

**HAMBLE HARBOUR AUTHORITY**  
**NOTICE TO RIVER USERS No 1 OF 2026**  
**LNTM 1 of 2026**

**RIVER HAMBLE HARBOUR AUTHORITY:  
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVICE**

1. This Notice to River Users is to be read in conjunction with the Bye-laws for the River Hamble Undertaking which may be obtained from the Hamble Harbour Office or on line at [www.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour](http://www.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour).

Harbour Master's Directions and Notices to River Users in Force:

Harbour Master's Direction No. 1, relating to the Six Knot Speed Limit;

Harbour Master's Direction No. 2, relating to the application of the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea;

Harbour Master's Direction No. 3, confirming for the avoidance of doubt the application of all rules and regulations to Personal Watercraft.

2. **6 Knot speed limit**

River users are reminded that, subject to certain exceptional exemptions specified in Harbour Master's Direction No. 1, there is a 6 knot speed limit within the limits of the River (from No 1 pile at the entrance, extending upriver to Botley Mill and Curbridge). Failure to comply with this Direction is a criminal offence which may lead to prosecution.

3. **International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea (COLREGS)**

Harbour Master's Direction No. 2 makes it clear that the COLREGS apply to all vessels, including Personal Watercraft, regardless of size and type, using the River Hamble. Those in charge of vessels who fail to comply with the COLREGS may be prosecuted.

4. **Recovery of Casualties - Persons and Vessels**

a. Ambulance Recovery. The nominated location for the disembarkation of all casualties to an ambulance is the Harbour Master's Jetty, Warsash. Masters of vessels

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with casualties or vessels being assisted under tow with casualties aboard should call Hamble Harbour Radio on VHF Channel 68 to request assistance or, out of office hours, call UK Coastguard on VHF Channel 16 or 67.

b. Fire and Rescue. The nominated recovery point for vessels in danger from fire, or vessels recovered into the harbour in danger of catching fire, or on fire, is the slipway at Warsash. Masters of vessels in danger from fire who require assistance should call Hamble Harbour Radio on VHF Channel 68 or, out of office hours, call UK Coastguard on VHF Channel 16 or 67.

c. Vessels in danger of sinking. Vessels in danger of sinking should not enter the Harbour without the prior consent of the Harbour Master, which will not be withheld unreasonably. Vessels in immediate danger of sinking should be beached on the slipway at Warsash, and the Harbour Master informed immediately.

**5. Reporting collisions and concerns relating to safety**

a. Harbour users are requested to report immediately to the Harbour Master any reasonable concern they have regarding safety in the River Hamble Harbour. Harbour users are also requested to report incidents and damage which may affect safety in the Harbour (Bye-laws for the River Hamble Undertaking, Nos. 8 and 9 refer).

b. In addition, attention is drawn to Bye-law No 9 – 'The master of any vessel or pontoon involved in a collision causing material damage with any other vessel or any structure in the River shall forthwith report the circumstances to the Harbour Master.' In this context, material damage is deemed to include scuffs and scrapes.

c. To report incidents or damage call "Hamble Harbour Radio" on VHF Channel 68 or telephone 01489 576387. You may be asked to submit a written report. Members of the public may report their concerns by completing a form on line at:-

[www.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour](http://www.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour). Photographs or video of incidents or damage should also be submitted if available.

d. Incidents and damage that should be reported include:

- i. damage to and collisions between vessels;
- ii. damage to navigation marks, Harbour structures or facilities;
- iii. malfunctioning navigation marks;
- iv. dangerous near-miss situations between vessels;
- v. vessels proceeding at an excessive speed or creating excessive wash and/or;
- vi. any other dangerous occurrence.

e. The River Hamble Harbour Authority complies with the Port Marine Safety Code and has appointed a Designated Person to monitor compliance with the Code and report to the Harbour Board. Any reasonable concerns regarding safety in the

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Harbour may (in addition to being reported to the Harbour Master) be brought to the attention of the Designated Person by writing to:

Capt. Martin Phipps MBE  
Designated Person (PMSC)  
Quayside Suite  
Medina Chambers  
Town Quay  
Southampton  
SO14 2AQ  
Email: [DP.Hamble@abpmer.co.uk](mailto:DP.Hamble@abpmer.co.uk)

**IN AN EMERGENCY  
DIAL 999**

**Or call 'UK COASTGUARD' on VHF Channel 16 or 67**

**6. VHF Radio Communications**

a. All vessels whilst underway within the limits of the River Hamble Harbour Authority, are strongly advised to monitor Hamble Harbour Radio on VHF Channel 68. VHF transmissions should be kept short and relevant. Channel 68 will provide river users with important safety information and details of the movements of large vessels and tows (see also Paras 18 and 19 below).

