

Notes of River Users Consultative Forum (Estuary) Meeting 21st May 2010

Present:

Roy Stanbrook	RS	HM(L) PLA
Chris McQueen	CM	DHM(L) PLA
Julian Parkes	JP	HM(SMS) PLA
Kevin Beacon	KB	Medway Ports
John Greenleaf	JG	JJ. Prior and RAFT
Chris Edwards	CE	RYA East
Ken Waller	KW	MYA
Tom Sims	TS	RYA South East
Michael Sherfas	MS	ATTC
Nick Dodson	ND	Trinity House
Rod Owen	RO	Pilot PLA
Will Wright	WW	K & E SF
Archie Turnbull	AT	MCA
A. Rudge	AR	MCA
M. Garside	MG	Corporate Affairs Manager PLA

1. Apologies

R. Baker, Trinity House, G. Jones, Joint police unit (Essex & Kent), N Jenkins, PLA.

2. Minutes of River Users Consultative Forum meeting 20th November 2009

Matters arising

PWC leaflet – Wording of the leaflet is still causing problems and clarification of where exactly PWC can use their craft. Unfortunately leaflet was issued in advance of new Thames Byelaws which are not yet in force. Existing River byelaws remain in force and current restrictions apply.

River Users Recreational Guide now includes routes into Medway. JP requested suggestions for further Medway information for the 2011 River Users Recreational Guide.

Action: JP

The merits of showing yacht routes for the outer estuary on the guide was discussed but on balance it was decided this was not necessary.

MS Commented the RYA has produced a Yacht Route Access Guide for the Thames including Medway.

RS stated the Harbour Revision Order has been completed.

3. PLA SITREP

- i. Safety management system
- ii.

JP reported the PLA are continuing to review hazards to navigation. Pilotage directions have been through consultation, with relatively minor alterations. As a result of proposed changes in Pilot ordering times have presented concerns have been raised by agents. A further period of consultation with agents is to take place. Other changes include changes to PEC training and examination arrangements. It is planned that directions will go to PLA board for approval in July and to come into force September 2010.

JP reported on progress of new Thames byelaws are with Department for Transport, there has been a number of legal challenges which need to be addressed and other issues considerations has hindered progress now new government is in place it is hoped Department for Transport issues can be addressed and further round of public consultation can take place over next couple of months. It is hoped new byelaws in place by the end of the year.

Harbour revision order - Letters have been sent notifying stakeholders that HRO is out for consultation full details can be found on PLA web site.

The 2010 River Users Recreational Guide has been published. The PLA's intention is to review and improve the guide on an annual basis. Changes from the 2009 version include an increase in size and adverts to mitigate costs. JP requested feedback on 2010 River Users Recreational guide.

TS and CE commented that they had not received a copy, highlighting potential problems with distribution.

Action: JP

The PLA is also in the process of reviewing the Safe Mooring Code of Practice and Code of Practice for Ship Towing

RO raised issue of standard mooring plans for berths and expressed about liability issues. RS commented that there are practical and legal issues it was agreed matter would be considered by safe mooring group.

Action: HM (L).

PLA has launched a micro website for aimed at Leisure user's www.boatingonthames.co.uk which was demonstrated. The website is a new initiative which aims to provide the leisure users access to relevant information so they navigate safely on the Thames. Website also includes a voluntary registration scheme so the PLA can provide direct specific navigational information. The website also includes guidance video animation for leisure users navigating the middle district.

MS who assisted with the making of the animation congratulated the PLA on this initiative.

MS and others suggested the PLA should be selective with wording when asking leisure users to register to the website. Change wording from register to subscribe. There was a general consensus PLA needs to get leisure users on side.

iii. Port Security and ISPS

ISPS remains at level 1.

JP gave an update on new Port Security Directive, It had been agreed that two Port Security Authorities should be set up on trial basis. Bristol and London. Bristol is now up and running but London has been delayed over the designation order. Hopefully now the new government is in place disagreements over designation order can be resolved with a further round of consultation so London PSA can come into being by the end of the year.

Olympic security - The PLA feel they are involved where they need to be with regards to maritime safety and port security issues

iv. Environmental matters - No up date

v. General port matters.

RS discussed trade - The cloudy skies of economical depression still linger. Last years figures show a drop to less than 47 million tons compared to 51 million tones in previous years. On the bright side there are some promising signals that appear occasionally. Slight increases of container ship activity have been noted and new line movements. Shipping numbers are stable however over the last month they have been slightly down, but the general the trend is up.

4. Navigation safety and consultancy matters

i. Estuary incidents

CM reported PLACID incident management database is being replaced by new database called Perspective there is more work needed before the real benefits can be realised. RS commented that a link so lessons is available from the pilots website is desirable.

12/01/10	Lemonia	Suffered main engine failure in vicinity of Sea Reach 3
06/02/10	Valberg	Close quarters situation with vessels approaching NESPIT Verity failed to give way.
07/0210	Dawn Star	Small fishing vessel anchored in Sea Reach channel close to Sea Reach 1 Police tasked to intercept and move on vessel. Skipper issued with a warning.
22/02/10	Olga Maersk	Vessel outward bound sheered to port at Sea Reach 3 misjudgement by helmsman.
29/03/10	Star Bonaire	Two incidents of erratic navigation Gravesend Reach and Sea Reach vessel navigating on wrong side of the channel. Formal warning issued to Master.
06/03/10	Almadiep	Inappropriate navigation incident. Small cargo vessel used Princes channel deep water route outward bound despite having 2.5 metre underkeel clearance for south channel.
16/04/10	Vespertine	Whilst passing Coryton inward bound incorrect application of helm by helmsman causing vessel to head towards tanker berths. Helmsman was required to period of retraining.
17/04/10	Marieke	In reduced visibility Marieke took a sheer to starboard whilst reducing speed passing barge mooring off eastern end of London Gateway site contacting with the barges. Barges broke adrift and set down onto dolphin on Coryton 4.
19/05/10	Raba	Inappropriate navigation incident in Oaze deep gave insufficient room whilst overtaking an inward bound tanker. VTS had to intervene to get vessel to alter course to make more sea room between vessels.

ii. Sunk TVS

Nothing to report.

