

Notes of the River Users Consultative Forum (Lower) Minutes 4th May 2007.

Present:-

Capt Roy Stanbrook	RS	HM (L)
Capt Chris McQueen	CM	DHM(L)
Capt Julian Parkes	JP	MASM
Katherine Harris	KH	PLA (MCT)
Rod Owen	RO	PLA (Pilot)
John Window	JW	PLA
Rev P Boagley	PB	Apostleship of the Sea (welfare)
Richard Lukes	RL	T& GWU
Derek Bell	DB	Svitzer Towage
Steven Cook	SC	Svitzer Towage
Jason Lane	JL	Essex Police marine unit
Jill Goddard	JD	Thames Estuary Partnership
Suzanne Featherstone	SF	Thames Estuary Partnership
David Gordon	DG	The Company of Watermen & Lightermen
PC Bob Read	BR	Kent Police
John Skellorn	JS	RYA (SE Region)
Richard Exley	RE	Port of Tilbury
Neil Dunlop	ND	EA
Laura Dowsett	LD	EA
David Allen	DA	RAFT

1, Apologies: Donald Chard, Lyndsay Thompson, Daryl Godbold.

Meeting opened with RS extending thanks to Gordon Dickins for his long & valued contribution to the port & to RUCF's in particular who has stood down as HM(L) and is shortly to retire.

JS Additionally expressed his appreciation of Gordon efforts over the years on behalf leisure users.

2, Notes of last RUCF meeting 10th November 2006 agreed.

3 Matters arising from 2.

- Use of historical names by VTS is an issue for both Medway & London leisure users is not straight forward to resolve but will be taken forward with new pleasure users guide under development along the lines of Harwich leisure guide, RS commented that he had received feed back from corporate affairs that they favoured retaining existing format because of the difficulty in creating a Harwich style guide covering upper, lower & estuary areas. RS sought views from members on how best to proceed, group felt Harwich style format was worth pursuing feedback received suggested having two guides an upper & lower version and possibility of having combined one with Medway. **PLA to discuss further internally. Action: RS**
- Olympic issues to be added to agenda for future meeting.

4, PLA Sitrep

Safety Management System

JP updated forum

1, Two public consultations are currently underway: Pilot boarding & landing code now closed, Vessel reporting points shortly to close.

2, SMS review of hazards now complete, duplicated hazards have now been identified & merged.

- Amendment to Pilot direction 4 consultation shortly to commence
- River byelaw review ongoing
- New Commercial craft towage code to be shortly published
- ISPS no issues security level remains at 1.
- New EU directive on Port security comes into effect 15th June, UK draft regulation not expected until end of year. New regulation will widen scope of ISPS to cover Port estate beyond the berth.

Environment matters

KH updated the group

1. Intention of PLA to draw up code of conduct for use of personal water craft for Essex side of the Thames similar to that already produced by Kent County Council, initiative being undertaken in response to complaints received last year concerning irresponsible users. A local workshop on 18th May has been organised to include all stakeholders users & local clubs, regulators. RO emphasised the importance of education & safety as well navigation enforcement aspects need to be addressed in guide. BR outlined how Kent guidance code was produced. BR asked if PLA would consider inclusion for provision of fixed penalty notice for certain byelaw offences. BR commented that Kent Police is making representation to HM Medway for similar provision. JP replied saying they would investigate how such provision could be achieved. JP commented inclusion of Col regs within PLA byelaws will be retained as it gave PLA a route to enforce regulation of leisure vessels following decision of House of Lords ruling not to accept PWC as a power driven vessel. SE also commented Kent police are using ASBOs to ban use of PWCs & they are looking at other initiatives to seize cars trailers of PWCs. KH commented that the code should be ready by April 2008.
2. Marine environmental GIS. Purpose of GIS to collate all data from all science disciplines to monitor changes to the environment on the river. Expected to be complete by end of the year.

