

**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****Report**

<b>Committee</b>	River Hamble Harbour Board
<b>Date:</b>	28 September 2012
<b>Title:</b>	Three yearly safety consultation
<b>Reference:</b>	4259
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

**Contact name:** David Evans

**Tel:** 01489 576387

**Email:** david.evans@hants.gov.uk

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Port Marine Safety Code requires that the Harbour Authority should consult regularly with harbour users, to ensure that any new safety-related issues are highlighted and that appropriate responses can be implemented. This report sets out the results of the most recent consultation.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 A thorough general consultation with River users on navigational safety was last carried out during the summer of 2009 and reported to the Management Committee and Harbour Board in January 2010.
- 2.2 On this occasion, a slightly different approach has been taken. River users were asked (by email) to respond to four questions which, taken together, cover a wide range of the current navigational safety issues on the River. A copy of the questions is at Appendix 1.

## **3. Analysis of responses**

- 3.1. The consultation questions were sent to over 600 email addressees. A total of just 15 replies were received which would suggest that the vast majority of River users are generally happy with safety on the River.
- 3.2. A number of themes were apparent from the replies which were received:
- a. Navigation Aids. There is general agreement that the current navigation aids (both day and night) are adequate and fit for purpose. Nonetheless, the Harbour Authority will keep this under regular review, particularly in the

vicinity of the V pontoons. There is currently no intention of discontinuing the sector leading lights.

- b. **Speed and Wash.** It is not surprising that this topic generated the most comment. The reality is that the Harbour Authority takes speeding and excessive wash incidents extremely seriously (and prosecutes where there is sufficient evidence, followed up by considerable press coverage), but it is obvious that very little speeding takes place where a Harbour Authority patrol boat is present. Thus, stationing a patrol boat near the mouth of the River is a simple and effective deterrent but, on a busy weekend, there are usually only enough staff to man the Harbour Office and one boat. The boat is frequently tasked to deal with breakdowns and similar emergencies and cannot be everywhere at once. Similarly, if reports of speeding in the Upper Hamble are received, a response is sometimes possible, but leaves the lower part of the River devoid of patrol cover for about two hours. Further, there is actually a considerable amount of signage around the River, reminding users of the speed and wash limits – the reality is that people simply ignore signs. Reports from River users of speeding incidents (with photographs and/or video) are very welcome and, even if they do not immediately lead to a prosecution, will help the Harbour Authority to build up a data base of known offenders. The suggestion that the speed limit above Port Hamble should be reduced to 4 knots may merit further consideration. The problem of club launches and the River Taxi exceeding the wash/speed limits is well known but those who complain are often the same people who complain if they have to wait too long for a launch to arrive – in insoluble conundrum.
- c. **Rowing.** Despite the proliferation of rowing activity (and Bursledon Gigs in particular) on the River, this consultation suggests that there are no significant safety issues and that rowing is generally well organised and controlled.
- d. **Paddleboards.** Paddleboards are, to date, a relatively unusual sight on the River. Nonetheless, there is a clear requirement for keeping other River users informed about the presence of such craft, and for actively encouraging paddleboarders to wear high visibility clothing, stay out of the main channel, wear a buoyancy aid and, at night, carry a light. This process has already started and will continue.
- e. **Other points raised.**
  - i. Pontoon ladders have been extensively considered in the past, and rejected.
  - ii. Swimming in the River is not a bye-laws offence. Climbing on pontoons and boats is trespass – a civil offence. ‘Private’ signs are a matter for individual pontoon owner(s).

- iii. The Harbour Authority's stance on the Collision Regulations with respect to small craft in the main channel has already been widely promulgated and is well-understood by sailing clubs and other event organisers.

**4. Way forward**

- 4.1. A number of interesting issues have been raised by respondents to this consultation. Several of the actions suggested are, in fact, already in place. A review of the remainder will be conducted by Harbour Authority staff during the coming months, with a view to implementing cost effective and affordable improvements as soon as possible.

