

Dear Sir

## **Draft Thames Byelaws 2008 – consultation feedback**

I have read the recent consultation document with interest and believe that some sections would have a serious detrimental effect on recreational use of the tidal Thames.

### **9. REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS**

These reporting requirements would seem to be reasonable for operators of commercial vessels, but excessively onerous for leisure users. In all but the most serious incidents this it would be much more appropriate to restrict these reporting requirements to commercial users.

### **12. SMALL, FAST VESSELS**

The requirement to “ensure that every Person in any part of the vessel which is not permanently covered is safely seated” in section 12.1.b is neither practical nor desirable in some small, fast vessels. For instance many RIBs are fitted with “jockey seats” where the preferred position is standing astride and not seated, and in some cases there is just a leaning post in place of a helm seat. These are proven to be both appropriate and safe, yet would appear to fall foul of the proposed wording of the byelaw.

### **18. SPEED LIMITS**

The introduction of speed limits below Wandsworth Bridge would completely change the character of the tidal Thames for users of any sort of powerboat as they would be required to operate at just below planing speeds. This would be likely to deter many people from bringing their boats onto the tidal Thames, and would significantly increase the amount of wash created by those that remain.

Apart from the section of the river between Lambeth and Tower Bridges, there is very little congestion and ample space for boats to safely operate at faster speeds. The introduction of the proposed 12 knot speed limit would be hugely onerous for recreational users, without any apparent justification.

It would seem logical to restrict the speed of larger passenger carrying vessels, as they create substantially more wash and have the potential to cause a major incident. To exempt these vessels, whilst imposing a blanket speed limit on smaller vessels, makes no sense.

I hope that these points will be addressed in a revised draft of the byelaws, and that the tidal Thames can remain as a unique and wonderful place for all types of boats to operate safely with the minimum of regulatory burden.

Yours faithfully