



River Hamble Safety Newsletter 2/22





Welcome to this second update on safety matters in 2022 which comes at the end of the season in a changed format. The content of previous versions has received some constructive feedback, for which I am grateful. As usual at this time of the year, I aim to reflect on observations made over the Summer and highlight trends which River users may find helpful when planning their time on the water.

It is in the nature of this type of note to focus on what can go wrong – I make no apology for that. For many, the subject matter will seem obvious. For others, regardless of experience or skill, we should all agree there are always lessons to be learned.

This note is not about ‘pointing the finger’. It is my hope that publishing these observations will help everyone enjoy their time on the water more. I would be grateful if you could help me spread the word.

July and August's fine weather saw all activity levels approaching those of last year. Within the volume of traffic experienced, the number of reported incidents has been thankfully relatively low. Some previous trends have been arrested but others have developed. Among the constants in collisions are flaws in both planning and execution. No matter what our levels of experience or currency are, complacency cannot be allowed to set in and we can all benefit from asking ourselves whether we are correctly prepared when venturing afloat and whether those crucial Rules of proper look out and safe speed are being adhered to when under way. As the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents at the Marine Accident and Investigation Branch repeats every year, time spent planning is never time wasted.

The latest [MAIB Safety Digest](#) is always worth a read. In this edition, there are some useful lessons about swimming, finger entrapment, hull integrity and speeding; all relevant to our community.

Review of Trends



Speeding



Speeding incidents last year featured more often than not in the mouth of the River. This year evidence suggests that the pattern has changed. Of formal warnings recorded over the Summer, over 95% were given between Warsash and the M27 Bridge. Of those given official warnings, 9 were riders of Personal Water Craft and 12 were to skippers of Motor Vessels, including RIBS. All these Motor Vessels were River residents. Among the reasons given in mitigation were 'I'm late' and 'I wasn't aware of the speed limit'. Neither is of course justifiable mitigation. Sound planning is the cornerstone of a safe and enjoyable day on the water. Knowing the speed limit and other rules in a managed area of waterspace is fundamentally important. Speeding because of poor planning is unacceptable. A similar conversation with a Police Officer on the road about speeding is an obvious analogy. The unfortunate hubris attached to the explanations of a few is disappointing, the more so when certain qualifications are deployed as apparent justification that the Rules are not universally applicable. For the great majority who adhere to the Rules for the benefit of all, this reminder will be unnecessary, but I would be grateful if we could all reflect on this and spread the word. The Harbour Office has this year also commenced investment in new evidential quality CCTV technology

which will eventually reach to the upper River. Flaunting the Rules believing to be out of sight of Patrol and the Harbour Office will become much more difficult.

Groundings



Fewer groundings have been recorded this year. The inference is that, at least in part, the word has got round after the issue of our previous Safety Newsletters. It is worth recapping: last year, I mentioned a spate of groundings on Hook Spit between numbers 7 and 9 Marks South West of Warsash College Jetty. As many will be aware, it is always worth considering the steepness of the gradient outside the Main Channel that exists beyond the line between the Marks. The strong Spring ebb can mean a loss of 60cm in the height of tide there within 30 minutes.

Paddleboards and Small Craft



Recent safety newsletters have focused on the mutual responsibilities between small craft and larger vessels in this area to consider and take into account each others' constraints in the prevailing circumstances and conditions. That focus should continue to apply. With the popularity of these craft increasing and accessibility to the River straightforward, it is no surprise that the Hamble becomes very busy and conflicts of interest can and do arise. The number of reported incidents will be surprisingly low to some if not many, particularly in view of this Summer's fine weather. Close quarters situations, as well as capsizing which introduces people into the water, may occur more frequently than reporting levels indicate. It would be helpful to gain more accurate data. I would therefore encourage reporting when appropriate. I would also ask for people to report such incidents wherever they are witnessed, mindful of a developing trend for wind-foiling near Warsash.

Anti-Social Behaviour



Anti-Social Behaviour has unfortunately taken place again this year in various locations. The centre of Police attention has remained Hamble Village and Quay where large groups of younger people from both the local and greater Southampton areas have continued to congregate between the months of April and September. The impact on River Users during the Summer months is that

legitimate use of Hamble Jetty, a public space, has been made frequently difficult. Joint work with the Police, local and Borough Councils has continued to bear down on swimming unsafely, trespassing on private property, engaging in criminal damage, fighting, theft, and threatening behaviour.

A number of arrests have been made with one potential prosecution. At a routine end of season meeting with the Police, it was revealed that 34 incidents had been reported and that the Police had attended on 11 occasions. 39 young people have been positively identified with follow-up action being taken in the form of letters and visits.

The Police have asked us to reiterate that those witnessing anti-social behaviour should report the matter to them using either the 101 telephone or on-line reporting facility, or, if necessary, by calling 999.

The Harbour Patrol attended the Jetty to disperse swimmers on 67 occasions over 41 days this Summer. It will do so again as necessary next year to make use of Body Worn Camera evidence to help the Police identify and take action against perpetrators.

Contact Us



If you would like to contact the Harbour Office on these or any other matters, please email on harbour.office@hants.gov.uk or call on 01489 576387. Please visit our website too for further information [The River Hamble | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk)