

PLA HARBOUR MASTER'S RECREATIONAL NAVIGATION GROUP

Notes of the meeting held at Pinnacle House on 5th October 2016

Present:

Mark Towns (<i>Chairman</i>)	PLA, Harbour Master Upper (HMU)
Darren Knight (<i>Note Taker</i>)	PLA, Assistant Harbour Master (Recreational)
Jon Beckett	PLA, SMS Manager
Sarah Broad	PLA, Navigational Safety Systems Coordinator

Mike Thomas	Dragon Boating
Peter Finch	River Thames Society
Kevin East	British Canoeing
Tony Reynolds	TRRC Rowing Safety Advisor
Bill Mitchell	TRRC PLA Liaison Officer
Richard Hart	Association of Thames Yacht Clubs
Andy Soper	Dutch Barge Association
Alex Hester	Chelsea Kayak Club
Roger Squires	Inland Waterway Association
Chris Winnington-Ingram	Corinthians Trust
Paul Hyman	Active360 (Standup Paddleboarding)
Steven Angell	Active360 (Standup Paddleboarding)

Apologies:

David Jones	Association of Thames Yacht Clubs
Mike Wardle	Shadwell Basin Activity Centre
Pamela Chart	Association of Thames Yacht Clubs

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Minutes of the PHRNG held on 24th March 2016 were approved.

3. Actions from Last Meeting

- a. AHMR to send the Recreational Users Guide to Chandleries, marinas and clubs in the Thames region. **Action Completed**
- b. AHMR to continue to develop signage at river entry points informing river users of the speed limit and any applicable local rules. **Ongoing action**
- c. AHMR to give briefings to the ATYC and IWA on the PLA and navigating on the tideway. **2016 IWA meeting cancelled. Next one planned for 9th Jan 2017. ATYC Meeting currently being planned.**
- d. PHRNG members to advice of locations where Visitor Moorings would be most useful. Please send suggestions to jon.beckett@pla.co.uk. **Action Completed**
- e. AHMR to update the PLA's list of visitor moorings and investigate ways of publicising them. **Action Completed** – a new Visitor Moorings section online is in the final stages of development which will be published shortly. This will highlight how to make the booking arrangements and this will include the PLA Visitor Moorings which have traditionally been hard to find.
- f. PLA to write a letter to British Canoeing for their support of this scheme and to agree on a way forward to implement this. **Action Completed**
- g. PLA to consider if vessel speed logs could be made public with tidal flow modelling data online. **Ongoing action** – currently in discussions to develop an accelerometer on houseboats at key locations to measure wash issues.

4. Review of TTNC Pre-Season Briefing – Action Matrix Review

- a. All Actions have now been completed barring issues relating to ‘wash’ which are now being managed separately.
- b. ‘Wash Issues’ – Harbourmaster Upper team have been working with the RIB Operators to gain a better understanding as to how they will manage their ‘wash’ and where ‘high-speed manoeuvres’ can take place. This has since been published in the latest edition of the Passenger Vessel Operations Code of Practice, which has generally seen good improvements. Guidance also states minimum passing distances and speeds, which has seen a decrease in the number of incidents reported. However it was noted that these types of commercial operations are set to increase with further vessels being added to fleets, which will typically increase the amount of ‘wash’ – therefore the PLA continues to monitor and work with all river users to ensure a safe environment for all to utilise.

5. Publications Update

a. Paddling Code of Practice

- i. The document has been reviewed both internally and with key external stakeholders in full and is now almost ready for Public Consultation.
- ii. There were some concerns raised about the new requirement to make paddlers utilise the slack water, similar to the rowing patterns.

b. PLA App

- i. This has been in the process for a long period of time and the first draft has now been completed. PLA aiming to launch in January 2017.

c. Thames Byelaw (Amendments) 2016

- i. The Formal Consultation will commence on 12th October 2016 and will be available to comment on until 12th November 2016.

d. Houseboat Mooring Guidance

- i. A draft guide has been completed with informal consultation with various external houseboat stakeholders. The PLA Safety of Navigation Consultation will commence on 11th October and close on 22nd November 2016.

