



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

18th May 2017 @ 10.30 hrs at London River House

Chair

Cathryn Spain CS Harbour Master Lower – PLA

Attendees

Simon Phillips	SP	Harbour Master VTS and SMS - PLA
Steve Rushbrook	SR	Deputy Harbour Master Lower – PLA
Tim Corthorn	TC	Deputy Harbour Master Lower - PLA
Sarah Broad	SB	Nav Safety Systems Coordinator – PLA (Notetaker)
Rod Owen	RO	Pilot - PLA
Jon Beckett	JB	Manager, SMS - PLA
Terry Leach	TL	HM Coastguard
Cheryl Wells	CW	Thurrock Council
Adesina Adewale	AA	Thurrock Council
Colin Hitchcock	CH	London Gateway
Andrew Denton	AD	Border Force
Kevin Boyd	KB	Svitzer
Richard Hart	RH	Assn. Thames Yacht Clubs
John Green	JG	RYA London & South East
Trevor Harris	TH	Trinity House
Geoff Holland	GH	Harbour Master, Port of Tilbury
Ian Clark	IC	Medway Peel Ports
John Gore	JG	MSBA
Richard Bain	RB	Jet Stream Tours
Stuart Strutton	SS	Kotug Smit
Graham Pearson	GP	London River Users Society
Brian Corbett	BC	MSBA
Ian Clark	IC	Peel Ports (Medway)
Andrew Rudge	AR	Maritime & Coastguard Agency

- 1. Apologies – numerous apologies received via outlook**
- 2. Minutes of last RUCF (Lower & Estuary) 24th November 2017**
Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.
- 3. Matters Arising**
 - Leigh Buoy**
Decision to be made pending information from Hydro Department
 - Risk Assessments**
Reminder issued to all clubs
 - Notice to Mariners for Lights – still to be disseminated**
 - Recreational Clubs & Associations – No representative**

A question was raised around the Risk Assessments – in relation to clubs having a risk assessment for each individual item. CS confirmed that risk assessment should be completed for any specific or non routine events.

4a. PLA Update - Marine Operations:

CS confirmed that Steve Rushbrook will be leaving the PLA as Deputy Harbour Master, Lower District in early June 2017 with a replacement starting soon. Tim Corthorn joined the PLA as Deputy Harbour Master, Lower in April 2017.

4b Navigational Incidents: Total for 12 months – 157 compared to 169 previously (down 7%)

Lower District Navigational Safety Incidents November-May 2017: Appendix 1

- There has been 1 'serious' incident in the last period compared with 4 'serious' and 1 'very serious' incident in the previous period.
- Near Miss reports are up 300%, which makes up the proportion of the overall increase in incidents. At the last RUCF there were 5 near misses for that period, for this period there have been 15 near misses in total.
- 27% overall increase in deficiency reports.
- 'Other' incidents in this period include parted lines on tugs, another laser pen incident and a medical incident onboard a dredger.

Recreational Incidents:

- There have been no recreational incidents since November 2016, however since the report has been produced, two have occurred – a grounding and an engine failure.

Attention was also drawn to the SMS Reports (Annual & Quarterly), which have since been published on the website. This shows how targets are being met and focuses on particular trend analysis topics. The last quarterly report focused on Commercial Shipping breakdowns (mainly Sea Reach).

A question was raised as to how the PLA is going to address the matter of the amount of incidents that are due to human error. SMS Manager JB reported that the PLA had just launched a 'Human Factors Campaign,' focusing on aspects of tackling fatigue and distraction in order to identify any underlying causes.

4c Navigational Matters – None

4d Risk Assessments

New procedures are in place for Boarding and Landing, following a risk assessment. Also a risk assessment has taken place on the use of staff and third parties using PLA vessels. No Navigational Risk Assessments have taken place since the last RUCF.

**4e Regulatory Update
i Thames Byelaws**

Still under formal consultation with the DfT. The two main objectors being British Marine and RYA. British Marine's concern was that the PLA hadn't consulted with the operators in London and were worried about the impact this would have on them. The RYA are concerned that there are a number of sail training providers that may be affected.

Action: SMS Manager to report back to RYA with figures

ii Pilotage Directions

This underwent consultation at the end of 2016 and some changes have been made, following feedback from towage providers:

- A new River PEC introduced - 'Class B PEC' (PEC B)
- Introduction of a 'Tug Endorsement' for the utilisation of ship towage tugs.
- Consultation on the Pilotage PEC regulations concludes on the 6th June 2017

Stoneness Light - consultation on whether the light is still required closes at the end of May 2017.

4f **Port Security**

The Thames Port Security Authority met on 12th April (Three yearly meeting - all members were invited). All were reminded of the vigilance against cyber attacks.