General

- Mixed performance
- Crude oil overall levels down due to unplanned closure of refinery
- Trade up 5% but fuel traffic down 20%. Unitised traffic, metals and scrap down.
- Trade running below budget for year.

- OIKOS re-opened pipeline to supply 4 million cubic metres per annum of jet fuel airport.

- Bio fuels trials for power generation have ended because of difficulties encountered during transshipment.

5. Navigational Safety & consultancy matters

River incidents

CM reported on incidents since the last meeting

01/12/2006	Cap Formentor	Outbound from TGT inner suffered engine failure while in Gravesend Reach. Rounded into the wind and anchored with bow of vessel between St Andrews camel & RTP. Stern of vessel held off Verifier by Benfleet and RNLI lifeboat pushing up. Tugs Anglia & Cobham mobilised & towed vessel to TLS to effect repairs.
27/01/2007	Havelstern	Outbound from Kaneb lost control while rounding Tilburyness making contact with Northfleet terminal causing minor hull damage to ship and fender / capping damage to berth. Incident thought to be due to tidal effects in combination with ballast condition of ship
14/03/07	Thuringia Express	Berthed on NHCT upper parted her forward mooring lines and broke away from the berth on an ebb tide. Master dropped anchors and stern lines let go / parted. River pilot and tugs attended at short notice and reberthed ship. Cause may be due to combination of deep draft, vessel being positioned well upstream and "unmiddled" moorings.
04/04/2007	Princess Pocahontas	Vessel taking water whilst alongside West Street pier, TOSCA, Marine police 1 & RNLI lifeboat summoned to assist in pumping out engine room.

Inland Waterways

1. Inland Waterways National Standards. New BML in force 1st January. PLA Watermens & Lightermens byelaws have been revoked. JP stated that he thought that majority of new BMLs have been issued. New Technical standards for new builds are fully developed but legal implementation of standards delayed 2008/9, PLA however has adopted these new standards

for PLA vessel licensing regime. RL commented that new BML affects tug crew qualifications & that they no longer required STCW95 qualification.

2. Leisure craft crossing points in lower points promulgation in third party charting. RS commented much information is already contained within electronic charts but is hidden & easier access of information is desirable. The issue had been raised with manufacturers & hydrographic department. JS commented that he would consult on issue concerning safe route around Tilburyness but raised issues of lack of awareness of existence & purpose Gravesend Reach Warning light and private craft tended not to monitor port frequencies.
3. Harwich style Leisure users guide, RS commented that he had received feedback from corporate affairs that they favoured retaining existing format because of the difficulty in creating a Harwich style guide covering upper, lower & estuary areas. RS sought views from members on how best to proceed, group felt Harwich style format was worth pursuing feedback received suggested having two guides an upper & lower version and possibility of having combined one with Medway. **Action: RS & JP**
4. Olympic arrangements. RS commented that PLA internal group is to be set up to look at issues surrounding 2012 Olympic preparation & actual events. Group will look at waterbound transport, port security, cruise vessels visits, leisure craft moorings, fuel & stores availability & booking arrangements.

6. Other Updates

- MCA District Marine Safety Committee JP informed forum that, PLA has been approached by MCA to consider an MCA initiative to merge Thames element of DMSC with PLA RUCF forums, PLA is generally supportive of idea but matter has still to be fully considered by NMT. This forum generally supportive provided DMSC matters can be handled without extending duration & numbers attending of meeting adversely.

Riparian Boroughs

Gravesham events

- 16 & 17 June Town Regatta – river racing both days
- 28th July- Summer Regatta & big day out- river racing with firework finale (not on river)
- 29th July Summer Regatta- river racing
- 18th & 19th August- Shrimpers Regatta- river racing
- Firework display in November TBC

Environment Agency

- ND explained that he is primarily involved with water quality issues & explained that EA is to be working with water companies at tightening up measures on sewage water discharge into the Thames. The calculation of discharge volumes is to be treated in combination with other discharges and not on an individual treatment plant basis in order to improve water quality.
- ND informed forum that a sub nosed sea horse has been found in the river.

