

Marine Director's Annual Report 2016

This year has been slightly unusual for the River inasmuch as you will have seen significant churn in the management team at the Harbour Authority. I replaced David Evans as Harbour Master in July and Wendy Stowe left over the Christmas period to take up the Harbour Master's position in Beaulieu. We have since recruited a new Deputy Harbour Master and Harbour Operations Manager, David Shakespeare and he will take up his new role on 1 Apr. The remainder of the Team is unchanged and you will no doubt come into regular contact with our Environment and Development Officer Alison Fowler, our moorings officer Jane Paull, our office team of Donna Taylor and Charon Baggaley, as well as our regular patrol officers Andy Melhuish, Brett Winslade and Peter Jennings. We will also be bringing in two additional seasonal patrol officers for the coming summer season, Nick McKinnon and Bob Clowes, and will shortly be recruiting for a patrol officer into the vacancy created by David Shakespeare's promotion to Deputy. I have been particularly impressed by the way in which I have been supported every member of the Team over my first 7 months.

From a safety perspective, my first priority has been to conduct a thorough review of our Safety Management system alongside our Designated Person, to make sure that I can reassure the Duty Holder, our Harbour Board, that we are doing all we can to reduce our risks to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable. At this point, I should like to record my thanks to Captain Mark Capon of Regs4Ships, for his support as our Designated Person over many years, and welcome Mr Andy Langford as his replacement for the River. Following our last review of our Safety Management System, in November, we have implemented a quarterly operational safety review meeting to ensure that we continually measure the success of our risk mitigation measures against the incidents we see occurring in the River, as well as against the likelihood of accidents highlighted in external reports such as those published by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch. I am sure that this sensible step will provide us with greater reassurance that we are focussing on what matters most for River Users. There are no major problems or non-conformities this year

In Governance terms, there have been no changes to either the Management Committee or the Harbour Board. I might only add that Chris Moody and David Jobson were re-elected to the Harbour Board.

Financially, we remain in a good position. As a result, the Board agreed this year to use £49,300 originally destined for transfer from the Revenue Reserve to the Asset Enhancement Reserve to reduce Harbour Dues. In the event, the Board decided not to increase Harbour Dues either for private or commercial customers, a prudent decision which has been welcomed in the current financial climate. Our income streams have been as expected and alongside Hampshire County Council engineering team, we were able to deliver and build within budget the much needed modifications to the Warsash Slipway. As part of a sensible rolling programme, we have this year replaced two engines on one of our Patrol Boats in readiness for the new season. These engines are worked hard but, thanks to modern reliability and sensible maintenance, we have extended their working life to two years, which we see as the optimum time for trade-in against replacements. On the financial front, a small surplus is anticipated for the current financial year (FY15/16).

In terms of developments within the River, work has been completed at the Royal Southern and Royal Air Force Yacht Clubs to create the Prince Philip Yacht Haven, which was officially opened by the man himself in July. The Harbour Authority was refused planning permission to extend the Hamble Jetty, but has completed the improvements to Warsash Slipway. The Harbour Authority is also in the process of receiving the various permissions required to connect the Harbour Master's Jetty at Warsash to the existing Fishermen's Pontoon in order to increase the number of tender berths available and so enhance access to mid-stream moorings..

There have been numerous applications to install pontoons on pile and fore-and aft moorings at various locations throughout the River. Each of these also requires planning permission and each is considered on its merits from the navigational safety point of view before Harbour Works Consent is granted by the Harbour Authority.

The winter season saw the completion, on time, of an extensive pile replacement programme by the Crown Estate. The work aimed to minimise disruption to mid-stream mooring holders and sought to make a modest but significant improvement in the number of moorings available in shortage categories. Those moorings are in the course of allocation.

The Harbour Authority continues to provide one-to-one advice for prospective developers and this service has been used extensively again this year. The Harbour Authority also runs the Consents Advice Panel and, although demand has not required a meeting this year, this service, which is recognised nationally as an example of best practice, is still available. The Panel is a chance for people wishing to undertake works in the marine environment on the River to meet informally with consenting organisations prior to an application being submitted and marine consents sought.

Smart Water continues to help with deterring crime on the River and the affect has been very noticeable. Kits are still available from the Harbour Office. Anyone selling Smartwater-marked boats or equipment is reminded to advise Smartwater accordingly.