**7. Pollution Prevention and Waste Disposal**

a. It is an offence for any vessel, including recreational vessels, regardless of its size, to discharge any refuse or waste overboard within specified distances from land, and in the case of plastics and other persistent rubbish, in any sea area surrounding the UK (International Convention for Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78)).

b. The River Hamble Harbour Authority gives notice of the following facilities for the disposal of waste:

i. General waste in the compound behind the Harbour Master's Office and glass recycling bins in the upper car park at Warsash.

ii. International catering waste <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/handling-and-disposing-of-international-catering-waste> in the compound behind the Harbour Master's Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/declaration-of-the-disposal-of-catering-waste-from-international-means-of-transport>

iii. Oil filters and batteries at the Harbour Master's Office.

iv. Used oil at Stone Pier Yard (by arrangement).

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v. Advice on the disposal of other special waste including contaminated fuel/oil and paint waste is available from the Harbour Master's Office.

vi. Time expired pyrotechnics cannot be disposed of at the Harbour Master's Office. The MCA has issued instructions regarding their disposal. Further information is available here:

1. Department for Transport: [MIN 687 Changes to how individuals can dispose of redundant flares - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/min-687-changes-to-how-individuals-can-dispose-of-redundant-flares)
2. RYA: [Disposing of flares | regulations | RYA](https://www.rya.org.uk/News/Disposing-of-flares-regulations)

vii. Sewage pump out facilities are available at either Premier Marina, Swanwick, by arrangement, or at the Harbour Authority Jetty at Warsash.

c. All berth operators, marinas, shipyards and yacht clubs provide waste disposal facilities for vessels using their amenities to comply with the Port Waste Reception Facilities Regulations 2003.

d. Companies operating tugs, barges and passenger vessels in the River are expected to provide waste facilities at their base sites.

e. Any vessel experiencing difficulty in accessing waste disposal facilities should contact the berth operators, marina or shipyard etc. Persistent problems should be referred to the Harbour Master.

## **8. Pollution – general**

a. All river users are requested to report all sightings of pollution immediately to the Harbour Master via Hamble Harbour Radio on VHF Channel 68 or by telephone on 01489 576387.

b. At times when the Harbour Master's Office is unmanned, reports should be made to UK Coastguard on VHF Channel 16 or 67, or by telephone on 02392 552100.

c. Under instructions from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), it is a statutory requirement in UK waters to obtain specific approval from DEFRA for any use of oil treatment products (dispersants) in water depths of less than 20 metres or within 1 nautical mile of any such area. This instruction therefore precludes the use of oil treatment products throughout the River Hamble Harbour without DEFRA approval.

d. In the event of an oil pollution incident within the River Hamble Harbour, the Harbour Office is to be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible. Should it be considered that the use of oil treatment products will be required, the Harbour Master will seek approval from DEFRA. No oil treatment products are to be used until specific approval is given and the Harbour Master issues specific instructions for

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their use. The use of 'washing-up liquid' (either domestic or industrial) falls within the scope of this notice.

**9. Lifeboat, Life Raft and Safety Training**

a. All vessels are warned that lifeboat, life raft and other training operations take place from time to time in the vicinity of the former Warsash Maritime Academy Jetty. These operations include simulation of rescue procedures and will involve fast RIBs. River Users should take account of such training and, where appropriate allow sufficient sea room to pass safely clear.

b. Before such training takes place the person in charge of the operations should report to Hamble Harbour Radio on VHF Channel 68, stating location, start time, estimated duration and the nature of operations. Hamble Harbour Radio will pass on this information as necessary to vessels calling in on VHF Channel 68.

