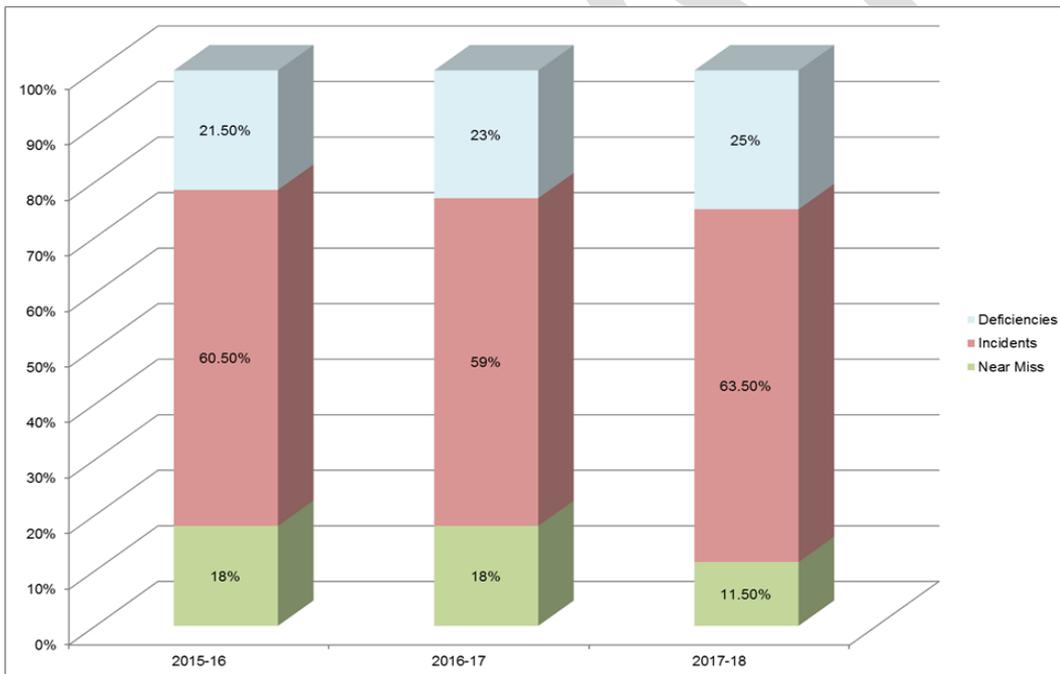
Passenger incident up 30%.

Inland Freight incidents down 7%.

Recreational incidents up 23%.

Commercial Shipping incidents down 78%.

Incident Breakdown



6.5% decrease in near miss reporting

4.5% increase in incidents

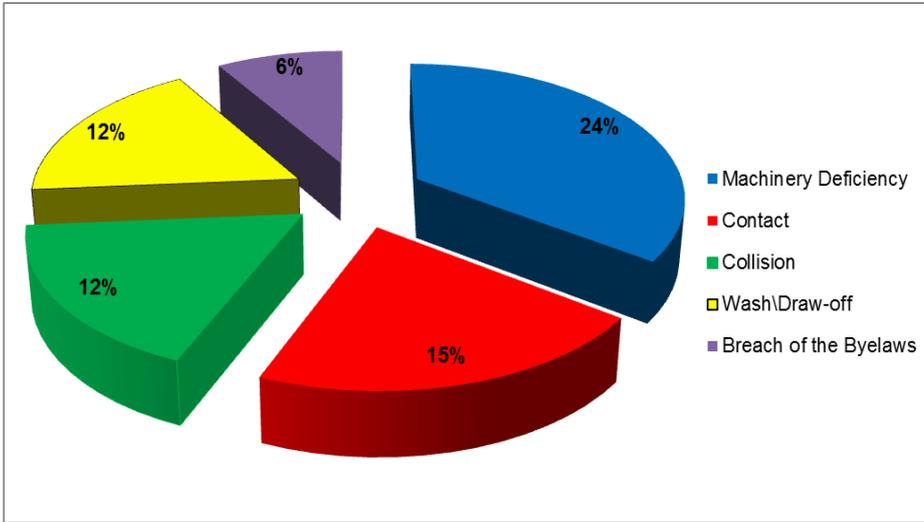
2% increase in Deficiencies

We have seen a dramatic rise in passenger vessel incidents. This is concerning but can largely be attributed to timetabling and issues arising when timetable clashes occur. We have significant pinch points on the Thames around Embankment, Westminster and Tower Piers and it is here the rise in incidents has been greatest. As a result of this the PLA and London River Services are taking a more collaborative approach with pier timetables, looking to eliminate all timetabled clashes and ensure procedures are in place when clashes do occur. We are aware of the impact the Thames Tideway Tunnel and other infrastructure projects are having on passenger vessel operations, with a high number of speed restrictions and arch closures contributing to the traffic density issues. As a result of this we are working with the

Thames Tideway Tunnel in an attempt to reduce the impact of critical arch closures such as Charing Cross Rail and taking a robust line with the over use of RY flags.

Top 5 Incident Categorisation (Oct 2017 – Sept 2018)

The top 5 incident categorisations in the Upper Harbourmaster District are demonstrated below:



The top three causal factors:

- 33.5% Human Error
- 23% Compliance Failure
- 20% Machinery /

Equipment Failure.

The principle reason behind incidents and near misses is a failure to comply or implement procedures or a failure to follow regulation.

The PLA appreciates that we have rules and regulation spread over numerous publications and in some cases standalone documents. We are currently reviewing all of our rules and regulations with the aim of removing duplication, simplifying some of the overly complicated ones, eventually creating a standalone document or Port Information Book that will collate everything in one place. It is not just a case of creating rules and expecting them to be followed, we need to ensure that they are easy to find and easy to follow.

WASH COMPLAINTS HOUSEBOATS – 471 (157)

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Total
6	16	55	85	61	98	19	32	59	15	12	13	471

Wash complaints from residential locations have **risen by 300%** when compared to the previous period. This is primarily due to the 2 residential locations East of Tower Bridge making the PLA aware of wash issues. The newly constructed Chambers Wharf for the Thames Tideway Tunnel project changed the wash profile in the area, causing wash from outbound vessels to refract back on to Downings Roads. It should be noted the wash complaints were not solely caused by CoC vessels. Wash complaints against freight and traditional passenger vessels being a regular occurrence. Having identified and addressed the issues through passage plan amendments, plus amending acceleration and deceleration points, wash complaints have returned to a more manageable level. We have also started to inspect residential locations to ensure compliance with the houseboat mooring guidance and advise improvements to configuration where issues are found.

Finally can we please highlight Notice to Mariners No. [15 of 2018](#) as the contact number for the Thames Barrier Navigation Centre (TBNC) has changed to: **0203 260 7711**.