**5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 **It is recommended that the contents of this report be noted.**

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document

Location

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

- 1.1. A full Equalities Impact Assessment for the River Hamble Harbour Authority's compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code has been carried out and this report does not raise any issues not previously covered by that Assessment.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

- 2.1. The contents of this report include reference to speeding offences on the River Hamble.

### **3. Climate Change:**

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? The contents of this report have no impact on carbon footprint or energy consumption.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? Not applicable to this report.

### **Consultation questions**

As part of the River Hamble Harbour Authority's compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code, we are required to consult regularly with harbour users on matters of safety.

On this occasion, I would welcome your views on the following safety-related matters:

1. The location and characteristics of Aids to Navigation (buoys, piles, sector lights, lights etc). Harbour Authority staff, in conjunction with Trinity House, will be conducting a full review later in the year and would welcome your input.
2. Excessive speed and wash. We would be interested in any new suggestions for dealing with this perennial problem.
3. Rowing. There has been a significant increase in rowing activity on the River in recent years. Are any additional safety measures required?
4. Paddleboarders. This is a relatively new activity on the River. Are any new safety measures required?

## **Navigational safety consultation responses**

From Mr Edward Rippier:

*Dear Mr Evans*

*A year ago, I did have a serious mishap on our pontoon V9-V10 by falling in in mid-winter and not being able to get out, despite valiant efforts by two friends. I eventually hauled myself into our tender which was lower than the pontoon, but I very nearly paid the ultimate price because of the time I spent in the water. You may have seen an article in Yachting Monthly on the subject in Summer 2011*

*We have since attached a ladder - in case it should happen again ! I am not sure how appropriate it is for you to insist on all pontoons having a ladder or some other means of getting out, but with the added weight of clothing and no foothold, it is well nigh impossible, even as in my case with two others trying to pull me up.*

*Regards*

*Edward Rippier*

From Mr Robin Sims:

- 1. These are good and I do not see a need to change anything*
- 2. This is a growing problem due to powerboats becoming even more overpowered and the weight hanging the stern down , small ribs going way above hull speed. This we know.*

*We all need to assist by phoning and emailing the culprits names, time and a photo if possible. Warning signs that this will happen could be placed on the river Wash watch in this area.*

- 3. Some paddle boards and rowers seem to think that the centre of the river is the best place to be. I choose the straight line route but I do stop to check I'm clear to do so. I listen and even I have had a surprise.*

From Mr James Pearcy:

*Dear Mr Evans*

*Thank you for your email, I think you have a hard task in balancing the needs of all river users, plus no doubt a tight budget. I hope my thoughts are useful.*

*I reply to you as an interested individual, who;*

*Has been a tenant of the harbour authority "Fleur dEcosse Piles G51-G52 for more than 10 years*

*Has been involved with boating on the Hamble for more than 40 years.*

*Has owned sail and power boats*

*Volunteer skipper with the Rona Sailing Project*

1. *Navigational aids are more than adequate on the river, including for those pleasure boaters who use it at night.*

*If you are looking to reduce costs then I would suggest that the leading lights at the entrance to the river are becoming superfluous.*

*Few boaters seem to know that they exist, port and starboard channel lights are in abundance.*

*GPS accuracy and detail at low range is fitted to most yachts and in a convenient position for most helmsman.*

2. *Speed and wash*

*I think you have an education issue, few boaters look behind themselves, hence they do not see the havoc that they can cause*

*I think one needs to define the objective, and separate speed and wash to Speed and safety*

*Wash and damage to boats, plus discomfort to non marina users.*

- a) *Speed*

*Boats are passing too fast, and too close to dinghies, small sailing boats, and also moored boats.*

- *Suggest a 4 knot speed limit above Port Hamble*
- *Suggest that in the river, sailing boats should proceed under engine where one is fitted. This will stop congestion and angst on busy weekends It will also stop 30 to 40 foot sailing boats blocking the fairway whilst hoisting sail.*

- b) *Wash*

*This is a subjective, since a south-westerly gale against a spring ebb will cause waves in the river that equal the worst wash.*

*Wash causes problems for small boats and in particular rubber dinghies, and makes life unpleasant to those on board moored boats..*

*This is an issue that owners of marina based boats do not understand, since they do not experience it.*