**10. Swimming**

a. Swimming at Hamble Jetty and Lands End and associated anti-social behaviour continues to be a problem at that location during periods of warm weather. Bad behaviour can extend ashore into Hamble Village. Harbour Authority staff do not in Law have powers to deal with anti-social behaviour. The Police make every effort to attend when the level of public reporting merits presence. It is therefore vital that incidents are reported using either 101 (telephone) or online, or 999 facilities. The Harbour Authority will continue to do all it can to assist the Police in the execution of their duty and provide evidence captured on body-worn camera and other means to deter and if necessary contribute to a successful prosecution. Swimming is not permitted from Hamble or other HM Jetties for safety reasons. Hamble Parish Council forbids swimming from certain marked areas of the Quay. In view of this, all mariners should navigate with particular caution when in the vicinity of Hamble Jetty in fine weather, in particular when out of School hours and during holidays.

b. The River Hamble Harbour Authority is concerned that some swimmers expose themselves to unnecessary risk. Information on the risks of swimming is regularly updated by the RNLI in their Respect The Water campaign. Parents of young swimmers, and swimmers themselves, are reminded of the following basic precautions:-

- i. Do not dive or jump into water of an unknown depth.
- ii. Do not dive or jump from any bridge or structure.
- iii. Do not swim near moving boats, boats running their engines or boats which may depart their moorings.

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- iv. Do not swim in the fairway or access channels.
  - v. Do not swim in strong currents and/or tides.
  - vi. Do not swim after consuming alcohol or after a meal.
  - vii. Beware of the cold; hypothermia can kill.
  - viii. It is not advisable to swim alone.
  - ix. Always swim within your limitations.
  - x. Always tell someone on the shore where you are swimming and when you expect to return to the shore.
- c. Any river user with concerns about a swimmer should telephone the Harbour Master on 01489 576387 or call "Hamble Harbour Radio" on VHF Channel 68. Note that swimming is not permitted from the Hamble Jetty, the Fishermens' Jetty or Harbour Master's Jetty in Warsash.

## 11. **Diving**

- a. All diving for favour or reward (i.e. "at work") is subject to the Diving at Work Regulations 1997 (DWR 97) and the associated Approved Codes of Practice (ACOP). Diving at work may only be carried out by a diving contractor who has notified the Health and Safety Executive in compliance with the provisions in DWR 97 and dives may only be carried out in accordance with the legal requirements. Additionally, the River Hamble Harbour Authority requires that divers at work apply for prior consent from the Harbour Authority before undertaking a dive. Details can be obtained by contacting the Harbour Master.
- b. The River Hamble Harbour Authority strongly recommends that all diving (whether the diver is at work or not) should meet all the above requirements.
- c. Sport or recreational diving which does not meet the above requirements is not recommended because of strong tidal flows, the number of underwater obstructions and moorings, and the numerous vessel movements on the River.

## 12. **Maintenance Piles**

- a. Maintenance Piles for public use are situated at:
  - i. Warsash – Public Slipway – 5 piles

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- ii. Hamble – Public Slipway – 2 piles
    - iii. Bursledon – Lands End Public Slipway – 2 piles
  - b. The following size and weight limitations must not be exceeded:
    - i. Sailing vessels up to 15m in length and/or 12 tonnes displacement
    - ii. Motor vessels up to 15m in length and/or 20 tonnes displacement
  - c. Mariners are reminded that, whilst using the piles, they are responsible for the safety of their vessel, their own safety, the safety of anyone working on their vessel and the safety of any member of the public in the vicinity. The risks involved when using maintenance piles should be considered carefully and all appropriate precautions taken. The use of maintenance piles for the removal of anti-fouling paint is not encouraged.
  - d. Use of maintenance piles is charged at £25 for each 24 hour period (or part thereof). Vessels displaying a valid annual River Hamble Harbour Dues sticker are entitled to the first 24 hours (two tides) free of charge.
- 13. **Closed Circuit Television**
  - a. This Notice to River Users constitutes a public notice in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations of 2018.
  - b. The River Hamble Harbour Authority gives notice that parts of the River Hamble may be subject to surveillance by Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) and Body Worn systems which are monitored in the Harbour Master's Office.
  - c. CCTV images are processed and recorded to enable the Harbour Master to carry out his statutory functions and for the purpose of promoting maritime safety. They may also be used in pursuing prosecutions against offenders.
  - d. The nature of some areas under surveillance precludes the posting of warning signs. This notice serves in lieu of such signs.