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

- Byelaw 49 – Discharge of Sewage into the Thames
The PLA has run a workshop with British Marine including service providers and operators to discuss further
- Thames Vision:
An environment bulletin was released on the controls for recreational users during 2017 – further details can be found on the PLA website
- Litter survey – many thanks for the response from operators and users – recent modeling has shown that litter dropped in the Thames is likely to stay there – the PLA is committed to do what it can to reduce the sources.
- Air Quality – Consultants will be conducting detailed studies on the contribution to air quality by port activity, in particular an inventory of the Port to calculate the status quo and measure any improvements. Thank you in advance for assistance

4h **River Works**

- Groyne Marker (Gravesend No.2) to be replaced in the next few weeks. 5 & 6 also to be replaced.
- Minor overhauls in Benfleet Creek
- On 19th May a jack up will be starting work at Tilbury PowerStation, drilling boreholes. This has been communicated in Notice to Mariners L5 of 2017.
- Oikos – maintenance works on jetty, in preparation for the new jetty.
- Nu Star Jetties – Borehole Drilling – TBC
- Drone Surveys at the Kentish Windfarms – TBC
- Notice to Mariners to be issued regarding the heavy lift operations at Harrisons Wharf. (mid June)

4i **River Events**

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

(Reminder that if drones are to be used for any events – please advise the PLA in advance)

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| ➤ 7-12 June 2017 | Balmoral operating on the Thames |
| ➤ 8 June 2017 | Tilbury Fireworks (NtM issued) |
| ➤ 1 July 2017 | Nore Race |
| ➤ 8 July 2017 | Round Canvey Island Race |
| ➤ 15 July 2017 | Thames Barge Match |

5 **Members' Feedback & Questions**

Oikos berth is still going through the licensing process, and will be two years until the berth is in place and operating fully. The new jetty will be off jetty number 2 extending into the deeper waters. Jetty Number 1 remains.

6a **Members' Updates:**

Maritime & Coastguard Agency – Terry Leach

Most significant is the recent terrorist attack in London - a police debrief is taking place on Friday 26th May. Coastguard figures show a 10% increase in the number of 'jumpers' in the upper part of the river, and subsequently an increase in the number of suicides on the river.

Maritime & Coastguard Agency – Andrew Rudge

AR reported that a re-organisation is currently underway; offices are closing in Orpington and Norwich, with staff moving to new offices in Colchester. Move will be complete by end of 2017 beginning of 2018.

6b Environment Agency – No EA representative present

6c Trinity House – moved Fisherman's Gat 2 in February, also moved Barrow 8 and 10 following a survey. In the previous RUCF, a two way route was discussed. Long Sand Head has slowed but is still moving. The paper has gone to the IMO for approval. On 1st June, a meeting has been arranged with the PLA to discuss the Princes Outer Buoy. Obstruction – Kentish Flats Windfarm, this has appeared since the windfarm has been constructed, as a full survey was carried out beforehand. This was not reported to the PLA at the time. Surveys are being undertaken to identify the object, and eventually recover.

6d Port of Tilbury – Geoff Holland

Current works – Lower arm doughnuts to be renewed, there is a Notice to Mariners in place for this. The next phase of works to be carried out on the LCT – Lower End – in the next month or so. Tilbury 2 – have taken ownership of the quay and three berths, hopefully works will commence starting end of 2018.

6e Medway Peel Ports – Ian Clark

Dave Newbury has since left and joined the PLA, a replacement will be announced within the next two weeks. LNG Code of Practice has been issued. 2017 will be the 350 year celebration of the Dutch Raid of Medway which will be a high profile event including royalty, war ships and a firework display. (June 8th-18th 2017) Water walls to be erected on barges. River will be closed from 2040 – 2240 on 17th June.

The VTS move has been held up by Civil Engineering problems, but the radars are now up.

6f London Gateway Port – Colin Hitchcock

Berth pockets have been dredged. No other work to take place on quay face. Work has been put out to tender to get the bollard markings on the quay wall numbered. Trade/Services are increasing.

6g Police – No Police representative present

6h RNLI – No RNLI representative present

6i Royal Yachting Association – John Green

At the last RUCF meeting it was mentioned that there was a lack of communication between yachts and the PLA. The RYA has since emphasized this point in their recent RYA publication, encouraging river users to call VTS and use the appropriate channel etc.

Crayford Creek Bridge and lack of navigational possibilities – Dartford Council has rejected the proposal and will therefore not be blocking the railway bridge.

6j Recreational Clubs & Associations – No Representatives present.

6k Border Force – Andrew Denton

In 2016 a pilot scheme was run on the Thames to get local Border Force staff back out on the river. With 7,000 miles of coastline more than four cutters are needed and will start to roll out a fleet of RIBs: the first one will be at Tilbury and another is to be commissioned. RIBs will be looking at foreign recreational river users (in conjunction with project KRAKEN). Any calls made to the 24 hour number will be directed accordingly by the Border Force Intel Staff.

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

7k Vessel Operators – Richard Bain

Tilbury Ferry taken over on 2nd May, service is running well.

Kevin Boyd - Svitzer

Addition of two new tugs – Monarch and Ganges.

7l Thurrock Council

Not attended before, and are mainly concerned with Resilience. Question was asked as to whether it is appropriate for Thurrock to add to this meeting or to set up another. CS said that this meeting looks more at the operational side rather than the emergency side. Following the Lord Harris review, looking to have a Thames Resilience Forum. There is a meeting taking place soon to discuss establishing and membership. Idea of the forum will be that all reps who have a resilience input into the river will attend. The meeting will pull together all boroughs and have one collective meeting rather than separate ones.

8. Any other Business - Event

Medway 350th Anniversary of Dutch Raid Commemorative Event – 10th June – There is an opportunity for a ladies rowing crew of 6 (+cox) to race against retired marines. It was suggested that Colin Middlemiss at Watermans Hall be contacted.

Action: Brian Corbett to email: lowerdistrictenquiry@pla.co.uk with details

9. Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 23rd November 2017 @ 10.30hrs at PLA London River House.