*The consistent major offenders are the club launches and water taxis, yet the patrol boats do nothing about this.*

#### *Suggestion*

*Clarify the 6 knot speed limit, is it through the water or over the ground.*

*Define an acceptable height of wash.*

*The harbour staff in the launches are not consistent in their attitude to speed, wash, and good river manners, this is a training and management issue.*

*Perhaps a database of consistent offenders and threaten to remove their right to use the river*

*Particularly late at night, there are ribs "on the plane" in the river, this is not bad manners but blatant speeding The cost of policing this should be fundable from the fines collected*

3 *Rowing*

*It is good and necessary for the future generations, to see low cost boating on the river.*

*However peoples interpretation of the "Rules of the River" are varied.*

*The Harbour Master needs to make some definitive statements as to "right of way", in regard to small boats appearing from between moored boats into the path of those going up and down the river, and dinghy sailors, who when racing will change tack part way across the river with no notice to those preceding up and down*

*Speed limits mentioned above would also help.*

4 *Paddleboarders*

*Similar thoughts to rowing*

*King regards*

*James Pearcy*

From Mr Jon Oliver-Freeman:

*Dear David*

*Thank you for your mail and the opportunity to input into safety measures, I make my input referring to the sections on your letter*

1. *I find the navigation lights etc in the river very good, well maintained and clear*
2. *Excessive speed and wash. I also have experienced this issue when either enjoying the river in a dinghy, working on a boat.*

*Understanding that you are not able to police the River the whole time. How about bringing the River users to help. Is there a way that you can allow or even encourage the public to take pictures - or even Video of boats that they think are speeding or causing a wash. They can send them in and then you can contact the Owner saying " you have been seen etc etc " just a reminder of the speed and the penalty*

*Could you also publicise Penalties and any convictions in ALL the Marinas on all the gates?*

3. *Rowing. No suggestions here*

4. *Paddleboarders. I think for this a real encouragement regarding visibility/ Life vests for the Paddle boarders I am certain that we all keep a look out but if they emerge from between the moorings they are very hard to see.*

*I hope these are a contribution that help*

*Jon Oliver-Freeman*

From Mr Barney Green:

*Dear David*

*Thanks for the request for input.*

*I am sure you are very busy, and so please forgive the "blunt" manner of reply.*

*I am an individual berth holder (Favorita, V16/17I)*

*Suggestions / Comments.*

***Aids to Nav.*** *I see little to be concerned with here, but am very used to the river. Perhaps canvassing new visitors would give a clearer picture.*

***Excessive Speed and Wash.*** *This has been, still is, and will possibly always be a problem. So many boat users have absolutely no idea what is happening behind them, and our society is so self obsessed that I doubt they care.*

*I suggest that we change the order of information to "Minimise Wash at ALL TIMES .. 6 knots MAX" .. and perhaps something like "you are being watched" ?*

*Many motor boat users do not seem to know how to set their trim, and drag half the river behind them. The great Mr Tom Cunliffe did not help recently by suggesting that motoring should be done "with a positive throttle" for the good of the engine. The sailing racers follow his advice. The other group are of course the kids, let loose in tenders whilst parents relax .. they are normally a local problem, but clearly are not being educated.*

*Do you have any sanction, like on the spot fines (minimal but making the point) ?*

*Do you have budget for some information about "how many fall in when transferring between tender and boat," or the "specific damage to boats and wildlife."*

*Perhaps some amusing but pointed visual signs (I am thinking cartoon type rather than words) at the launch sites and pontoon entrances to the marinas with the strap "Minimise Wash at ALL TIMES" (or similar) ?*

*They could even form a container for the weather report and so attract attention ?*

***Rowing.*** *My understanding is that a rowing boat has no "rights" in relation to the navigation of other craft ? Up at the top of the river we see lots, but they are mostly out of the main channel. Have we an accident problem ? Perhaps they help to keep the wash down (cartoon thinking) !*

***Paddleboarders.*** *Same as above. I think they are helpful in keeping the others boats more aware of their wash. Again perhaps we can get some cartoon signs that remind/warn of consequences.*