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**14. Suitability of tenders**

- a. Owners of vessels in the River Hamble Harbour should ensure that any tender used to transport personnel or equipment is of a suitable size, stability and construction to provide safe passage in all conditions likely to be encountered in the Harbour.
- b. In assessing the suitability of any tender for use in the harbour, the following factors are among those which should be considered:
  - i. The actual and forecast weather;
  - ii. The strength of the tidal stream;
  - iii. The effect of wind on sea state.
  - iv. The likelihood of encountering wash from other vessels;
  - v. The remoteness of the parent vessel.
- c. Tenders should not be overloaded and all occupants should wear lifejackets or buoyancy aids at all times. A secondary means of propulsion is advised, along with a bailer or bucket. A light or torch should be carried to ensure that the tender is visible in poor visibility or at night.

**15. Paddle Boards, Kayaks and Other Small Craft**

- a. Throughout the year and predominantly in warm weather, paddle boarders and small craft such as kayaks are likely to be encountered throughout the River. Larger numbers of such craft are likely to be present at Swanwick bend and in the Upper River.
- b. Signage has been placed to guide these craft out of the Main Channel between Swanwick and the A27 bridge in language that recognises that many users will be unfamiliar with the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea.
- c. Mariners encountering such craft are to be mindful of wash and of relative inexperience of those using them. IRPCS Rules 5 and 6 are particularly important in this respect.

**16. Access Channels**

- a. There are a number of channels on the River Hamble which run parallel to the Main and Secondary Channels and give access to pontoons, moorings, jetties and slipways. These access channels are frequently used by operators of small craft (sailing dinghies, tenders etc) who wish to remain clear of the main channel. However, the access channels are also used by larger vessels to gain access to moorings and facilities. This can lead to potentially dangerous situations, particularly

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where head-on encounters occur between vessels in narrow channels. Operators of all vessels which use these access channels should be aware of these dangers and navigate with due caution.

**17. General Safety on the River Hamble**

a. The Harbour Authority does not wish to over-regulate the use of the Harbour and wishes all users to be able to enjoy the full range of activities available. No one type of vessel or activity has priority or primacy.

b. The Harbour Authority has a responsibility to manage the risks associated with marine operations to ensure that they remain as low as reasonably practicable. It is appreciated that going afloat can never be free of risk and that everybody who uses the River, especially those in control of vessels, has an important role to play to ensure the River remains safe.

c. The Harbour Authority wishes to emphasise the following:-

i. The Master, Skipper or person in charge of a vessel, regardless of type or size, remains responsible for its safety, except in the case of children, where adults, event organisers or Clubs have additional responsibilities.

ii. All vessels using the River must comply with the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea, SOLAS, Bye-laws and Harbour Master's Directions. It is the responsibility of all those who go afloat to familiarise themselves with these laws. Those who do not comply with the law may be prosecuted.

iii. Vessels navigating within the River should be vigilant for small crossing vessels such as tenders and act in accordance with paragraph ii, above.

iv. There may be times when it is not safe to participate in a particular activity. Before taking to the water those in charge of vessels, adults responsible for children and those organising events and races need to carefully consider the prevailing weather, tidal and traffic conditions.

v. The location chosen to launch a trailered dinghy or vessel needs particular consideration especially if the launch area is close to a main channel at a busy time and/or during adverse weather or tidal conditions. Likewise the timing and location of race starts need careful planning by the Clubs involved.

vi. There may be times when a planned use of the River has to be modified or cancelled. This is common sense and basic seamanship. This is reflected in the requirement to assess risks and put appropriate precautions in place.

vii. Clubs have a particular responsibility to ensure that events which they organise, or facilities which the Club provides, are run to acceptable safety

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standards and that their members are kept apprised of the standards required and any possible dangers involved.

viii. The River Hamble Harbour Authority has developed a Code of Practice for Races, Events and Regattas and the Harbour Authority looks to all Clubs to continue to comply with this Code.

d. Kill cords. Kill cords are an essential part of the safe operation of any boat with an outboard motor (including Rigid Inflatable Boats and small tenders). They should be worn by the person in control of the vessel at all times when the engine is running, even if the vessel is not making way.

e. Contractors. All contractors and those who make use of their services are reminded that there is a legal obligation to provide safe systems of work and that they should be skilled and/or qualified and hold appropriate insurance. All those who engage contractors must ensure the contractor has produced risk assessments and method statements wherever appropriate.

