



Notes of River Users Consultative Forum (Lower) Meeting
17th November 2011

Present:-

Captain Roy Stanbrook	RS	HM (L) - PLA
Captain Chris McQueen	CM	DHM (L) – PLA
Mark Towens	MT	DHM(SMS) – PLA
Martin Garside	MG	Corporate Affairs Manager - PLA
Nicola Jenkins	NJ	Environment & Management Systems Mgr – PLA
John Window	JW	Haven Master Holehaven – PLA
Rod Owen	RO	Pilot - PLA
Lisa Cockerill	LC	Assistant to HM(L) - PLA
Richard Lukes	RL	Unite
Alan Hurrell	AH	Waterman
Paul Cave	PC	Lighthouse Seafarers
John A Skellorn	JS	RYA (South East)
Melanie Norris	MN	Gravesham Borough Council
Ian Dunkley	ID	RNLI
Richard Exley	RE	Harbour Master Port of Tilbury
Andy Read	AR	Targe Towing
Jessamy Woolley	JW	Targe Towing
David Jones	DJ	ATYC
Mike Shefras	MS	RYA Thames/London
John Potter	JP	Company of Watermen & Lightermen
Daryl Godbold	DG	Leigh & Southend Fisheries
Debra Read	DR	London Port Health Authority

1. Apologies

M Dodson, Trinity House. Peter Smith, SERRC. Kevin Boyd, Svitzer. Julian Parkes, PLA.

2. Minutes of RUCF (Lower) Meeting 5th May 2011

Agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising

Item 3 (i) Port of Tilbury is continuing to develop Tilbury lock standard mooring plan. RE explained that for regular runners it was not a problem, however, irregular visitors it can be dealt with by pilot outlining mooring arrangements required.

Item 6, page 9 The continuing problem of welfare visits to Jurgens jetty is now to be taken forward by a letter from the Merchant Navy Welfare board.

RL raised yet another incident that had recently occurred of an anchor being let go with another vessel under the bow.

RS stated that the PLA were not informed of this incident and would be discussing it with Kevin Boyd.

ACTION – HML

4. PLA SITREP

i. Safety Management System

MT reported on a number of key issues.

- Thames Byelaws – formal consultation in August. About a dozen responses had been received, most issues in the upper area. Could be in place by Q1 2012.

- Revised Permanent Notice to Mariners 2011 now issued.

- General Directions 2011 now issued.

- Craft Towage Code of Practice has now been re-issued.

- Guidance to Berth Operators – this will be published in 2012.

- Recreational User Guide – this will be reissued in 2012.

Following the success of the middle district leisure users video for transiting Central London, a similar video is being produced for the Lower district. Also a video for the Woolwich area has been completed. It is planned that these will be available to view on the PLA website by Christmas.

ii. Port Security and ISPS code

ISPS level 1 remains in operation.

The first tabletop port security exercise was held in early November.

iii. Environmental Matters

Nicola Jenkins reported to the meeting following the Balanced Seas Project recommendations for reference areas and that Holehaven Creek has been selected. Additionally, much of Thames has been recommended to become Marine Conservation Zone known as MCZ.

There was also a discussion on the Tentacle Lagoon Worm in Greenhithe area.

NJ presented a poster showing Ecology of the Tidal Thames which shows important habitats along the river.

RE to contact NJ re. piling work.

iv. General

RS reported that there has been a slight increase in trade in the recent period.

5. Navigational safety and Consultancy Matters

i. River Incidents

03/05/11	LUCY BORCHARD	LUCY BORCHARD with tugs STANFORD (F) & SMIT AHOADA (A) made ebb tide approach for Tilbury Lock and whilst manoeuvring for lock contacted with the upper arm causing damage to ships bow and upper arm fendering. Tilbury HM submitted report to MAIB who accepted findings and closed the incident.
06/05/11	SEA CHARENTE	SEA CHARENTE navigating erratically outward bound in Lower Hope Reach on wrong side of the channel at Mucking 7, met inward bound vessel Beringzee. VTS intervened and instructed vessel to navigate on the correct side of channel.
09/05/11	MARE	MARE touched bottom approaching Mucking refused to berth due to poor passage planning & preparation.
14/05/11	GUNFLEET	GUNFLEET going alongside motor cruiser 'NO WORRIES' contacted the vessel heavily due to being caught by the swell. A cracking sound was heard on contact. No external damage to both vessels.
15/05/11	CMA CGM PLATON	CMA CGM PLATON sailed from NHCT lower berth head down on flood tide on clearing the berth, tug SVITZER JOSEPHINE was released and vessel started to proceed outwards, crossing over to the south side of channel to round Tilburyness because of inward traffic in Gravesend Reach. CMA CGM PLATON failed to round Tilburyness and contacted Bevans 42 causing damage to her bow. MAIB are investigating incident. Preliminary report received for review.
17/05/11	CORBROOK	Barge CORBROOK with loaded containers found adrift having broken adrift from moorings at Northfleet Collar barge. CORBROOK was found just above Imperial Wharf, barge and had contacted with one pile on jetty causing minor damage.

