CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ORGANISED EVENTS

LYMINGTON RIVER / HARBOUR AREA

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CONTENTS

		Page
Introduction:		2
Aim of this Code:		2
Scope of this Code:		2
Section 1 – Risk Assessment		
1.1	Basis of Risk Assessment	2
1.2	Identified Risks	2
1.3	Control Measures	3
1.4	Audit and Review	3
1.5	Application	3
Section 2 - Responsibilities		
2.1	Event Organisers	3
2.2	Participants	3
2.3	Harbour Authority	4
Section 3 – Forms		4
3.1	Event Notification Form (F1)	5
3.2	On the Water Incident Report Form (F2)	6
Section 4 – Risk Assessment and Control Measures		7
4.1	Risk assessment	8
4.2	Control Measures (Planning / Communications / Control During Event)	9 -11
Annex A - Notification of Peak Traffic Dates		12
Annex B - Plan of River Zones		13
Annex C - Reportable Incident Definitions		14

DEFINITIONS

ALARP -	As Low as Reasonably Practical
Control Measures -	Measures used to reduce risk to acceptable levels including (but not limited to) those measures contained within this code. Risk should always be reduced to a level that is As Low as Reasonably Practical
Events -	Events include (but are not limited to) all: Races Regattas Other recreational events Events involving training in sail, power or rowing.
PMSC -	Port Marine Facilities Safety Code
Organiser -	A club or organisation arranging an Event on the Lymington River
Organisers Policies & Guidelines -	Published Documents demonstrating how the club or organisation adopt a safety led approach when organising/running events.
Participants -	All persons taking part in an Event.
Race Officer -	Trained person approved by the organiser for running the race in accordance with the Risk Assessment and the organisers Clubs policies and Guidelines.
Race Official -	Any person approved by the organiser to assist the race officer with the management and organisation of the race in accordance with the Risk Assessment and the organisers Clubs policies and Guidelines.
Risk Assessment -	An assessment of Risk for an Event by the organiser in accordance with the provisions of this Code of Practice.

Introduction:

As the Harbour Authority for Lymington River, The Lymington Harbour Commissioners are committed to complying with the Port Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC), a national standard set by the Department for Transport for every aspect of port marine safety. The PMSC is periodically reviewed and updated, most recently in April 2025. The PMSC is based on the principle of assessing and identifying risks involved in marine operations and managing those risks so that they are As Low as Reasonably Practical (ALARP). Recreational events are included in marine operations.

After consultation between the relevant local clubs/organisations, the principle commercial operator in the harbour (Wightlink), and the Lymington Harbour Authority this Code has been developed to meet the needs of all interested parties and will be updated as required. A committee representing interested parties will meet annually to ensure this Code remains pertinent and fulfils its purpose. A copy of this Code will be published on the Lymington Harbour Commissioners website.

Aim of this Code:

To assist Organisers meet their responsibilities and manage events safely by referring to the risk assessment and the Control Measures detailed in this Code.

Scope of this Code:

This Code applies to all organised Events where participating craft come within the jurisdiction of the Lymington Harbour Commissioners. Important: The provisions of this Code are supplementary to the Lymington Harbour General Directions (2014) which apply in all cases.

This Code does not apply to major events (as defined by the RYA) which occur infrequently. For these events the Harbour Authority will require the Organiser to produce a specific Risk Assessment for that event that demonstrates appropriate controls to manage the identified risks. If necessary, Lymington Harbour Commissioners have powers to issue a temporary General Direction to supplement the control measures. The RYA definition of Major, Medium and Minor events as contained within their document 'Guidance Notes on Risk Assessment for Events in Harbour Authority Areas' is to be adopted for this code of practice.

Section 1: Risk Assessment

1.1 Basis of Risk Assessment:

The Harbour Authority have assessed the risks involved in running events on the Lymington River. Having assessed the risks, control measures were identified. This Risk Assessment and the Control Measures were discussed and developed during the consultation stages of producing this Code and reviewed annually.

1.2 The following Risks were identified:

- Collisions
- Grounding/Capsize/Swamping
- Boat damage
- Personal injury
- Others including congestion, bad weather and fog.

1.3 Control Measures:

Control measures to reduce the identified risks to ALARP have been identified. They fall into 3 categories:-

a. Planning
b. Communications
c. Control measures during the race

1.4 Audit and Review

Measures to monitor the effectiveness of this Code of Practice have been identified and include.

a. Incident reporting procedures
b. Recording of river traffic data
c. Audit and Review procedures.

1.5 Application:

For Organisers to manage the identified risks associated with an event they must ensure that all of the Control Measures identified in this Code are carried out.

The Risk Assessment and Control Measures are contained in Section 4 of this Code which relies on carrying out all of the Control Measures identified to manage each risk.

Section 2: Responsibilities

2.1 Organisers:

The Organiser will manage the event in accordance with the provisions of this Code. Further, the Organiser is responsible for the safe management of the event through managing all risks so that they remain ALARP. As soon as the Organiser is made aware of an incident that would require emergency services to be activated, it is their responsibility to activate the Coastguard and other emergency services where appropriate.

2.2 Participants:

The primary responsibility for the safety of the participants lies with themselves. However, this is not the case where the participants are children where the Organiser has additional responsibilities. These responsibilities are contained in the publication entitled RYA Race, Training and Event Management – The Legal Aspects under Section 5 – Special Considerations for Children and Young Persons.

This Code requires that all participants have the sole responsibility to ensure that their boat is seaworthy and fit for the event. The term 'seaworthy' includes the boat, the equipment on board, and the capability & experience of the skipper and crew.

2.3 Harbour Authority:

The Harbour Authority is responsible for ensuring that Lymington River is operated efficiently and safely. This includes ensuring that Organisers meet their responsibilities to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, the safety of all those participating in an Event.

To discharge these responsibilities the Harbour Authority has the ability to rely on statutory provisions and in extreme circumstances the Harbour Authority may give legally binding directions to Organisers regarding the management and conduct of events or give legally binding directions to participants. Details of the Lymington Harbour General Directions (2014) are published on the Lymington Harbour Commissioners website and noticeboard. Paper copies are available on request.

The Harbour Authority will liaise with the Coastguard and other emergency services whenever appropriate and will assist with any rescue assets deployed in the River.

Section 3: Forms

3.1 Event Notification Form (F1)
3.2 On the Water Incident Report Form (F2)

Section 3.1 - EVENT NOTIFICATION FORM (Form F1)

Event:		
Date(s) of Event:		
Organiser:		
Organiser Contact Name:		Email:
	Tel:	Mobile:
Operating period (Times): (including slipway launch/recovery times where relevant)		
Operating area (within Harbour Limits):		
Number of Boats:		
Type or Design		
Risk Assessment Prepared by: (copy to be submitted with this form to Harbour Master)		
Supporting Documents: (organiser policies & guidelines etc)		

Organiser Statement:

I confirm that this Event has been planned in accordance with the provisions of this Code of Practice for Events on the Lymington River. I further confirm that a full risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that risk levels are acceptable and as low as reasonably practical (ALARP).

Signed on behalf of the above Organiser: …….. Date: ……

Print Name: ……

Note: This form to be forwarded to Harbour Master a minimum of two weeks in advance of the Event.

Section 3.2 - ON THE WATER INCIDENT REPORT (Form F2)

This form is for completion by Race/Event Participants, Officials or Organisers to record details of any on-the-water incidents witnessed immediately before, during or after racing. Completed forms should be submitted to the Club/Organisers Office – See Annex C for definitions of reportable incidents.

Date:	Time of Incident:
Area of River where incident occurred (within Harbour Limits):	Event:

Incident Description – Tick Relevant Boxes

Collision	Near Miss	Grounding	Capsize	Swamping	Boat Damage	Personal Injury	Man Overboard	Impede Ferry/Other

Weather (general description)	
Wind (force) Speed and direction)	Sea State (wave height m)
Visibility	Emergency Services Activated **Yes / No** (delete as applicable)

Brief Description of Incident (or any other useful information including collision avoidance measures taken)

Actions taken

Any lessons to be learnt (How could the situation be avoided in future)

Name: (Please print)	Signature:	
Tel:	E-mail:	
Copies to: Club/Organiser (RCS/Secretary) Harbour Master		
	LHC Incident ref:	

Section 4: Risk Assessment and Control Measures

4.1 Risk assessment
4.2 Control measures
- 4.2.1 Planning
- 4.2.2 Communications
- 4.2.3 Control Measures during Events

Section 4.1 - RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk	Description of Risk	Risk level before control measures in place	Primary Control Measures and assets (see Section 4.2)	Risk level after control measures in place
Collisions	Racing boat with racing boat	**M**	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 2.3, 2.5 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3.	**L**
	Racing boat with race support boat	**L**	1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 2.10	**L**
	Racing boat with cruising boat	**M**	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	**L**
	Racing boat with commercial vessel	**M**	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	**L**
	Commercial vessel with race support boat or non racing 'event' boat	**L**	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10	**L**
	Cruising boat with race support boat or non racing 'event' boat	**L**	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10.	**L**
	Racing boat with moored boat/navigation pile	**M**	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.7, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	**L**
	Race support or non racing 'event' boat with moored boat/navigation pile	**L**	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.2, 2.10	**L**
	Racing or 'event' boat causing collision between non participating boat and/or navigation piles.	**L**	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 3.2, 3.3	**L**
Grounding Capsize	Poor navigation / collision avoidance / loss of control	**L**	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10	**L**
	Rig or equipment failure	**L**	1.5, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4	**L**
	Capsize	**H**	1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.10	**L**
	Swamping of dinghies due to wash	**M**	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10	**L**
Boat Damage	Rig or equipment failure	**L**	1.5, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4	**L**
Personal Injury	Man overboard	**L**	1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.10	**L**
	Injury impacting on external rescue services	**M**	1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.10	**L**
Other Risks	High winds	**H**	1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	**L**
	High waves (relative)	**L**	1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	**L**
	Fog, calm and current causing drifting into obstructions	**L**	1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	**L**
	River congestion due to slipway launching/recovery	**H**	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5	**L**
	Diving operations	**L**	2.2, 2.4	**L**
	Marine Civil Engineering Projects	**L**	2.2, 2.4	**L**

L = Low Risk M = Medium Risk H = High Risk

Section 4.2 - CONTROL MEASURES

4.2.1 Planning

	Measures	General Comments	Specific comments, measures and assets where necessary
1.1	Limit competitor / participant numbers.	Organiser to limit entry numbers that car park and slipway can safely accommodate. Organiser to limit race entry numbers to safety boat availability. Organisers to limit keelboat numbers for Club Line finishes to 35	Need to require pre-entry with cap on entries. When there are large numbers entered slipway and river channel congestion should be avoided by batched launching and escorting down or up the river. Dinghies should be kept out of the channel as much as possible and use Horn Reach small boat channel between HM Pontoon & Yacht Haven entrance as marked by yellow buoys. Good Marshalling ashore required to minimise interference to other slipway users and manage safety on the slipway. Need co-operation to manage launching, recovery and berthing of large numbers of safety boats. Maintain a vessel in the vicinity of the slipway at busy periods and ferry passing times. When considering finishes at Club Lines, organisers to work within agreed policies (keelboats) for limiting participant numbers.
1.2	Tidal prediction.	Assessment to be made regarding strength of current, height of tide and other associated conditions.	Congestion is much greater at low water. The racing/event programme should be arranged to manage congestion.
1.3	Identify danger points on course - river zones	River Zones have been designed where different control measures will apply depending on the risk. See attached plan.	Marks and Gates should be specified in Sailing Instructions where races can be shortened. Shallow draft sailboats can be required to keep out of the channel. Use Horn Reach small boat channel between HM Pontoon & Yacht Haven entrance as marked by yellow buoys. River is zoned according to risks in each area. Sailboats without engines can be required to be towed. Sailing Instructions can require that spinnakers may not be flown in certain zones. Safety Boats can be stationed at identified danger points.
1.4	Vessel traffic information.	Some or all zones of the river are extremely congested on certain days in the summer, especially weekends in the summer and over Bank Holidays. Special events may cause the river to be congested outside of these times.	Racing programmes should be organised to avoid racing in specified Zones during agreed high risk periods where congestion can be expected. Racing programmes should be organised to avoid 'conflict' with commercial ferry movements. If for any reason congestion is higher than anticipated, Events should be finished outside of the known congested zones and approaches to the channel.
1.5	Weather monitoring.	Use of weather forecast information and monitoring of the present weather to vary race management to control risk.	Sailboats without engines have difficulty manoeuvring in light winds and many are prone to broaching and capsize in high winds, especially if flying spinnakers. Races can be postponed, abandoned or shortened to suit the conditions. LNtM No 5 (2025) provides guidance on vessel movements in poor visibility
1.6	Briefing of race management personnel.	Organisers to agree Policies and Guidelines and provide suitable training of key personnel.	Suitably experienced, trained and approved Race Officers must apply Clubs' Policies and Guidelines.
1.7	Safety Boats - Manning.	Safety boats should be manned by a minimum of 2 people, one of whom should be suitably trained and qualified.	The safety boat helm should be suitably experienced, trained, qualified, well briefed and fully understand their responsibilities.
1.8	Emergency and contingency procedures.	Establish and maintain an action plan.	Race management personnel should be trained in how to deal with an emergency.

4.2.2 Communications

	Measures	General Comments	Specific comments, measures and assets
2.1	Signing on/off for race	Agreed procedure for accounting for all personnel involved laid down in the Organiser's Policies and Guidelines.	The procedure will vary depending on the type of craft, where based, and the age and experience of the people involved.
2.2	Safety Briefing.	Safety briefing to competitors and safety boat crews as per organiser's Policies and Guidelines.	Briefings need to take into account variations between events, types of boats, the age and experience of competitors and their familiarity with the river. Briefings to highlight ferry wind shadow, thruster impacts & marking of extent of underwater rock hazards at breakwaters (breakwater exclusion zone). A ferry safety video is available on the LHC website and has been circulated to clubs.
2.3	Landside Management to include records of membership and other competitors' details.	Policies and Guidelines need to ensure that the Organiser requires a declaration that all craft are suitably equipped, seaworthy, and insured.	Wording of Notice of Race, Entry Form and Sailing Instructions to comply with current RYA Best Practice Guidelines concerning Safety and Insurance. Records should be available to Race Officer if required.
2.4	Communications with other River users.	Vessel movements. Identified special risks.	Communication on VHF channel M1 and M2 with Clubs, Race Teams and Safety Boats. Communication on mobile telephone with Ferries and Race Officers. Communication on VHF channel 16 with other river users & LHC VHF channel 66.
2.5	Right of way between racing and none racing traffic.	IRPCS. Vessels confined by their draft and manoeuvrability.	Sailing Instructions must also refer to IRPCS although they are built into the Racing Rules of Sailing. Organiser's instruction must include the time racing and transits to/from the organised event Race Committee should protest offending boats for breach of the IRPCS .
2.6	Right of way between racing boats	Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) apply	Race Committee should protest offending boats if no other protests. Clubs to consider refusing race entry of boats that are persistent offenders.
2.7	Limiting Spinnaker use.	Some classes of sailboat are in some conditions much easier to control when sailing without a spinnaker. Sailboats without spinnakers need less "river room" and are less likely to collide with other boats or static objects.	Spinnaker use can be limited by sailing instructions either for all races or when signalled. Limits can be easily zoned.
2.8	Wavescreen Gap	Boats can be permitted to use the wavescreen gap to keep them out of the channel.	Use of the wavescreen gap should be controlled by Sailing Instructions
2.9	Racing mark (B1) west of 'Cocked' Hat mark.	Delimits the Northern end of the crossover zone of the river.	This can be used as a finishing mark or a mark at which a change of course or the use of spinnakers could be signalled.
2.10	Racing Checklist, Post Race Incident report	Compiled by Organiser. Organiser to forward copy of completed Incident Report Forms to Harbour Master..	Provides detailed audit trail including information on occurrence of incidents. This information will be used to review Risk Assessments and Code of Practice.

4.2.3 Control Measures During Race

	Measures	General Comments	Specific comments, measures and assets
3.1	Abandonment.	In the event of adverse weather or other factors.	Decision made by Race Officer to comply with RRS or the Organiser's Policies and Guidelines.
3.2	Shortening course.	In the event of adverse weather or other factors.	Decision made by Race Officer to comply with RRS or the Organiser's Policies and Guidelines.
3.3	Monitoring of weather and sea conditions.	By observation and communications with safety vessels, competitors and Organiser.	In light winds sailboats without engines have difficulty manoeuvring and in high winds many are prone to broaching and capsize especially if flying spinnakers. Races should be postponed, abandoned or shortened to suit the conditions.

Annex A - Notification of Peak Traffic Dates in the River - 2026 Season

Please find below details of known peak traffic dates in the river where the boat movements in the river are expected to be significantly higher (based on previous season trends) than at other times. Accordingly, this must be reflected in risk assessments for all events.

Friday 3rd April to 1700 Monday 6th April inclusive (Easter)
Saturday 2nd May to 17.00 hours on Monday 4th May inclusive (May Day BH)
Saturday 23rd May to 17.00 hours on Monday 25th May inclusive (Spring BH)
Saturdays & Sundays 1st June to 1st September inclusive
Monday 31st August until 17.00 hours (Summer BH)

In further informing the risk assessment process by identifying where the increased traffic movements have the potential to pose heightened risk, the following information should be considered. The river has been zoned into three sections according to the risks in each area. Details of these zones and increased risks are described below and are as the attached plan.

Southern Zone - ***South of the new 8A Port side buoy in Long Reach***

Increased boat movements.

Central Zone - ***North of No 8A Port side Buoy to a line between No.11 Post (end of wave screen) and Southern end of Dan Bran pontoon.***

Ferries passing (Pylewell) – congestion in channel

Short Reach – Because this is a narrow area of the channel on a bend bordered by swinging moorings on the western side, ferry manoeuvring is constrained in this area (ferry swings on bend). The effects of congestion will be significantly greater in this area on peak days.

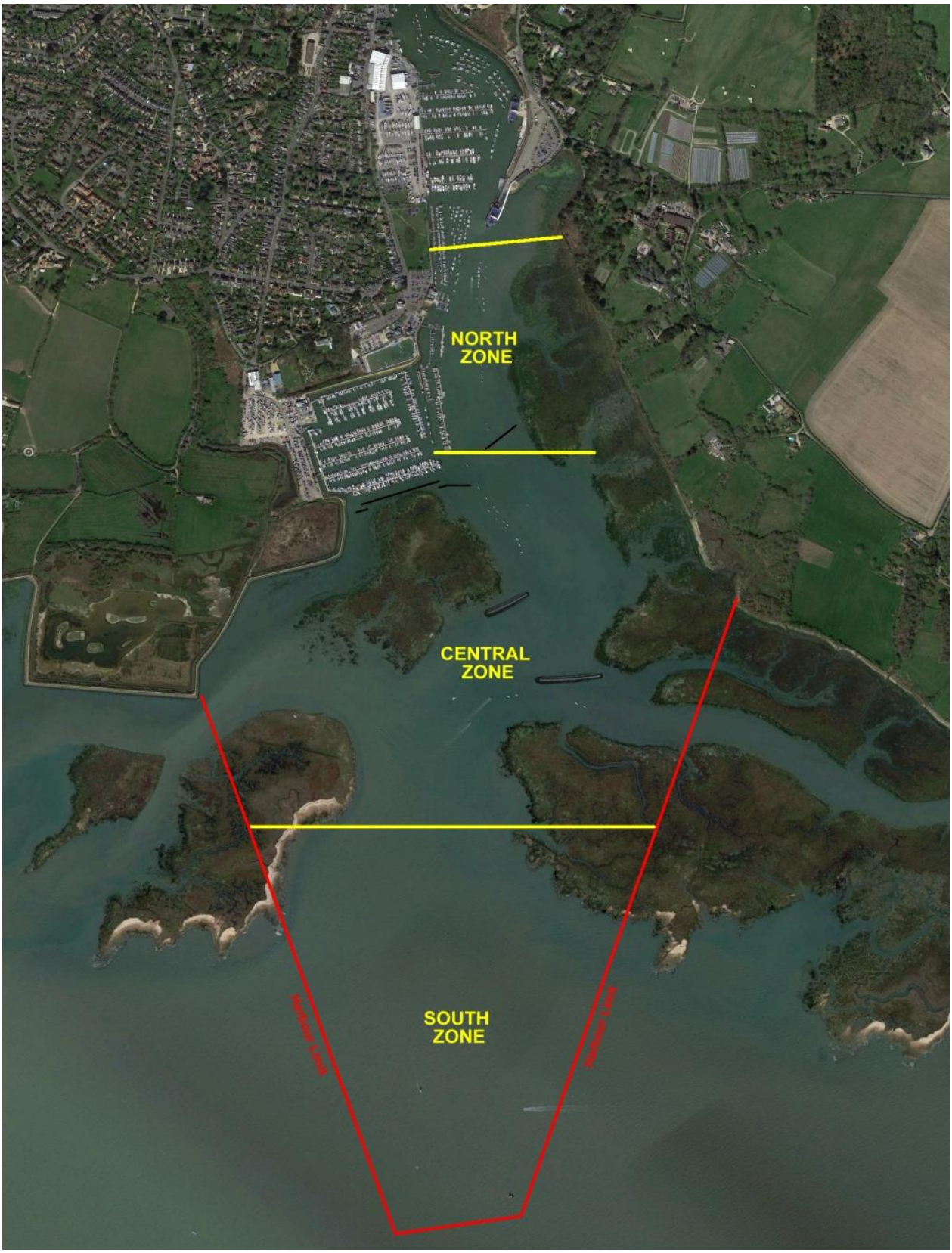
At the northern end of the central zone, the entrance to the Yacht Haven Marina and the southern entrance to the Dan Bran pontoon converges with main channel. In this area the channel is narrow and therefore ferry manoeuvring is constrained. The effects of congestion will be significantly greater on peak days.

Northern Zone - ***North of a line between No.11 Post (end of wave screen) and Southern end of Dan Bran pontoon to No 13 Post (Ferry Post).***

Horn Reach – Because this is a narrow area of channel bordered by river moorings to the east and various pontoon and mooring infrastructures to the west, ferry manoeuvring is constrained in this area.

The entrance for Dan Bran (North) converges with the main channel, as do users of the Harbour Master, LTSC and RLymYC pontoons. Regatta / Event moorings on outside of Dan Bran pontoon on many Summer weekends. Users of the public slipway also converge with the main channel. Just north of the RLymYC users of the Fortuna mooring area (200 boats) converge with the main channel.

ANNEX B - RIVER ZONES



ANNEX C - REPORTABLE INCIDENT DEFINITIONS

Any of the incidents described below must be reported using the electronic online Incident Report Form (preferred) or the 'On the Water Incident Report (Form F2)'. Lymington Harbour Commissioners only require incidents to be reported that occur within their area of jurisdiction. (See Annex B Plan on page 13)

1.0 Collision

1.1 Any collision between a participating boat and a non-participating boat or fixed structure.

1.2 Any contact between participating boats that results in any injury or significant damage (see damage below for definition of reportable damage)

1.3 Any incident to which the emergency/rescue services have been called.

2.0 Near Miss

2.1 Any situation where the vessel defined as stand-on under the IRPCS had to take substantial avoiding action at the last minute to avoid a collision.

2.2 When racing, any breach of the RLymYC/LTSC voluntary exclusion zone ahead of the ferries.

3.0 Grounding

3.1 Any grounding incident which causes injury.

3.2 Any grounding incident in the main channel which could present an obstruction to navigation.

3.3 Any incident which results in the emergency/rescue services being called.

4.0 Capsize

4.1 Any capsize incident by boats that are not mono hull dinghies.

4.2 Any incident that causes injury.

4.3 Any incident in the main channel that causes non-participating vessels to take 'significant' avoiding action, i.e. ferry/other vessel has to stop.

4.4 Any incident to where the emergency/rescue services have been called.

Note: *It is recognised that dinghies capsize on a regular basis and are normally 'self righted'. It is acknowledged that for this class of event, Club risk assessments require appropriate numbers of safety boats to be on standby to create a 'controlled' situation. Therefore, only Capsize incidents in categories 5.0 to 9.0 below should be reported.*

5.0 Swamping

5.1 Any swamping incident caused by the wash of another boat.

6.0 Boat Damage

6.1 Any damage caused as a result of an incident between a participating and non participating boat.

6.2 Any damage caused as a result of a participating boat colliding with harbour infrastructure, i.e. navigation post.

6.3 Any damage to a participating boat that compromises the seaworthiness of the vessel.

7.0 Personal Injury

7.1 Any of the above incidents which results in personal injury.

8.0 Man Overboard

8.1 Vessels other than Dinghies:
Any MOB incident.

8.2 Dinghies
It is recognised that dinghies capsize on a regular basis thus resulting in a MOB situation prior to the dinghy being righted. It is acknowledged that for this class of event, Club risk assessments require appropriate numbers of safety boats to be on standby to create a 'controlled' situation. Therefore, only the following MOB incidents should be reported:-

8.2.2 Any MOB incident which results in personal injury or the person is in distress.

8.2.3 Any MOB incident which results in non-participating boats having to assist or take significant avoiding action.

8.2.4 Any incident to which the emergency/rescue services have been called.

9.0 Impede Ferry/Other

9.1 Any incident whereby a small vessel contravenes General Direction 3.9 - "The master of a small vessel which is not constrained by its draft to navigate only in the fairway shall not make use of the fairway so as to cause obstruction to other vessels which can only navigate in the fairway"