**18. Large and commercial vessels and vessels burdened**

a. All commercial vessels and all vessels of 20m or more in length overall and vessels not under command, restricted in their ability to manoeuvre, or towing another vessel or structure, are to give notice of their movements by reporting to 'Hamble Harbour Radio' on VHF Channel 68, giving the vessel's name, length, position and intentions.

**19. Towing and fog**

a. The Port Marine Safety Code 'Guide to Good Practice' now requires Harbour Authorities to give special consideration to tows including tugs, involving dead-ships or unusual objects and towage events of a non-routine nature.

b. Vessel owners, towage contractors, tug masters, project managers and agents are further advised that the person responsible for the safety and planning of the manoeuvre (and thereby acting as the Towing Master) must be clearly identified for all operations and will be responsible for the production of risk assessments, method statements and passage plans which must be discussed and agreed in advance with the Harbour Authority.

c. For tows exceeding 22 metres in overall length (ie the sum of the length of the towing line and the tow (object/vessel being towed - IRPCS Rule 24a, i), a "Towage Authorisation Form" is available on the Harbour Authority website or from the Harbour Office and must be submitted to the Harbour Office in advance of the operation. When the details of the operation have been fully discussed and agreed, the written approval of the Harbour Master will be given. The Harbour Master will continue to engage with Sailing Clubs within the River to understand and enable

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particular towing requirements for sailing vessels. The Form should be forwarded at least 5 days before the intended date of the operation to: [harbour.office@hants.gov.uk](mailto:harbour.office@hants.gov.uk).

d. All tows in fog or restricted visibility are particularly hazardous. If visibility is less than 400 metres, tows must proceed at very slow speed and with extreme caution, monitoring VHF #68 throughout. An escort by a Harbour patrol vessel will be provided upon request (if available). If visibility is less than 100 metres, approval for tows will normally be postponed until visibility improves.

**20. Trawling and Dredging in the River Hamble**

a. It is an offence under River Hamble Bye-law No7 for the master of a vessel to use or permit such vessel to be used for drift, trawl or other net fishing or shellfish dredging in the River, except with the previous written permission of the Harbour Master and at such place and subject to such terms and conditions as he may stipulate. The Protection of Wrecks Act (1973), makes it an offence to damage or interfere with (by tampering with or removing) any part of the historic wreck of the Grace Dieu, or within a 75 metre radius of the wreck, opposite the River Hamble Country Park Jetty, marked by a yellow buoy centred in position 50° 53'.54N, 001° 17'.33W. Diving or depositing anything on the seabed is also prohibited within this area.

b. Further information on historic wrecks is also available in the Annual Summary of Notices to Mariners. Shellfish dredging within this protected area would risk causing such damage and may therefore constitute an offence. Furthermore, attention is drawn to Southern Sea Fisheries Bye-law No7 which states that no person shall dredge or fish for or take any oysters, clams or mussels on any day before 8.00 am or after 4.00 pm (local time) within the area enclosed by a line drawn three nautical miles to seaward of baselines (which includes the whole of the River Hamble). Every effort will be made to prosecute offenders. Any Harbour user who suspects that such activity is taking place is encouraged to report it to the Harbour Office with as much detail as possible (eg time, place, description of vessel, name and/or registration number of vessel), so that appropriate action can be taken.

**21. Compass Swinging**

a. The Master of any vessel wishing to carry out a compass swing in the River Hamble is required to inform the Harbour Office prior to commencing the swing. Vessels under 10 metres LOA may swing in the vicinity of Warsash Maritime Academy Jetty, subject to the Harbour Master's approval. Vessels of over 10 metres LOA will normally be asked to leave the River before commencing their swing.

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**22. Sky Lanterns and Drones**

- a. For safety reasons, sky lanterns and drones are not to be released on the River or on any land adjoining the River owned or leased by Hampshire County Council.

Jason Scott  
Marine Director and Harbour Master  
River Hamble  
Shore Road  
Warsash SO31 9FR

01 January 2026

All River Hamble Notice to River Users can be found at:  
[www.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour](http://www.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour)

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