		CORBROOK was with assistance of PATROL and GUNFLEET was held in position until SVITZER MERCIA was able to take barge in tow back to her moorings at Northfleet. HM investigation complete Corys have put into place new control measures.
23/05/11	ORION	Leaving Tilbury Lock to proceed outward bound ORION failed to comply with VTS direction to remain in the lock. As result a near miss incident occurred with the inward bound vessel SPAARNEBORG rounding Tilburyness for the lock. ORION turned to starboard and proceeded inward thus avoiding a collision. Captain Gort's PEC suspended pending completion HM investigation, which was restored following HM interview.
26/05/11	FRANCESCA PRIOR	FRANCESCA PRIOR inward bound in Lower Hope Reach reported a fire onboard. Tug MORAG M & RNLI assisted. FRANCESCA PRIOR went alongside Denton Wharf where Fire Brigade attended. Repairs to main engine, exhaust and lagging replaced.
23/07/11	WHITSUNTIDE	Yacht WHITSUNTIDE navigating on wrong side of the channel inward bound at Crayfordness met river tanker PURGO outward bound and stopped in front of it forcing the PURGO to take avoiding action. Enforcement action warning letter sent to owner.
20/08/11	MARFRET SORMIOU	MARFRET SORMIOU whilst berthing at NHCTU with tug assistance MERCIA centre line forward & BRENDA centre line aft, MARFRET SORMIOU's stern landed heavily and in between shore fendering and contacting with concrete top of the berth. Minor damage to concrete decking of berth and minor damage to ships plating close to stern. HM investigated, no further action.
16/09/11	HANJIN BUENOS AIRES	HANJIN BUENOS AIRES whilst berthing starboard side alongside at NHCTL on first of the ebb is reported by TCS as contacting one of the container crane QC8 causing some contact damage. Recommended no further action.
09/10/11	BEYOND THESE SHORES II	Sloop BEYOND THESE SHORES II mid stream inward bound off Coldharbour point with inward bound MONIA C astern trying to pass was blocking the channel, failed to respond to repeated calls from VTS & warning sound signals from

		MONICA C. Duty HSL intercepted yacht MRI gave enforcement/education instruction.
17/10/11	CAP ROBERTA	CAP ROBERTA whilst going alongside to berth vessel landed on fenders and counter on stern rode over fender causing an inspection plate ton NHCTU to be dislodged a few centimetres. Wind was SSW 16 knots gusting 25 knots. 2 tugs MERCIA on centre lead, CECILIA in push pull mode abaft of bridge. No damage to vessel. No further action.
22/10/11	CMA CGM HERODOTE	CMA CGM HERODOTE Master had controls and took conduct of vessel departing NHCTL did not heed pilots advice swing too close of the berth risking contacting with the shore cranes. HM to write to owners about issue.

A discussion took place on the best way to circulate information on incidents to pilots and other river users.

ii. Inland Waterways

MT updated the meeting on the MCA consultation on BML.

Work is continuing on the issue of freight skills. This will include the setting up of the 'Thames Skills Alliance'.

PLA is working with MCA on new freight vessel standards. A consultation version should be available in the new year, with publication possibly by Easter 2012.

iii. Olympic Update

A flyer has been sent out to yacht clubs and others on both sides of North Sea. The key message for potential visitors is only come if you have pre-booked a mooring.

RS summarised purpose for 'Gatekeeper patrols' at Gravesend and Teddington to check visitors have a berth. If visitors have not arranged a mooring prior to arrival then they will not be allowed to proceed.

ID raised issue of fuelling facilities for recreational craft.

DR also raised the issue of the provision of water for vessels. RS to look into this.

ACTION: HML

MG explained a PLA video about procedures for recreational craft during the Olympics had just been finished and will be on the website shortly.

6. Other updates

- i. MCA – no attendance
- ii. Environment Agency - no attendance
- iii. RNLI

ID stated that RNLI Gravesend are approaching 10 years of being on the river. RNLI are currently undertaking a manning review of all its stations on the Thames.

There will be one extra RNLI boat and crew available during Olympic period.

- iv. Met Police – no attendance.
- v. Police (Joint Marine Kent & Essex Unit) – no attendance
- vi. RYA

JS raised issue of wording of new PLA byelaws in respect of need for risk assessments during events on the river. PLA are to add interpretation note to byelaw highlighting how area HM will apply byelaw.

- vii. Other

DR raised issue of ecoli contamination of soda machines on some passenger vessels.

DG discussed the noticeable decline in fishermen on the Thames in the recent period, with fishermen unable to earn a reasonable wage.

7. River Events

Southend Air Festival	Saturday 26 th and Sunday 27 th May 2012
Queens Diamond Jubilee	3 rd June 2012
Sail Amsterdam – tall ships Gravesend/Tilbury – London	25 th July – 12 th August 2012
Gravesend Town Regatta	June 2012
Dartford Bridge Mixed Race	June 2012
Benfleet Yacht Club “Nore Race”	July 2012
Gravesend Summer Regatta	July 2012

Thames Sailing Barge Match July 2012

Lower Thames Challenge July 2012

QDJ on 3rd June 2012 – approx 1000 craft.

