

Notes of River Users Consultative Forum (Lower) Meeting 7th May 2010

Present:

Captain Roy Stanbrook	RS	HM (L) - PLA
Captain Julian Parkes	JP	HM (SMS) - PLA
Captain Chris McQueen	CM	DHM (L) - PLA
John Window	JW	Havenmaster - PLA
R.B. Exley	RBE	Port of Tilbury
Kevin Boyd	KB	Svitzer
Alan Hurrell	AH	Waterman
Mike Sherfras	MS	Assoc of Thames Y/C & RYA
Rod Owen	RO	Sea pilot_ PLA
Mark Towens	MT	PLA
John Potter	JP	Waterman
Bryan Hopkins	BH	MCA
James Goodfellow	JG	PLA

1. Apologies

P Welch, Met Police. N Jenkins, PLA. M Dodson, Trinity House. R Barker, Trinity House. Garry Jones, Joint Police Marine Unit (Essex & Kent). Jill Goddard, Thames Estuary Partnership, Richard Lukes, TGWU.

2. Presentation on Thames Leisure Users website

New leisure user's website – www.boatingonthames.co.uk presented by M T. The website provides structured easy to access information. MT requested feedback from the committee.

A new innovation on the site is the creation of video animations (Cruising through Central London and Rowing through Central London) to explain how navigate safely. The website incorporates a Google interactive map providing information on location and facilities that are offered by yacht clubs, mariners and rowing clubs.

MS congratulated the PLA on this website.

MT stated developments to the website would involve linking the interactive map to the notice to mariners system, creating a passage planning tool. **Video animation for other parts of the Thames are being considered including the lower area.**

3. Minutes of River Users Consultative Forum Meeting 7th May 2009

Matters arising

1, RNLI / PLA joint presentation to Thurrock Yacht Club still to be arranged.

RS discussing possible date with the club.

Action: RS

2, New revised Tug allocation tables. It has been decided contrary to previous minutes that the new tug allocation tables and Code of Practice for Ship Towing Operations will be a combined document.

3, Lack of tug handling skills by PEC holders will be addressed in new Pilotage Directions now being considered. There will be training requirement including simulator training.

4, Towing Liaison Committee, wider spread of pilots, tug skippers and Waterman attendance is desirable. On going, committee meeting to be arranged June ACTION: HML

4. PLA SITREP

i. Safety Management System

Consultation feedback on new pilotage directions has been received – Concern has been expressed from agents over increased notification times required to be given for booking a pilot has resulted in a further period of consultation with Agents planned for early June. It is planned for revised Pilotage directions to be presented to PLA board for approval in July and directions coming into force 1st September 2010.

JP reported on progress of new Thames byelaws which are with Department for Transport, stating a number of legal challenges and considerations are hindering progress once these had been addressed the Department for Transport will conduct a further round of public consultation. It is hoped New byelaw could be in place by the end of the year.

Recreational Users Guide for 2010 has been published and is now available free of charge. Changes from 2009 version include an increase in size and incorporate advertisements to mitigate costs. Positive feedback had been received, JP request's feedback from users.

Harbour Revision Order has been prepared which will focus on changes to the Port of London Act 1968 to bring it up to date

and to delete sections of Act which are no longer relevant –
Period of consultations is about to begin. Planned HRO can be found on PLA web site.

Craft Towing Code of Practice to be reviewed, however there is not a great deal of change expected.

Code of Safe Mooring is being reviewed and main change will be to include the findings from the Navigational Advisory Panel into the Greenwich ship tier incident last summer. Code is out for consultation now.

ii. Port Security and ISPS code

ISPS level 1 remains in operation.

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 planning has intensified with progress being made at government and agency level. The PLA feel they are in a good position to progress with safety precautions.

BH suggested leisure users to report suspicious activity's to local police. Agreement was reached on the importance of this initiative. MS commented Surrey, Kent and Essex police have also adopted similar precautions and are currently spreading this information to the public via presentations.

CM on behalf of P Welch gave briefing on changes to Marine Police Unit, CAD room at Wapping has now closed and operation moved to central Met Police Control Centre which based at Lambeth. Marine Police Unit can still be contacted on VHF channel 14 which will continue to be monitored by MPU.

JP reported Inland waterways standards has now passed into law.

iii. Environmental Matters

No update on environmental matters due to Kathryn Harris Environmental Manager leaving the PLA. The PLA are currently advertising for replacement Environmental manager.

MS enquired about conservation areas in the lower Thames. RS responded - areas in question are north from the Reculver right across the Thames estuary. Efforts are currently directed towards the drying sand banks to improve conservation of wildlife.

iv. General

RS discussed trade - The cloudy skies of economical depression still linger. Last years figures show a drop of 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.