6. Events

a. Online Events Calendar

- i. The online events calendar has been live for the majority of 2016 and the PLA has received little or no feedback on it. PHRNG members present were content with the system and happy with how it works.

7. Review of Incident Report

- i. The incident report was reviewed and is attached in Appendix A to these minutes.
- ii. Member’s attention was drawn to a number of reported incidents of recreational river users passing underneath the weirs at Richmond Lock as they were being lowered/raised. PHRNG member were requested to highlight to all river users how dangerous it is for any river user to attempt to pass underneath the weirs during their lowering/raising. The PLA have improved the guidance regarding this, within the 2017 Recreational Users Guide and will take firm action with all Masters/Coaches moving forward.

Action: Lock Foreman requested to take pictures of any river users failing to follow this advice.

- iii. It was recommended that the PLA contact Waterways World and various boating magazines to give them a safety briefing about typical incidents that occur on the tidal Thames in Feb/March 2017 and have a closing message on the lines of: "Don't be one of these!" It was suggested to also contact 'London Boaters' on Facebook to support this work.
Action: Roger Squires to forward contact details to AHMR and AHMR to discuss with PLA Corporate Affairs team.
- iv. Question raised as to whether there is any chance to get the report form changed to an online reporting form. PLA advised that this is something that we will continue to investigate and will look to introduce when it's feasible.

b. Ebb Tide Flag Stats

- i. The flag stats are from 1st January 2016 until 30th September 2016
 - Red 0%
 - Yellow 12%
 - Green 63%
 - Black 25%

c. Safety Bulletins

- i. Since the last meeting the PLA have not issued any Safety Bulletins.

d. MAIB Safety Bulletin

- i. The MAIB have issued a Safety Bulletin recently regarding Carbon Monoxide Poisoning – SB2/2016:
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a872eed915d096e000000/MAIBSafetyBulletin2-2016.pdf> - would all members please circulate accordingly.

8. River Works

a. Central Navigational Channel Arch Closures at:

- i. **Hammersmith Bridge** – this project is in the early stages of scoping and planning. Concept and feasibility works are due to be completed by November 2017, with the bidding process for contractors commencing in January 2018 and the works due to commence in July/August 2018 however all these dates are quite fluid at present and the PLA will keep all river users informed as we have a firm project plan.

b. Garden Bridge

- i. The project is currently stuck in some legal and planning issues with the South Bank. The Trust is working towards commencing works in 2017, this will pose some challenges for the PLA in managing the construction works and the increasing traffic in relation to Thames Tideway Tunnel works but should be manageable.

c. Thames Tideway Tunnel

- i. Preliminary works at a number of sites have commenced and the project is currently on target. Installation of new moorings is progressing and all additional moorings will be installed by the third quarter of 2017.

d. Nine Elms Reach – Battersea Power Station/Northern Line Extension

- i. Work in this area has yet to commence however once it starts the activity will be substantial. Northern Line Extension works are going to be 24/7 throughout 2018 and will be a main tunnel boring site. Works at Battersea Power Station will commence in 2017 and will last approximately 22-months, once complete there will be a pier for both commercial and recreational traffic.

e. Blackfriars Bridge

- i. Works in the vicinity of Blackfriars Bridge is ongoing and the new Blackfriars Pier has now been installed, opening on 30th October 2016.

f. Fulham FC

- i. The PLA does not have any major update on this project at present bearing that the tree works have been completed and that the design team are currently reviewing the design of the new stand.

g. Proposed New Crossing

- i. **Silvertown Crossing** – this project is continuing to be discussed and the PLA is trying to get agreement for the depth of the tunnel with TfL. However once construction work commences spoil will be moved out by river and the tunnel linings brought in by river.
- ii. **Limehouse Reach Bridge** – the PLA is engaged with the developer and a development envelope has been agreed as the river must come first and as such the development of a bridge in this location is subject to trials in the PLA's Pilotage simulator.
- iii. **Ferry between Canary Wharf and O2** – there is a desire to improve the connection between Canary Wharf (East) and the O2 with a ferry crossing being proposed.

h. Hammersmith Revetment

- i. Works are currently taking place to repair the revetment at Hammersmith at a cost of £1,000 per square metre. Longer term the PLA will need to look at repairs to their entire revetment and are about to undertake a survey of the entire PLA ownership focusing on areas where trees have caused major damage first.