*My personal soap box is the vandalism and theft from the swimming youths (particular to our mooring area I fear).*

*Is it allowed to "swim" in the river ? If not, perhaps we could include a sign that shows "what else is in the river" to discourage swimmers, or even show the penalty ....(tricky I know).*

*An alternative would be to explain the damage caused by rocks thrown at the boats, (but could also be a double edged sword) ...*

*Perhaps even a set of "Private" signs would help on the pontoons and piles ?*

**Summary:** *I suggest a set of cartoons that depict the six most significant issues, and that are displayed everywhere along the river (almost like a "brand"). They would need some careful thought, but hopefully would keep the chosen issues front of mind. I think they should be positive rather than threatening ?*

*Overall, even with our "problem," I am amazed at the way the river is run, with so many boats, so much activity, and with (touch wood) relatively few problems.*

*I hope this is of help.*

*Best wishes*

*Barney*

**Barney Green**

From Mr Michael Warren:

*Dear David*

*In response to your email re safety on the River Hamble I have outlined a few points below*

- 1. Lights and markers are reasonably obvious to those who use the river frequently. Navigation lights seen against an urban backdrop are often very difficult to spot unless obviously flashing and of reasonable brightness.*
- 2. Warps seem to wear rather rapidly these days together with the working of tender lines sawing grooves in my toe rail/rubbing strake and is a recent feature largely occasioned I suspect because of increased number of motor boats speeding in the river. Yachts tend to create little wash by reason of their underwater shape but most motorboats are akin to an engineered brick and create significant wash. I also have greatest concern with motor boats approaching the leading mark and channel marker piles at the river entrance at great speed, making it increasingly more dangerous to take in sails before the channel markers, especially when motor boats are also speeding up Southampton Water at the same time, and hence will not even attempt to take in sails until I am well into the river.*
- 3. Rowing skiffs and canoes tend to use the areas outside the main channels and I have no issue with them at all and consider that they do not interfere with anyone to any marked degree.*
- 4. Paddle boards are to my mind inherently stupid and dangerous being too unstable to be used in anything other than very calm waters. The means of*

*propulsion with no real leverage ( as an oar has ) is largely ineffectual and against wind and ebb think that they would in general be in some difficulty and should be banned.*

*Kind regards*

*Michael Warren*

From Jane and Keith Parks:

*Dear David,*

*Where we are moored on J1 we are only to aware of the problems of excessive wash. I am often to be found yelling 'Wash' to passing RIBs mainly. I do get the feeling sometimes that the 'drivers' do not know what that means. Keith and I have thought about this and the following are our suggestions; Pro active harbourmaster boats stopping or slowing people down as they do in Cowes. Reducing the speed to 4 knots above Port Hamble. Lots of very visible signs with the speed limit also No Wash, Slow and Dead Slow placed as often as possible. Education is the main thing. Anyone who has dealings in selling boats, chartering boats(very much so),training folk to sail or motor. Basically anyone who comes in contact with the boating public must be obliged to educate the importance of speed in a river or estuary.*

*Regards,*

*Jane and Keith Parks.*

From Mr William Tracy:

*Dear Mr Evans*

*Further to your email and attachment of 25 June 2012, here are my views:*

### ***Aids to Navigation***

*I do not consider that these require further improvement.*

*The Aids in question are now infinitely better than they used to be, and, if anything, and as I said to you in my letter and paper of 29 February 2012, my view is that they have probably been improved to an excessive and unnecessary extent already.*

### ***Excessive Speed and Wash***

*This is without doubt the most serious of the issues that you raise.*

*From my property, I observe a great deal of the activity on the river between Universal and Swanwick Marinas, along which stretch a significant minority of vessels make excessive speed and/or wash.*

*In particular, there are people in power driven vessels who seem to think, with no little justification, that there is nothing much to stop them ignoring the speed/wash regulation(s) completely in the vicinity of the Swanwick/Brooklands Bend where there are no pile moorings - i.e. to the northeast of J27.*