Following the tragic RIB accident in Padstow, the Harbour Authority has continued to be proactive in campaigning for greater use of kill cords on any boats with an outboard engine. As part of the campaign, floating keyrings have been issued to anyone who wants one, with the words 'Think Kill Cord'.

Harbour Authority staff have, as usual, been broadly involved in supporting many River-wide activities, including the Annual Harbour Master's Charity Pursuit Race for dinghies, the Hamble River Raid and the Bursledon Regatta. This year, The Harbour Master's Pursuit Race, in support of Parkinson's UK, and Hamble River Raid will take place on Saturday 21st May. Bursledon Regatta, with a Rio de Janeiro theme to match the summer's Olympic Games will take place over the Bank Holiday weekend of 27th and 28th August. Additionally this year, we have been engaged in sponsoring and supporting the preparations for the third bi-annual Hamble River Games, which will take place across a number of venues in the River on Saturday 18th June.

Once again, staff have worked with the Hamble River Combined Clubs on the preparation of the latest edition of the River Hamble Handbook and Directory which was published in February. In addition, our own Visitor Guide provides specific information for visiting yachtsmen.

Management of the mid-stream moorings and the moorings Waiting List, on behalf of the Crown Estate continues. The waiting list is still very long for most sizes of boat but there have been more than the usual number of surrenders this winter, so there is hope for those who still wait. A number of additional moorings has been made available in the key shortage category of 32-40ft, providing some welcome movement in the waiting list.

Members of staff have given a number of talks and presentations about the management of the harbour at a variety of venues including sailing clubs and at local Council fora.

Inter-agency co-operation aimed at improving mutual awareness and capability continues to be a relevant safety theme. The recent, very public powerboat accident at the mouth of the River brought with it a number of important command and control lessons. To that end, this year, we held an inter-agency table-top exercise at Warsash Sailing Club involving adjacent Harbour Authorities, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, local Life Boat teams and First Responders. This event resulted in much improved levels of mutual capability and understanding and, importantly, underlined the statutory duties of the Harbour Authority in the event of a disruptive challenge. The Harbour Authority has since hosted a number of visits from external authorities to deliver similar outcomes, including the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Marine Accident Investigation Branch.

In training terms, the recent changeover in personnel has reinforced the importance of ensuring business continuity, in particular in the field of Oil Spill Response. I am attending my qualifying course this week and our new Deputy will be attending his course in a few weeks time. Our Environment and Development Manager remains accredited, and continues to ensure the Harbour Authority's compliance with oil spill response regulation. Our boom deployment exercise will take place at the end of this summer, and is likely to be based on a scenario at the entrance to the River. Our Deputy will be embarking on accredited Harbour Master training courses in May.

The Harbour Authority is an active participant in the Solent European Marine Sites Management Group, ensuring that we, along with other Relevant Authorities, exercise our statutory functions in such a way as to ensure that the Solent European Marine Sites are managed appropriately. Staff also continue to support the work of the Hamble Estuary Partnership (HEP), which continues to provide a valuable network for a wide variety of organisations with an interest in the River. Many and varied talks have been presented to the HEP to ensure all members and their representative organisations continue to learn and remain up to date. It is continuing to lobby for a solution to potential pollution sources relating to the bridges cross the River.

AHTI consultants have been working on a feasibility study for the Harbour Authority, due shortly, which will take initial steps towards ascertaining if there may be any potential to manage

the estuary's sediment, including re-use of dredged material, in such a way that would be of benefit to mudflat and saltmarsh areas.

The Harbour Board continues to part-sponsor a PhD student to evaluate the spatial variation in the dissolution of sacrificial anodes in the Solent.

The River Hamble Safeguarding Agreement (RHSA) is now coming to a close. This contract between Associated British Ports (ABP) Southampton and the River Hamble Harbour Authority was designed to protect the Harbour Authority and other River Hamble stakeholders from any adverse effects of excess sedimentation relating to ABP's capital dredge of Southampton Water. The dredging and associated monitoring programme is now complete. Data analyses is complete and final negotiations are well underway.

The Harbour Authority continues to engage in consultations associated with the Marine Management Organisation's emerging South Marine Plan, Natural England's proposed new Special Protection Area, and the Environment Agency's Seaview 2027 project.