



Brightlingsea
Harbour
Commissioners



Personal Watercraft (PWC) Strategy

Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners (BHC)
October 2018

Background

- 2016: Various issues with behaviours of PWC (and some power boats) in Harbour and River Colne
 - Speed
 - Behaviours, especially close to others
 - Verbal abuse
 - Noise
 - Wash
- BHC looked at options, consulting with
 - Marine Police,
 - Colchester Borough Council (CBC); responsible for River Colne),
 - Personal Watercraft Partnership (PWP)



Personal Watercraft Partnership (PWP)

- PWP is sponsored by PWC dealers and supported by the RYA, BMF, marine insurance industry and others.
- Encourages responsible PWC ownership
- Endeavours to help authorities implement effective PWC management schemes for the benefit of all.
- Developed guide to help authorities manage PWCs
 - http://pwp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/MPW_Jan08.pdf
- Used by BHC to help develop our strategy



Outcome of BHC 2016 review of PWCs

- BHC are required to enable access to the water for all legitimate users
- PWC owners are Harbour Stakeholders and legitimate users of the water.
- Most PWC users are not aware of the traditions, rules or expected courtesies on the water
 - Though all new PWCs being sold with a voucher for a 'free' RYA intro course
- Bans are hard to enforce, are resource intensive and confrontational
- Prosecutions are expensive and time consuming
- You get the behaviours you encourage
 - Bans and confrontation seem to 'encourage' some PWC users to seek confrontation and break rules
 - Better to develop an approach to encourage the behaviours we'd like to see

Further outcomes of BHC 2016 review

- BHC has authority in the Harbour limits only.
 - Plus navigational safety (buoyage) in the River Colne
- CBC is responsible for River Colne, including River Colne byelaw enforcement
- A more open and welcoming approach might encourage more responsible behaviours from PWC users
 - Past experience shows exclusion doesn't work
- Essex Marine Police unit and CBC agreed to work with BHC to incentivise, educate and if necessary prosecute
 - Police focus their efforts on days of action around busy weekends
 - With additional “ad hoc” visits

Action and progress since 2016

- BHC 2017 launched “Welcome Everyone” leaflet.
 - Includes setting out the rules
- Notice boards showing speed limits provided
- HM actively engaging with visiting PWC owners to inform and educate
- PWCs permitted to launch from town hard.
 - Allows harbour staff to talk with PWC users and educate
- CBC undertaking prosecutions, supported by BHC and police, for speeding in River Colne
 - Motorboat owners & PWC users prosecuted. Speed and wake is not just a PWC problem
- 2018. BHC encouraging the formation of RYA PWC training establishment & club
- BHC hope that peer pressure from responsible PWC users will help improve behaviours
 - “Don’t spoil our welcome here”



Welcome Everyone leaflet

THE LAW
Speed limits are in place to prevent anti-social behaviour and ensure the safety of all river users. If you violate the speed limits you will be prosecuted and if convicted receive a fine of up to £2,000.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR INCLUDES:
Speeding
Disturbing vessels
Disrupting commercial operations
Generating excessive wake near moorings
Disturbing Nature Reserves
Damaging saltmarsh

DANGERS AND SAFETY
If you hit a fixed object even one partially submerged not only will you damage your vessel it is likely to lead to serious injury or death.
Playing in the wake of other vessels.
Riding a ships bow wave.
If you hit a swimmer you will seriously injure or kill them.
If you don't know the rules of the road your risk of collision is very high and you will definitely be prosecuted.
Safety Lanyards - Never operate your Power Boat without the safety lanyards attached to you. The lanyard will cut the engine if you fall from the craft.

INSURANCE AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT
Ensure that you have (and carry proof of) adequate public liability insurance and ID before using your Power Boat. Ensure that you hold a copy of the registration certificate.

Personal Equipment	Power Boat Equipment
Suitable clothing	First aid kit
Buoyancy aid	Full tank of petrol and oil
Safety lanyard	Fire extinguisher
Sun-cream	Flare pack
Foot Protection and gloves	Reps and suitable anchor
Whistle	Radio
Torch	Paddle
Tool kit	
Paddle	

WELCOME EVERYONE

We hope everybody enjoys the water whatever craft they are on, however it is important to respect other users and obey the rules.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
Birds and wildlife are frightened by excessive noise.
Saltmarsh is damaged by speeding too close to the shoreline which reduces the flood defences. Many species of bird are protected by Law. Maintain a steady direction and a slow 'no wake' speed if wildlife is encountered.
Do not harass, chase or try to feed wildlife.

TRAINING
RYA 1 Day Course competence course which teaches you how to get the best out of your craft.
Where possible, join a local club.
All details from Harbourmaster - 01206 302200 or from any RYA Training Centre www.rya.org.uk

GET IN TOUCH
Brightlingsea Harbour Office - 01206 302200 VHF 68
Brightlingsea Harbour Police Officer - 101
Email: marine@essex.pnrs.police.uk
Colchester Borough Council

WELCOME EVERYONE

Map is for illustrative purposes only, do NOT use for navigation.

OBSERVE THE SPEED LIMIT

4

5

8

NO LIMIT

...OR FACE A FINE OF UP TO £2,000

REPORT SPEEDING ON TEL: 01206 302200

● Strictly 4 KNOTS or slower in these areas
● Strictly 5 KNOTS or slower in these areas
● Strictly 8 KNOTS or slower in these areas
NO LIMIT There is no speed limit in these areas

This is supported by prosecutions

- Carried out by CBC legal team using police evidence
- Prosecutions have covered PWCs and motorboats
 - August 2018 “KNOTS SO FAST! JET SKIERS HANDED OVER £1300 IN FINES FOR SPEEDING.”
 - <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=latest-news-august&id=KA-02221>
 - May 17 “Three people have been fined by magistrates for breaking speed limits. Magistrates fined one (motor boat) £440 plus a victim surcharge of £44 and £250 costs; another (motor boat) was fined £1360 plus a victim surcharge of £136 and £250 costs, while the third (PWC) was fined £720 plus a victim surcharge of £72 and £250 costs”
 - Plus others in summer 2017

Observations

- The Commissioners believe that PWC behaviours within the Harbour (inside line from Batemans to Martello Tower) have improved
 - Not perfect or even good enough, but better
 - Seen PWCs slow down and less silly behaviour
- Similarly, we believe, behaviours in the River Colne close to the harbour have also improved
 - But not as good as in the harbour
- Behaviours ‘up river’ (eg Wivenhoe) reported & observed as not improving; especially speeding and wash close to boats / tenders

What's next?

- Create PWC (small powered craft) berthing area
 - This allows BHC to better control PWCs
 - Insurance, education and ultimately threat of losing berth
 - Priced to encourage PWC owners to launch from Brightlingsea, rather than elsewhere on the Colne
 - Using part of harbour not suitable for 'normal' moorings
 - Will also be available to other small powered craft, not just PWCs
 - It may not work, but BHC think it is worth trying. Our work since 2016 gives us encouragement
- Discussions with CBC and others about how to further improve behaviours in the upper reaches of the Colne Estuary
- Continue with 'days of action' and PWC user engagement

The BHC approach is

- As long as PWC (and other boat) users follow the rules and show courtesy to others, BHC will
 - Actively welcome PWCs (and other boat) owners,
 - Provide easy access to the water
- If PWC (and other boat users) break the rules or are discourteous , BHC will cooperate with the Marine Police and CBC to
 - Prosecute those who break the rules
 - CBC takes the lead on this
 - Withdraw berthing from those who consistently break rules or are discourteous.
 - Forfeiting their remaining berth fee