*It is not unknown to see RIBs and speedboats accelerating to 15 or 20 knots (and sometimes more) over all or part of the stretch in question, and some larger vessels increasing their speed to something noticeably in excess of 6 knots - thereby creating an enormous wash in the process.*

*As for how you deal with "this perennial problem" on this part of the river, then I can only suggest that, if your CCTV camera is not effective (which it seems not to be), you increase your on-water surveillance of the area.*

*Some large prohibition notices on the navigational piles would not go amiss either, I would not think - and could prove to be the most cost-effective partial solution.*

### **Rowing**

*Based on what I see from here, I do not perceive there to be a particular issue with regard to increased rowing activity.*

*As you will know, most of the rowing on this part of the river takes place in the area between the main channel and Hackett's Marsh, and northwards inshore around Lands End towards Bursledon Pool - and so there is little or no 'coming together' with other users.*

*I appreciate there may be more of an issue with regard to this activity downriver from Mercury Marina where there is less free water outside of the main channel.*

### **Paddleboarders**

*Again, speaking from what I observe from here, the paddleboarders invariably keep clear of the main channel, and, perhaps understandably, seem mostly to be in evidence when the river is fairly, or very, quiet - e.g. weekday evenings.*

*I hope that the foregoing may prove to be of some use to you.*

*Yours sincerely*

**William Tracy**

From Hamble Point Marina:

*Having consulted my colleagues the main issue we have is with the wash of vessels. As boats leave the river they are speeding up as they reach our slipway. A more prominent sign facing both upstream and down at the end of the mid river pontoon might help. The only truly effective way is to have a patrol constantly near the mouth of the river and concentrate on wake. Fishing boats at 5 knots kick up excessive wash.*

*I look forward to your conclusions,  
Nick*

**Nick Willis**  
**Lead Dockmaster**  
*Hamble Point Marina*

From Mr William Holliday:

*Dear Mr Evans,*

*Thank you for your e-mail.*

*1). Aids to Navigation – I think the existing arrangements are fit for purpose and are clear for both regular users and visitors.*

*2). Excessive speed and wash – The vast majority of users appear to be considerate, the sign at the entrance is clear : perhaps a duplicate sign a little further in might help. I seem to recall some years ago at busy times a harbour launch had a visible presence at the entrance as a deterrent. I tend to avoid busy times so am not sure if this still happens : I recall seeing boats throttling back on sighting an “official presence”. It saddens me, as a yachtsman, to note than those who offend are not limited to power boats and speed boats. Unfortunately a number of yachts travel under motor at excessive speed creating significant wash, apparently oblivious of the fact.*

*3). Rowing – I haven’t noticed any increase personally.*

*4). Paddleboarders – I’m not sure what a Paddleboarder is and don’t think I’ve seen one.*

*My personal plea would be please don’t take any action which would harm the freedom and pleasure of the vast majority of responsible users.*

*These are purely personal views. I think the River is wonderful, I have been sailing from the Hamble since 1970 – keep up the good work.*

*Kind regards*

*William Holliday.*

From the Hamble River Rowing Club:

*Dear David,*

**Tri-ennial Safety Consultation**

*I write as Chair of Hamble River Rowing Club, after a number of informal conversations with Members of the Club Committee, to present a view on some of the issues upon which you seek responses.*

### **Navigation Aids**

*It has recently been suggested to me, by a boat owner on the channel side of the piles below the red pile at the Jolly Sailor, that The Rowing Club (or the Hamble River Raid) have caused some damage to his boat. I think this extremely unlikely as our boats seldom go in the main channel here and our rowers quickly become aware of the strength of the currents. Any races, such as the Raid, tend to be rowed at high tide when there is little current to draw boats onto the moorings. The Races at Bursledon Regatta all take place outside the main channel.*

*However, there is an issue with the cross currents here for less manoeuvrable boats than Bursledon Gigs. As a regular, Tuesday evening, observer from the Jolly Sailor jetty I have seen numerous powered craft get into difficulty on this corner, underestimating the current taking them onto the piles as the tide ebbs. Large 'Keep clear – cross currents' signs and an arrow on the red pile, facing up river might warn the unwary.*