9. AOB

- a. Sediment Concerns were raised by some PHRNG members especially round the moorings at both Wandsworth and Greenwich YC. A question was raised as to whether the Thames Tideway Tunnel (TTT) survey works could be shared/reviewed by members of the public to assist in monitoring those concerns. HMU advised that the PLA continues to monitor sediment movement and there are conditions within the TTT survey works that should there be any potential changes these can be utilised by the PLA for conservancy purposes.

Action: HMU to enquire with PLA Hydrographics as to whether there has been a change in sediment, particularly scaling out in the Hurlingham YC area.

- b. Visitor Moorings – PHRNG membership noted the work which had gone into making Visitor Moorings more visible but there was concern raised as to how to get ashore from afloat moorings? What can the PLA do to improve the situation?

Action: PLA will consider on how to improve this issue over the coming years, especially through closer working with the riparian councils along the Thames via the Thames Vision Project (i.e. the new Barking Riverside Regeneration Project and asking pier owners to change the conditions within their River Works Licence to permit visitor mooring (i.e. Cheyne Walk)

Action: HMU to check that Imperial Wharf Marina and Chelsea Harbour are meeting the requirements of their River Works Licence.

- c. Emergency Moorings – an opinion was made that there needs to be more 'Emergency Moorings' and highlighted accordingly on charts so that these can be considered when planning passages on the tideway. However the PLA would advise contacting London VTS in the first instance who will direct you to a suitable mooring location until the issue has been fixed; be that be mechanical or weather related.

Action: AHMR and SMS Manager to consider adding a section to the 2017 Recreational Users Guide or highlighting the process in PLA Briefings to the recreational community more.

- d. Steam Packet Houseboat Mooring there is a current river works licence application currently being considered, it raises little or no concerns navigationally. Therefore if any PHRNG members have any comments on this proposal, they must inform AHMR as soon as possible so that they can be considered with the PLA's planning officers before the PLA's formal response is given.
- e. Fulham/Sainsbury's Jetty was discussed and PHRNG members believed that there was a potential to establish a paddling club there once the structure is handed over to the local community in a years time.
- f. St. Thomas' Steps, Lambeth was recently used to finish a leg of the SUP Relay but Lambeth Council was unsure who the owners were. Therefore concerns were raised as to whether other owners of steps/stairs along the tideway were aware of their ownership responsibilities and that they should be kept open for easy egress from the river.
Action: Should any PHRNG member have any further concerns regarding this, please advise Peter Finch at the River Thames Society who proactively contacts the appropriate owners to advise on their responsibilities.
- g. Tidal Stream data was requested by the PHRNG membership from the PLA. It was explained this quite difficult for the PLA to collect and provide but would investigate the possibilities again.
Action: AHMR to discuss with the PLA Hydrographics team about the possibility of providing tidal stream data at various points along the tidal Thames.
- h. Kew Pontoon a meeting to discuss the future of this structure is still to be arranged.
Action: AHMR to arrange a meeting with all interest parties by November 2016.
- i. Concerns raised about the illegally moored vessels in the Environment Agency waters and whether they might come downriver into the PLA's jurisdiction. HMU explained that he was in constant liaison with the Environment Agency and was fully apprised of the situation.

DONM: 29th March 2017, 10:30 – 13:30
Pinnacle House, 26 – 26 St Dunstons Hill, London, EC3R 8HN

INCIDENT REVIEW

1st MARCH 2016 TO 30th SEPTEMBER 2016

There have been **15** reported recreational incidents since the last Port of London Authority Harbourmasters Recreational Navigation Group (PHRNG) held in March 2016.. This demonstrates incident numbers have decreased by 60.5% compared to the same period of the previous year. It should be noted that recreational incidents in the upper district account for 17.2% of all the reported incidents in this area, between 1st March 2016 and 30th September 2016.

