

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	River Hamble Harbour Board
Date of Decision:	29 January 2010
Decision Title:	Navigational Safety Consultation
Decision Reference:	1218
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. During the summer of 2009, the Harbour Master carried out a web-based consultation on navigational safety in the River Hamble, as required by the Port Marine Safety Code. The consultation did not reveal any major concerns about navigational safety, but this report sets out the details and identifies possible actions in response to the minor concerns.

2. Results and proposed actions

- 2.1. A total of 129 people responded to the consultation. Of these, all but 31 were mooring or berth holders on the River. 110 respondents were boat owners or users. 82 (63%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with navigational safety in the harbour. The concerns raised by the 47 respondents who made further comments about navigational safety are summarised in para 2.3 below.

- 2.2. Satisfaction rates in response to more detailed questions were very high, as follows:

Service provided by Hamble Harbour Radio	94.1%
Patrolling to uphold bye-laws and ensure safety of the harbour	80.2%
Navigation lights, beacons and buoys	94.4%
Safety of events	90.8% to 98.7%
Safety of other activities	84.6% to 94.9%
Safety of commercial fishing in the harbour	78%

- 2.3. Many comments did not relate to matters of navigational safety and are not considered here. Detailed comments and proposed responses/actions (in italics) are set out below. Some are an amalgamation of two or more similar comments:

Operation of Hamble Harbour Radio – no adverse comments, but one respondent asked for more detail about what the service can provide. *It is proposed that this could be addressed by an item on the website, in future newsletters and in the River Hamble Directory.*

Patrolling to uphold bye-laws and ensure safety of the harbour – a number of interesting comments were made, as follows:

- There should be more patrols during the evenings at the height of summer. *Patrols (usually one boat) are carried out until about 2200 most summer evenings, and up until midnight on summer weekends. Increasing the number of patrol boats, or extending beyond midnight, would have significant staffing and cost implications.*
- Users of the upper Hamble sometimes disregard the speed limit. *This is a well known problem, but it is rare that this takes place in clear view of the Patrol. More frequent patrols would help to discourage speeding but there are staffing and cost implications.*
- There should be more covert patrolling. *Covert patrols are already used quite extensively but, by their very nature, are rarely noticed by River users.*
- Motor boats go too fast and create too much wash. *It isn't just motor boats – a sailing vessel under power at, or near, hull speed can create a huge wash. Offenders are warned (either verbally or in writing) and serious or repeat offenders will be prosecuted (however, prosecutions are expensive and successful convictions cannot be guaranteed).*
- Surveillance of speeding at the harbour entrance is too infrequent. *Patrols operate in this area during busy periods when resources and other events allow.*
- Patrols are an expensive waste of time. *Regular patrols are an important control measure identified in the harbour Safety Management System. The very fact that that so many other respondents would prefer to see more frequent patrols suggests that they are not a waste of time.*

Navigation lights, beacons and buoys:

- The starboard-hand buoys in the middle of the River are a waste of money. *The four starboard-hand navigation marks serve to clarify the location of the main channel in the busy area between Hamble Point and Stone Pier Yard, particularly for vessels entering the River at night. Many users have commented favourably since their installation.*
- Many of the port and starboard posts are in need of a re-paint. *Following a successful trial, a phased programme of fitting reflective panels in lieu of paint is currently underway.*
- It is not easy for visiting yachts to know where to go: *There is clear information in the well-known pilot publications and almanacs, and the Harbour Authority endeavours to keep this as up-to-date as possible. There is comprehensive signage located on all visitor berths. Alternatively, visitors can call Hamble Harbour Radio on VHF channel 68 for additional information.*

Safety of events and other activities:

- Some dinghy sailors need to be reminded that a heavy displacement craft cannot stop instantly when a dinghy tacks in front of it: *This may be true, but it is also true that some skippers of larger vessels have little awareness of the speed and manoeuvrability of a dinghy.*
- Motor yachts ignore the Collision Regulations and expect dinghies to get out of their way. *Large motor yachts are normally restricted to the main channel. The Collision Regulations are quite clear on this matter: “a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway” and “a vessel shall not cross a narrow channel or fairway if such crossing impedes the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within such channel or fairway.”*
- Dinghy and Gig racing should not be done in the main channel: *This is partly agreed, but does not generally happen unless the event has been pre-notified by a Notice to River Users and a Harbour Authority Patrol Boat is in attendance.*

In view of the comments above, it is proposed that the risk assessment for dinghy racing and gig racing in the harbour should be re-appraised before the spring of 2010.

Safety of commercial fishing in the harbour:

- It is difficult to see lobster pot markers: *Lobster pots are not allowed in the harbour. Any that are found are quickly removed by the Patrol.*
- Surprised that commercial fishing is allowed in such a busy harbour, especially at weekends: *Commercial fishing in the harbour is carefully regulated and licensed by the Harbour Authority, taking into account the navigational safety aspects. A very limited number of licences are issued, mainly for the winter months, and the activity is closely monitored. The Collision Regulations do apply with regard to fishing vessels in the harbour.*

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Harbour Board to note the comments above, approve the inclusion of more details about Hamble Harbour Radio in future newsletters and the Hamble Directory, and initiate a re-appraisal of the dinghy and gig racing risk assessments .**

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Business 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.)

DocumentLocation

None