*The safest place for small boat recreation the River is probably the upper reaches. Reaching this area, safely, through the narrow channel between Bursledon Bridge and the railway bridge is an occasional problem if a less able, or less aware, skipper of a motorboat fails to manoeuvre sympathetically. However, in the three years of the Club's existence there have been no incidents of real concern. I, personally, believe that the narrowness of the channel at this point is a significant hazard, particularly to inexperienced canoeists and kayakers. A warning to power boat users to take special care of small boat users at either end of the narrow channel might be a good idea.*

### **Excessive Speed**

*This is a minor problem to Club rowers as most of our rowing takes place outside the main channel. We instruct new members that they should row outside the main channel wherever possible and endeavour to cross it at right angles when it is necessary to cross.*

*However, the issue of excessive speed in the upper reaches of the river, above the motorway bridge is a concern. Last Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 4 boats (20 people) rowed up to the Horse & Jockey on the high tide. There were a number of small motorboats going at high speed (on the plane) towing ringos or skiers, or just enjoying a fast ride. This was of greater concern to the kayakers and paddleboarders than to rowers, but it is uncomfortable to have a short sharp wash, and, as with many powerboaters, they do not look behind themselves to note the effect their wash has and, invariably go too close to other craft.. The previous Sunday there were, also, a number of offenders.*

*I wonder whether a large notice on the motorway bridge stating 'No waterskiing' and 'Maximum 6 knots on the whole of the river' would make a difference, as might an occasional patrol on sunny, weekend afternoons.*

## **Rowing**

*The Rowing Club now has 75 active members, with the 7 Sea Scout Gigs, and a couple of other Gigs which appear for races, this means that there are more than 120 active rowers on the River. Our regular Tuesday evening sessions attract 30, and sometimes 40 Members and our Sunday morning rows can attract 25. All but 2 of the Club membership live in Fareham or Eastleigh so rowing is providing opportunity to a significant number of locals to enjoy the river. Most of these would not, otherwise, have the opportunity to get on the water.*

*We suspect that the rowing of small inflatable and rigid tenders to cross the main channel so that owners may reach their boats on the piles is a much more dangerous activity than rowing Bursledon Gigs. These small tenders are slow, often are overloaded and seldom have coxes. Our Gigs, normally, have a cox and, with 4 oars can quickly accelerate out of trouble, should they face it.*

*Because so much of the rowing is under the aegis of the Club or the Sea Scouts most rowers understand safe practice on the River and the Collision Regulations. Thus the Club is against further regulation of rowing on the River.*

*I hope these views are helpful. The Rowing Club would be pleased to cooperate in any future deliberations.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Jim Chadwick-Williams*

From Mr Alan Tribbeck on behalf of Marina Developments Ltd

*David*

*I have asked for comments from Hamble Point Marina, Port Hamble Marina and Mercury Yacht Harbour. The responses from the site managers were as follows:*

*From HPM : In response to question 2: the manager suggests that a more prominent sign on the mid river pontoon may assist with excessive wake/speeding.*

*From PHM : The manager has nothing to add.*

*From MYH : In response to question 2: the manager believes that this problem is usually associated with small power boats and RIBs; therefore perhaps MDL's dry stack operators could be tasked with educating users.*

*In response to question 3: Having dealt with this problem on the Itchen, his view is that the rowing clubs need to make their members aware of the rules of the road and their responsibilities towards other river users. Single sculls should be escorted by a safety boat as they are unable to maintain a safe constant lookout. Racing sculls are moving considerable faster than the speed limit – albeit without the wash!*

*In response to question 4: one annual berth holder at Mercury regularly uses a paddle board. The site manager suggests that users could be instructed to stay out of the main channels and perhaps upstream of Mercury in the quieter waters.*

*Kind Regards*

*Alan Tribbeck*

From Mr Phil Clifford:

*Dear David,*

*Re: your requests for contributions to the above consultation; which is in my opinion a constructive initiative - provided that it's responses are considered on a positive light, may I offer the following:*