Monthly Recreational Incident Numbers

2014												
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
4	2	4	8	9	5	9	9	7	0	6	1	64
2015												
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
3	2	2	6	4	5	11	8	4	5	2	2	55
2016												
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2	2	1	3	3	4	1	2	1				

MAN OVERBOARD – 2 (1) There have been 2 ‘man-overboard’ incidents ‘during this period, on both occasions the persons entering the water were not wearing lifejackets. One of these incidents also involved an out of control tender vessel, as the Master’s ‘Kill Cord’ did not activate. These incidents highlight to all river users the importance of wearing the most appropriate buoyancy aid or lifejacket and to check that their ‘Kill Cord’ systems are full functional.

NB: At the last PHRNG the ‘man-overboard’ incident, which had resulted in a fatality, was still under investigation. This incident has since been handed to the Metropolitan Police for further investigation and enforcement action.

(There have however, been contacts and collisions involving man-powered craft resulting in crews entering the river.)

WASH – 0 (0) There have been no reported incidents of wash either encountered by or caused by recreational traffic during this period.

CONTACTS – 3 (2) The trend shows that two contacts have occurred due to rowers not maintaining a proper lookout. Two of these incidents took place at Dove Pier. One concerned a vessel navigating without due care and attention at the end of a training session and the other involved a youth team rowing in an area of which they should not have been rowing. We are still looking into the second incident to ensure young recreational river users are not put into such situations by their coaches in the future.

COLLISIONS AND NEAR MISS COLLISIONS - 6 (3) There has been an increase in the number of reported collisions and near misses:

- Two rowing eights were on an outing with a coaching launch, who had inadvertently activated the kill cord of the launch. One of the eights was unaware of the coaches’ issues and made contact with the stern of the launch, this then began to take on water. The launch then got caught on some overhanging tree branches and sunk. The launch was

later recovered. This has led to a review of the launches and procedures used being updated within the club.

- There were three other rowing related incidents, which were due to not keeping a proper lookout and following the 'Rowing Code'.
- During a sailing regatta there was a near miss with a Thames Clipper which had to take avoiding action and there was also a collision with another sailing dinghy from the same group with another Thames Clipper, although no serious damage was caused to either vessel. The club has since reviewed their procedures and the Masters of the dinghies involved have been warned by the clubs Commodore.
- There was one reported incident of recreational river users passing underneath the weirs at Richmond Lock as they are being lowered/raised. It is highly dangerous for any river user to attempt to pass underneath the weirs during their lowering/raising and as such we have included a new section into the 2017 Recreational Users Guide. This is not acceptable practice and we will be taking firm action with all Master/Coaches moving forward.

We continue to ask members to encourage those they represent to report all near miss incidents to ensure that we gain a clear understanding of what issues there are for recreational river users.

GROUNDINGS - 0 (0) There has been no reported groundings in the last 6 months on board recreational craft.

FIRE / EXPLOSION – 0 (0) There has been no fires in the last 6 months on board recreational craft.

MECHANICAL FAILURE - 1 (2) There has been a further decrease in mechanical failures of recreational craft in the last 6 months. The one reported incident was due to a lost propeller.

BREACH OF BYELAWS & GENERAL DIRECTIONS – 1 (2) The number of Byelaw and General Direction breaches continues to reduce. There was one incident where a cabin cruiser passed a group of rowers creating excessive wash. This incident also highlighted that the coach with the group of rowers became aggressive to the cabin cruiser and therefore we would like to remind all river users not to engage in 'river rage' and to contact London VTS or the Duty Harbour Service Launch, so that appropriate action can be taken by officers of the PLA.

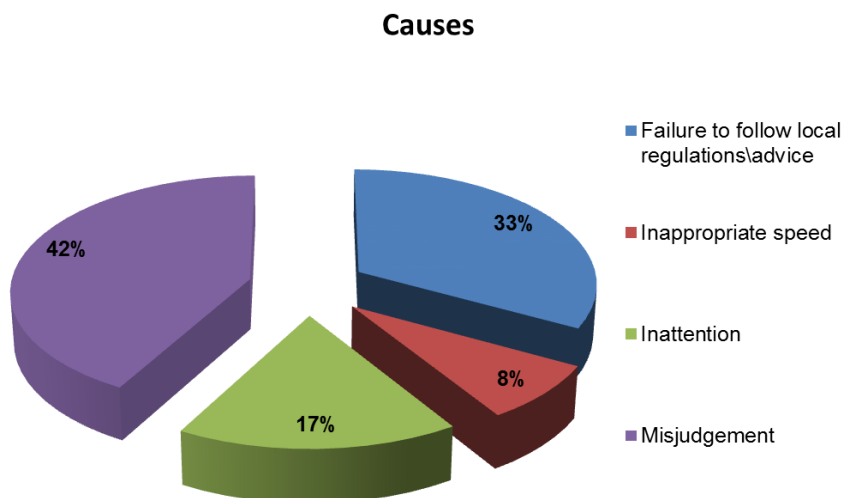
SWAMPING – 1 (0): A square bowed narrow boat left Limehouse Marina inward bound for Oxford and encountered rough water in the Lower and Upper Pool taking on large quantities of water. The fire brigade pumped out the vessel and it continued upriver without any further incident, however due to similar incidents with narrow boat incidents, the 2017 Recreational Users Guide will now include guidance on vessels' suitability for tidal conditions, freeboard and watertight integrity.

LOSS OF HULL INTEGRITY – 1 (0): A narrow boat was proceeding through Kings Reach towards Limehouse Marina and began taking on water due to the seal on the weed hatch not being watertight. The vessel was pumped out however we would like to remind river users to ensure that vessels are properly checked and to ensure that they are fit for purpose when transiting the tidal Thames.

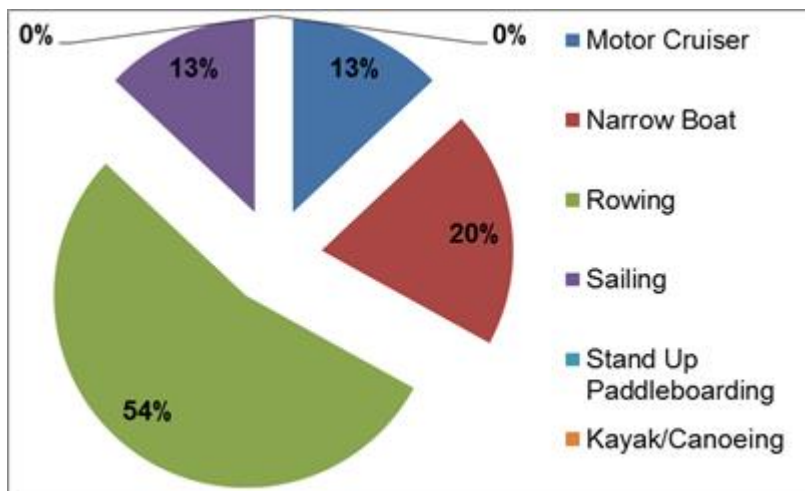
INAPPROPRIATE NAVIGATION – 0 (1): There have been no instances of inappropriate navigation in the last 6 months by recreational craft.

Analysis

In analysing the causes, the overriding casual factor remains to be Human Error, at 80%. Focussing on Human Error, the breakdown is below:



This breakdown shows that the majority of incidents are due to misjudgement and failure to comply with the Byelaws/local regulations. We continue to encourage increasing sustainable use of the tidal Thames for recreational and sport user in a safe and fun environment. With this in mind we have broken down the incidents for the past period into recreational types in the table below.



While we expect that rowing incidents to be the highest percentage of recorded incidents due to the Thames being the centre of rowing in the United Kingdom, we would still actively encourage all recreational river users to report any incidents and near misses, as the number of incidents involving other forms of recreational use appear to be quite low.

Safety Bulletins

During this period the PLA has not produced any safety bulletins, however we would like to draw you attention to the MAIB SB2/2016 regarding Carbon Monoxide Poisoning on board a cabin cruiser which resulted in two fatalities. A simple carbon monoxide alarm would have potentially saved the lives involved and we strongly encourage all recreational rivers users to invest in an alarm at their earliest opportunity.

Note – Figures in brackets are for the previous 6 month period from 1st October 2015 to 29th February 2016