6. Navigational safety and Consultancy Matters

i. River Incidents

06/12/09	MIMMO IEVOLI	Tanker contacted Thunderer jetty whilst berthing causing minor damage to ship and jetty.
11/12/09	B827 RNLI LIFEBOAT	At night Lifeboat returning from up river to RTP contacted with a mooring buoy off Imperial wharf. Extensive damage was caused to lifeboat and crew suffered some injury.
11/12/09	BONN EXPRESS	Vessel left NHCTL failed to round Tilburyness contacted with Bevan wharf causing extensive damage to wharf. Visibility closed in very rapidly and tugs had to be released early as safety precaution.
01/01/10	HELEN	Fouled propeller singling from Tilbury Grain Terminal Coaster berth and letting go shore wire.
06/02/10	SUMMITY	Vessel on reduced speed set down and fouled propeller and rudder on Mucking 3 buoy. Vessel damaged propeller

20/03/10	KELLY & LITTLE PLUM	Yachts Kelly and Little Plum in contravention of Rule 9 in way tanker Vega Gravesend Reach rounding Tilburyness. Formal warnings issued to yacht skippers
18/03/10	ORASTAR	Whilst topping off cargo of veg oil and a small quantity entered the river whilst loading at Erith Oil works. Company revised loading procedures.
29/03/10	STAR BONAIRE	Vessel involved in two erratic navigation incidents, navigating on the wrong side of the river in Gravesend and Sea Reach. Master received formal warning.
12/04/10	MARCO POLO	Near miss incident whilst un berthing from Tilbury Landing stage and swinging of the berth with outward bound vessel Undine.
16/04/10	NORQUEEN	Whilst ebb tide docking at Tilbury dock stern first, aborted manoeuvre and re entered the river and near miss situation occurred with Vespertine inward bound off Tilburyness
17/04/10	MARIEKE	Marieke on fog contacted with barges at the eastern end of London Gateway Works in dense fog, barges broke free and contacted with one of the dolphins at Coryton 4. Dredging company has revised working procedures in restricted visibility
24/04/10	VICTORINE	Wash and excessive speed complaint vessel passed by Vopak no 1 berth causing cargo loading trip mechanism to operate.
29/04/10	MARCO POLO	Whilst un berthing from Tilbury landing stage, bow contacted with stage fendering.

ii. Inland Waterways – Nothing to report

iii. Olympic Update

Moorings for Olympic visitors are in early stages of planning. RS requested feedback on potential up take. MS reported he had heard there was a shortage of mooring in the upper estuary, but highlighted that it would be very hard to gauge the true demand. RS comment that they are looking at placing putting moorings close to public transport hubs. Charging is an issue. Mooring venture could provide opportunities for waterman and other segments of local trade.

7. Other up dates

- i. MCA
BH gave update to MCA Legislation issues and presentation for District Marine Safety committee brief. Notes attached.

Local knowledge for BMLs is to stay as a formal exam

An area of concern was staff fatigue on vessels. BH requested that if pilots or anyone else see OOW under extreme fatigue please report to the MCA.

Pilots ladder deficiencies whilst boarding and landing BH highlighted importance of early notification to MCA.

New ship inspection regime to come into place for 2011, targeting ships with poor record of defects will inspected every time ships enter UK port others will be inspected at two yearly intervals.

- ii. Environment Agency – no attendance
- iii. RNLI – no attendance
- iv. Police (joint Marine Kent & Essex Unit) – no attendance
- v. Marine police unit – no attendance. See note ii ISPS and Port security, regarding closure Wapping CAD room.
- vi. RYA – no update

8. River Events

Dunkirk little ships event 25/5/10
Southend Airshow 30th & 31st May 2010
Gravesend Town Regatta 12th/13th June 2010
Thames sail barge match 3rd July 2010

9. River Works

i. London Gateway

RS gave a presentation on London Gateway. Methods for dredging and infilling were demonstrated by video animation as well as the sequence for construction. Some areas are expected to break the surface imminently and environmental considerations are being executed to replace areas claimed by the project.

CM reported on the high quality material currently being collected by dredgers, aiding in solid infilling of London Gateway area.

Contrary to initial plans centreline buoys in the London Gateway vicinity will not be taken out. They will be moved slightly by the dredger during operations and will not hinder navigation. RS stated the only gated buoys to remain in the area after the project is finished are sea reach 7 and sea reach 1. RS stated this project is still a long way off completion.

ii. Belvedere Waste and Crossrail

Reports indicate good progress. The generating units have been lifted over the wall and the jetty is almost completed. Unfortunately there is not a date for Belvedere Waste entering service but it is expected to be soon.

iii. Crossrail

It is planned that spoil material from building of Crossrail will be moved to Wallasea island by river. The RSPB has plans to build pontoons for wading birds at Wallasea island. There are a number of issues still outstanding over Pilotage arrangements and with Crouch Harbour Authority to resolve.

iii. Marina developments

RS reported Greenhithe marina was refused planning permission by the local authority but developers have revised their scheme and are in the process of re-applying. Lack of suitable car parking was a key issue why planning permission was refused originally which will need to be addressed.

At Veolia at Rainham there is a proposal for a river leisure development under consideration by local authority.

iv. Wind Generation, riverside locations

RS comments that the PLA have been approached with the possibility of micro tidal power systems at Denton.

RBE reports Tilbury wind generation is going ahead in the next 6 to 9 months.

v. Town Pier Gravesend

Pontoon for Town pier is going ahead and planned to be in place by summer 2011.

vi. Lower Thames crossings - nothing to report

vii. Brit Ned cable

The Brit Ned cable inter connector runs from The Netherlands to The Isle of Grain and follows a line south of the Princes channel across the Oaze deep, Nore to Grain.

10. Any other Business

AH asked whether there had been any progress on formalised mooring arrangements for individual berths.

Action: Issue to be raised for consideration at safe mooring code group.

11. Time/ Date Of next meeting

1030 / Thursday 4th November 2010