*With respect to piles V22-26, which are subject to a severe cross-tide on the ebb; between myself and Mr Blewitt we have sustained at least 5 damage collisions whilst our boats are properly on their moorings, plus numerous extremely close near misses. All the above are due to the inability of boat owners to allow sufficiently for this cross tide or, where visitors to the river are concerned (as has been the case for 2 of the 3 collisions sustained by my boat) they are often wholly unaware of the direction of tidal-run in this area, which might indicate ineffective channel marking.*

*It is also a significant concern that NONE of these collisions has been reported ! Although I have been successful in tracing two culprits and recovering monies via the legal system, the first objective is to prevent such incidents in the first place.*

*The value of repairs to the boats on V22-V23-V24 has in recent years exceeded £10,000. Additionally we have as yet been unable to contact the owners of boats on V22-23 and V25-V26 to establish their experiences.*

*The HRMHA has suggested that a sign be established to warn of the tidal hazard here, although I believe that a sign would be no more than an ineffective placebo, contributing little or nothing to the situation. Rather I would suggest that: the RED pile (V26?) which is almost completely invisible to northbound river traffic as it is wholly masked by moored boats, be established as a 'navigation mark' say, some 35' to the east of it's current position. Thus, marking the fact that the safe channel is to the east of the 'V' moorings and not through the moorings.*

*I note that you have established a new green pile off Swanwick Hard although it's need is difficult to discern. However, this does establish a principle that a new pile may be established to enhance safety/navigation. And this is the principle behind my request for a navigation mark to the north and east of the 'V' Piles, where there is an established pattern of collisions with moored boats, a pattern which confirms the continuing presence of a RISK to SAFETY.*

*I would request that you look carefully at the situation in this location, a situation which can only deteriorate with the changes at Deacons and especially with the imminent changes at Premier Marina, and that you take prudent and seamanlike measures to improve navigational safety. To this end I would be happy to make myself available to discuss the issue.*

*Regards*

*Phil Clifford*

From the Hamble Sea Scouts:

David M Evans  
Marine Director and Harbour Master  
Harbour Office,  
Warsash  
Shore Road,  
SO31 9FR

Dear Mr Evans

In response to your recent safety consultation I write to provide the response of the Hamble Sea Scout Group to the specific points that you have identified.

**Overview of the Hamble Sea Scout Group**

I am sure you, and many on the river, are familiar with the nature of our organisation. By way of overview we can trace our roots on the river back over 100 years. Today we have around 150 members, spread across all scouting sections ranging from 6-25 years old, in addition to a large number of adult supporters. We provide a range of boating activities, including kayaking, canoeing, rowing, dinghy sailing, keelboating, yachting, dragon boating and powerboating. We are an RYA recognised training centre, and provide boating opportunities for our members on the river on average of once a week.

**1. Navigation aids.**

We believe the current navigation aids are sufficient for the river. We do however note an increasing number of marks appearing. We believe that there are sufficient marks in the river, and that any further increase is unnecessary in view of the likely cost involved. As users of the river for training purposes, often in smaller boats, the less congested areas of the river are particularly useful to us and should not be cluttered with additional marks.

Whilst as an organisation we only make limited use of the river at night, we find the sector light at the mouth a useful teaching aid for demonstration purposes.

**2. Speed.**

We have not noticed a change in the number of vessels exceeding the speed limit this season, and do not believe the problem has become more significant this year.

**3. Rowing.**

Rowing has been one of our core activities on the river since 1908. As such we are the most established rowing organisation in the local area. We currently operate 10 rowing boats, ranging from 4 small single/ double handed stem dinghies, 4 Bursledon gigs, and two larger Cornish derived longboats, and have occasional access to a rowing skiff.

We have a range of rowing experience within the group, from complete novices to experienced racing crews of all ages who regularly compete in both local and national events, and who hold a variety of rowing trophies including numerous class trophies at the Great River Race on the Thames, in addition to success in various local events. Our rowing activities range from specific novice training sessions conducted as a group of boats to more informal independent recreational rowing and training at various time throughout the week and weekend.

We have supported and encouraged the growth of rowing on the river. We have run various rowing events, including the former Hamble week gig races, and assist with the Hamble River Raid event (organised by an independent body for the benefit of the group), and have advised others, including the Netley Regatta in organising rowing events. As such we are well placed to comment on proposals in relation to rowing on the river.