- iii. MAIB Digest 2010 edition included two incidents that occurred on the Thames, namely loss of Fishing vessel “Louisa” and Maersk Nottingham near miss incident with the Thanet Wind farm following complete engine and power failure. Vessel was unable to clear and drop anchor.

6. Other Updates

i. Trinity House

ND reported on the 12th of May Trinity House will be conducting there annual ATON review of, notes will be available on the website. Plans have been made to remove seven buoys in the Knob channel however no date has been set.

Plans for dismantling of several beacons in the Thames estuary has been halted following representation. The beacons whilst no longer maintained as navigational marks will remain in situ as Pilots and other users use the beacons for parallel indexing purposes.

iii. MCA

AT stated that Dover and Thames Coastguard will collect out of date pyrotechnics for disposal. There have been cases of irresponsible dumping of pyrotechnics. RS suggested this issue should be raised by RYA by talking to yachting press to raise public awareness.

Harwich power boat race is planned for 31st July. RS stated that the PLA hasn't been given final race course details. This was heavily discussed and concern for leisure and commercial users has been noted.

AT informed meeting that they have had inquiry of someone who wants to swim from Southend to Sheerness.

AR reported on a consultation for smoking on commercial ships. This is a grey area in smoking regulations is currently banned on shore but not on ships outcome of the consultation is not known.

MCA consultation/review of Boat Master Licence has been completed and it has been decided tier 1 remains will remain but there was no agreement on need for tier 2. The next phase is to

draft regulations. Local Knowledge Endorsement revalidation will be by examination.

Feed back from the Vancouver Olympics suggests there will be demand yacht moorings for London Olympics as large numbers of Dutch yachts turned up for Vancouver games. RS added PLA are looking for potential sites near to transport hubs.

- i. Environment Agency – nothing to report
- ii. Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries
Kent and Essex sea fisheries reported the MMO is now in place and will act as a one stop shop for planning new maritime projects. The Marine Conservation Zone project is gathering steam. This national scheme is looking to set up conservation areas in UK waters. Indication of draft locations will be produced in the next 2 to 3 months. There are a series of consultation's to be arranged and a completion date has been set for 2012.
- iii. RYA – nothing to report
- iv. Medway
KB reported a slight increase in traffic. LNG numbers are up mainly due to commercial factors. Second berth has been completed and should be operational by the end of the year. Increased LNG traffic could be an issue for Medway.

WW asked what the situation was with proposed new Medway channel raised last year. KB commented an Environmental impact assessment needed to be carried out, there is no time line for the project.

- v. Medway Yachting Association
KW reported safety and security programs run on the Medway have been successful. There are concerns over the future ownership for Queenborough and MYA are supporting the idea that a trust is formed to run the harbour. Relations are also being built with the local police. Sum pier has been demolished.

At Medway river user's forum, issues raised Medway Port that PWC incidents are best reported to Medway TVS rather than the police or another body so action can be taken more effectively. A Medway handbook has now been published and can be found on line at www.medwayya.co.uk. It is suggested links to be made between yachting association web site and PLAs leisure users website www.boatingonthames.co.uk

- vi. Police
CM reported on behalf of the Met police. The marine police unit CAD room at Wapping has been closed, and operations are now being handled from a central incident control centre based in Lambeth, however the MPU will be maintaining a listening watch on VHF channel 14.

Kent and Essex Police have signed a memorandum of understanding with PLA to improve policing and security on the river.

- vii. Other
RS reported a request had been received for an offshore marine based sports and recreational centre to be build on a swinging barge. A small area has been identified to the east to Medway.

7. River events

30th & 31st May Southend Airshow.
12th & 13th June Gravesend Town Regatta.
20th June Benfleet Yacht Club Nore race.
3 July Thames Sail Barge Match race.

8. River works

- i. London Gateway

Video presentation on construction method for London Gateway quays was shown.

Dredging works continuing with cutter dredger Rubens working on the eastern end of the site and Marieke trailer suction hopper dredger on the Western bund. Progress to date has been good

- ii. Wind farm Proposals

Round 2.5 has been given the go ahead to ensure continuity manufacturer infrastructure is maintained during the gap between round 1 and round 3 starts with expansions to Kentish Flats, Thanet and Outer Gabbard wind farms planned. The PLA are still awaiting plans.

London Array – construction to start 1st March 2011.

- iii. BritNed cable

The BritNed cable. The cable laying work is progressing. There has been difficulties with contractors which has delayed project. The cable is planned to be laid across the Ooze over a period of four days starting on 29th June. Cable laying ships will have

pilot on board. After laying and burying of cable, cable will be cover with rock armour but not in the navigational channels.

iv. CO2 Pipeline

There has been several meeting with PLA by Energy companies over proposal to lay CO2 pipe lines for carbon capture through the estuary. Initial plans involve laying pipe right through the Oaze, Knock John Channel and Black deep which has been declined. A more practical route has suggested to lay pipeline parallel to the BritNed cable.

1. Time / Date of Next Meeting

November 25th 2010 – 10:30 London River House