8. River Works

i. London Gateway

Phase 1 reclamation complete. Sea wall construction is well advanced. Phase 2 reclamation and dredging planned to start January 2012. DPW have announced that by Q4 2013 London Gateway will begin operations.

ii. Crossrail, Thames Tidal Tunnel

The meeting was updated on the movement of spoil from these projects by water. Bidder for moving spoil from site to Wallasea and Northfleet due to be made early December. Work is expected to commence Spring 2012.

iii. Marina developments

RS gave an update on marine developments including Embankment Marina.

iv. Wind Generation, riverside locations

RE gave an update on wind generation at Tilbury. First turbine going in next year. There will be 2 wind turbines.

v. Town Pier Gravesend

The meeting was informed that piles were going in, with pontoon due in January. Should be completed by Spring 2012.

vi. Lee tunnel work is continuing with spoil from Beckton to Mucking.

vii. Conways Wharf Erith has been opened and has had 2 or 3 ships.

viii. 'S' jetty at Shellhaven now operational, and taking aviation fuel for airports.

ix. Tilbury Power Station is about to commence a commissioning process to burn wood pellets instead of coal, this will make the power station the largest of its type in the world. The storage of wood chip is very limited and a 'just in time' service is required to maintain delivery of wood chip to the station.

It is intended for the station to operate until end 2013 for a trial basis until its licence runs out. The operators then have plans to refurbish the plant as a biomass power station, which will be the largest in the world.

9. Any other Business

RS showed Alex Hurrell's picture of a heaving line. This is to be taken to the 'Mooring Group'.

RO enquired whether masters of new larger Cobelfret ferries could trip with pilots on some deeper draught vessels to gain experience.

RS to discuss with Cobelfret.

ACTION: HML

JP asked if ships could ease down in area near Town Pier Gravesend. A discussion followed about the practicalities for an ease down in such an area.

RL raised the frequency of Pilots, Tug VTS/Liaison informal meetings as he felt there was a need for more frequent meetings, he thought meetings should be held twice a year. This should increase interaction between Tugs crews, pilots and VTS.

RO and RL commented that Svitzer tug simulator input from pilots would be positive. There was support and in principal no objection.

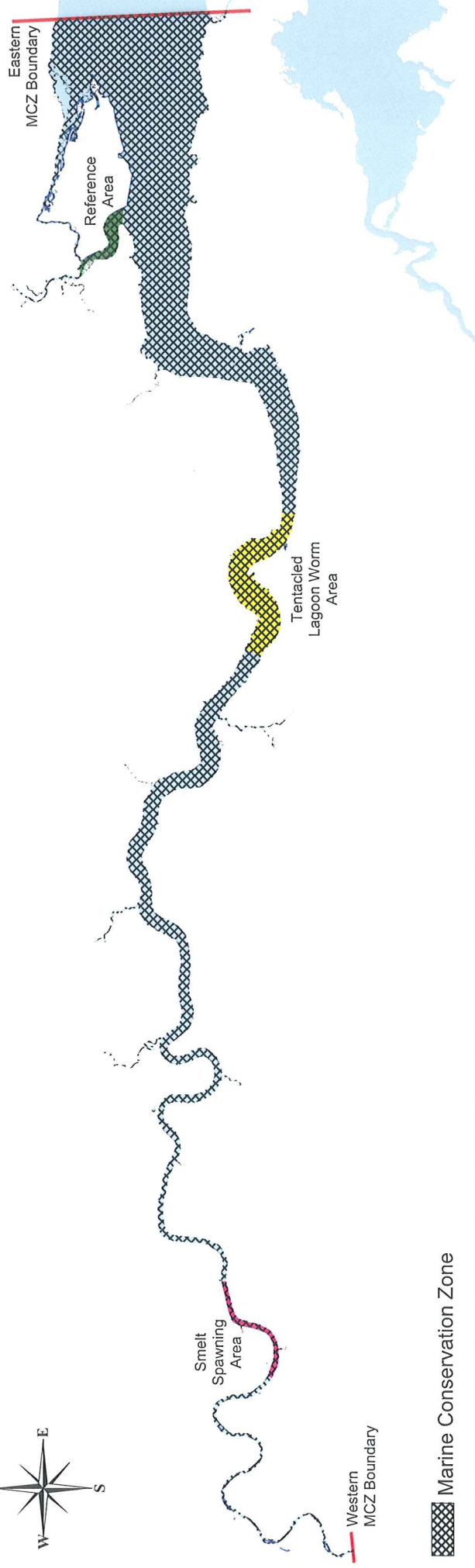
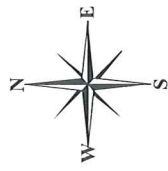
It was also decided informal sub group meeting was the way ahead. Provided there was a channel for issues to be fed back to the main Pilot/Tug/VTS Liaison Panel for discussion.

ACTION: HML

10. Time/ Date Of next meeting

1030 / Thursday 17th May 2012 - LRH

Marine Conservation Zone - River Thames



 Marine Conservation Zone