London Port Health

RNLI (Gravesend)

- ID informed forum location move from carpark to Royal Terrace Pier to take place in June. ID to take on new role as sea safety coordinator to coordinate sea safety work for leisure users on the Thames. Tests on new Atlantic 85 rib successful in lower part of Thames less so up river. Gravesend will in due course use Atlantic 85.
- JG commented that TEP welcomed initiatives such sea safety work & asked forum to be involved in similar initiatives as its fits in with TEP role.

Apostleship of the sea (Welfare societies)

- PB new seafarers centre in Tilbury docks to be officially 22nd May. Both upper & lower drop in centres proving to be successful. PB standing down from forum. RS thanked Paul for his contribution to the forum & work on the river.

Police

MSU

- DW informed forum to changes are being put in place to make the Thames counter terrorism partnership formed in 2004, aimed at making TCTP more streamlined & effective.

Kent

- BR Nothing to report

Essex

JL will be actively involved in PLA PWC workshop 18th May

7. River Events

26 th May	Medway barge race
27 & 28th May	Southend airshow
16 th June	Greenhithe raft race
16 & 17 th June	Gravesend Town Regatta
7 th July	Pin Mill race
21 st July	Thames sailing barge match
18 & 19 th Aug	Shrimpers Regatta
25 th Aug	Southend barge match

8. River Works

London Gateway

- Decision still awaited, now expected end of May

Town Pier Gravesend

- Proposed restaurant thought to be going ahead but pontoon nothing to report

Gravesend Canal basin

- JS constant maintenance & dredging is required & leakage from the lock gates serious issue still to be resolved, marina is considered to be too small to be commercially viable hence owner encountering difficulties attracting investment & because of problems boat owners are taking their craft elsewhere.

Belvedere Waste & Cross rail jetties

- Nothing to report

Marina Developments

- Developer from Gosport looking at possibility of marina at Thurrock
- Greenhithe marina application planning permission being sought from Dartford size of development and access issues to be resolved.

Wind generation, riverside locations

- Port of Tilbury 3 turbines planned off Tilburyness no further news to report.
- Canvey LNG. Planning permission refused by local authority, to be appealed

Causeways

- Greenhithe is closed for repairs expected to open for weekend 13thMay.
- Holehaven PLA looking at replacing.

9. Any Other Business

1. DW (MSU) Sky television planning TV series on river police & policing.
2. RL (T& GWU) Sought endorsement of idea for regular liaison group for tug crews & operator, pilots, VTS operators to discuss interaction between groups. Forum supported idea.
3. RO (PLA pilot) Expressed concern of the small numbers of tugs based at Gravesend, and lack of back up in event of break down of tugs. DB replied by stating Tug company carefully planned for sufficient tugs matching against planned work & had eleven tugs available for London & Medway but not all eventualities could be covered. RO additionally expressed concern over short ordering for tugs & charges. DB replied short order notice was four hours & charges published. RS commented PLA initiative of an "end to end review"

looking at all processes involved in bringing a vessel into the port and to look at measures to improve & simplify process is underway & will include issues such as tug ordering.

4. DB (Svitzer) informed forum that new owners of Adsteam tugs is Svitzer, livery changes to the tugs is underway & review of organisation structure will follow.
5. DA (RAFT) informed forum that work starts on Prescott lock & channel Aug 2008.
6. BR (Kent Police) Emphasised importance of everyone to keep eyes & ears open for criminal activity on the river.
7. JG (TEP) outlined role of TEP as networking tool & means of pooling information and highlighted close working relationship with PLA . Participation in RUCF has been a useful exercise and wished to build on this.

Date of next meeting 2nd November 2007 at 1030.

Meeting closed 1225