Whilst the number of rowing boats has increased, (although arguably not more so than were present on the river as working/ fishing boats/ tenders without engines in the past) we have not identified any particular safety issues arising. Rowing boats are generally maneuverable for their size, and are not influenced by wind in the way that sailing dinghies are (they do not get becalmed, and do not capsize in strong wind).

We believe that there are now around 25 Buledon gigs in the local area, however it is very rare for them to be in use at the same time, (with the exception of a limited number of recognised events), and so have minimum impact on other river users.

For these reasons we can see no reason to be concerned with increasing numbers of rowing boats on the river, or for any form of specific or special provisions in relation to rowing craft on the river, and would comment that it is nice to see the river being used for something other than as large marina.

#### **4. Paddle boarding.**

We have noticed the increase in paddle boarding both locally and nationally. We wait to see if the sport becomes established, and may one day look at offering it to our members. A paddle board is no more unstable than a kayak or Canadian canoe, and we can see no need to be concerned with their operation in the river.

Whilst not part of your specific consultation, we have experienced several incidents this season where yachtsmen have been threatening/ intimidating/ or rude to our younger members for no apparent reason. This would appear to occur when yachts are attempting to overtake slower/ smaller boats in the fairway, or want enter/ exit marinas and are impatient in waiting for an appropriate gap in traffic. It would appear that some who purchase a yacht (or large boat) believe they have also purchased exclusive rights to the river, and that all others, especially smaller boats should move out of their way, irrespective of the relevant collision regulations provisions. We believe this has become more noticeable this season. We recognise that there is little that can be done to address this issue, although never the less believe it should be brought to your attention.

Yours sincerely

From the River Hamble Mooring Holders' Association:

*Dear David,*

*We thank you for the opportunity to respond to the three year safety consultation. We have not, on this occasion, had time to consult all our members but have discussed the matter in Committee and are aware of previous remarks made by our members.*

#### *Navigation Aids*

*We are sure you are aware of the concerns of certain of our Members about the number of accidents that have occurred at 'V' piles at the corner near the Jolly Sailor and adjacent to Premier Marina. Members have suggested that additional signs be displayed in that area which read "Beware strong cross tides and turbulence exist in this area" and that they should be attached to the northern most piles on 'Y16' and 'V26' piles warning vessels travelling down river.*

#### *Speed and Wash*

*Our members are, of course very concerned about the excessive wash caused by certain users of the river. The solution may be that adopted in certain other harbours, in which the harbour authority patrol craft are on patrol in the River or Harbour for a greater proportion of the day, and give verbal and written warnings.*

*As the Warsash slip is the most commonly used by occasional users, it is particularly important that speed signs are clearly displayed in the vicinity of that slip.*

*We suggest that the emphasis should be placed on the education, and secondly enforcement of those persons operating vessels that use the river daily or at least several days a week. We refer to the taxi, commercial work boats and week end club launches. In view of the frequency of their use and in some cases the ratio of their engine size to their waterline length, they have the greatest potential to be a cause of excessive wash.*

*We ask that the Harbour Office concentrates its attention to the education of work boat operators, club launches and taxi operators.*

#### *Rowing, Paddleboards and Canoes*

*We have added canoes to our response as the largest increase in river users in recent years has come about as a result of the development of lightweight and inexpensive plastic canoes. We know of no regular difficulties and are aware that you know about the recent incident involving the testing of bow or stern thrusters.*

*As a generalisation we believe our Members welcome the increased use of the river by a wider section of the community as we believe that the majority of people involved are local, living in Hampshire and mostly from Fareham and Eastleigh. They represent a counterbalance to the increasing number of large motor vessels, of which a greater proportion will have London or similar connections. Should there be a proposal to modify or restrict the use of these small craft in any way we urge that it is*

*the subject of the widest prior consultation within the Community and not restricted to the known river users.*

*We hope that you will find these suggestions of use during your three yearly revue.*

*Yours sincerely*

*J F Mitchell*

*Chairman – River Hamble Mooring Holders Association*