

Code of Conduct Review East Exe Mixed User Meeting

Minutes

10:00 Wednesday 15th November 2017

Location: Exe Sailing Club, Tornado, Shelly Road, Exmouth
EX8 1EG



Attendees

Stephanie Clark, Exe Estuary Management Partnership
Rowena Garne, Exe Estuary Management Partnership
Nick Ajderian
Ria Ball, Exewake
Peter Blyth, East Devon District Council
Frazer Brown, Sail Exmouth
Ralph Collison, Exe Kiteboarders
Ian Cudd, Exe PWC User Group
Amelia Davies, South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership
James Edge, Exewake Ltd
Stephen Elcoate, RSPB
Sama Euridge, South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership
Jane Evans, Exeter Canoe Club
Guy Farrant, Exe Sailing Club
John Fordham
Kate Fortnam, The Green Blue
Rex Frost, Exmouth Water User Group
Shaun Griffiths, Lower Exe Moorings Administration
Steve Hughes, Exe Sailing Club / Exe Rowing Club
Edward Maltby, Lympstone Sailing Club / Devon Maritime Forum
Rosemary Maltby, Lympstone Sailing Club
Graham Nye, Exmouth NCI Coastwatch
Graeme Smith, Teignbridge District Council
Phil Thomas, Exeter British Subaqua Club
David Tidball, BCU
Mark Trout, Trout's Boat Yard
Nicholas Webber, Exe Sailing Club
Alan Wood, Royal Yachting Association
Viv Woodall
Steve Hockings-Thompson, Exmouth Marina / RNLi
Neil Downes, Exe Estuary Management Partnership

Introduction to Review of Codes from Exe Estuary Officer

- As most of you already know codes of conduct are in place to encourage respect towards other users and the environment. They are there to ensure activities are undertaken safely.
- Codes have existed on the Exe for a long time.
- We have been given the opportunity to update the codes with input from users making it a combined approach.
- At the end we hope to have a general code as well as several codes for specific activities.

- We would like input not only on content but format and distribution as well.
- Additional meetings can be set up for specific activities such as paddlesports.
- The final designs will be endorsed by the Exe Estuary Management Partnership in March.

Q: Is it going to be made clear which sections are purely voluntary and which are statutory?

A: The codes are essentially voluntary but any sections that contain statutory elements can be made clear. We are mainly updating existing codes.

Q: Will it be clear on the website?

A: Yes, any input is welcome if you don't feel the website is clear.

Q: Why do there need to be separate codes for activities?

A: For example dog walkers are primarily land based and have different points of access

- The codes need to be clear and concise – this can be dull, when you start adding routes etc. it becomes more of a tourism leaflet. It needs to be made clear that these are guidelines to follow.

Q: Is there scope for an app?

A: iCoast app was suggested as a format to follow.

Q: Could use other authority websites or local council app?

Groups then split into discussions, looking at existing codes.

Discussion Initial Ideas

- No cartoon style images – better to have photographs.
- Electronic is the way forward, use of QR codes on signage so that people can use phones to access the codes online.
- Need both paper and digital as some people don't know technology as well as others.
- Website – need a guide as well as a code of conduct. Encourage use but safe and environmentally responsible use.
- Needs to be community led.
- Signage / information should be at slipways.

Individual Discussion Notes (handed in)

- Need to promote PWC use as that can influence where they go on the estuary, previously use was not promoted.
- Do not merge messages about statutory and voluntary messages and zones. Be very clear about separation.
- Do not promote on SEDHRP website – their credibility is very poor with users. It will be ignored.
- Exe Explorer is an example of a leaflet which provides general information. Specific codes should be created for certain activities.

- Stewart Line and other commercial vehicles should be included on code of conduct e.g. travelling at a low speed through moorings.
- Where there is a suggested voluntary code, that restricts access / activity / causes conflict then the rationale and logic should be very clearly explained otherwise it will be ignored.
- More integrated general use code of conduct so that everyone would feel it applied to them. If too structural people will cherry pick and not recognise the wider concerns and needs. Could be limits to more specific leaflets.

- Codes of conduct need to put at signage points
- Respect Wildlife Refuges – make clear the exception for safety reasons.
- Respect other water users – be aware of COLREGS.
- Conduct yourself with due regard for safety of your vessel, crew and other water users.
- Do not obstruct the buoyed fairways.
- Do not pollute the waterways.
- Possible groupings – paddlesports code, specific sailing clubs – mainly safety oriented and more specific.
- Training, communication, awareness of codes of practice.
- Responsibility for young people and inexperienced users. Risk assessments.
- Boat registration?

General Code Discussion Summary

Format

- Poole Harbour example has a very clear map. Other good examples include Langstone Harbour and Chichester Harbour.
- Map on one side of codes and 2 codes on the back, e.g. sailing and canoeing.
- A similar leaflet to the Exe Explorer which then links to more specific activity codes.
- Have a water code and shore code rather than 12 individual codes.
- Don't think an all-encompassing code will work.
- Unlikely to need sailing code – clubs provide safety training and responsibility. For rowing, Cox's are trained how to act.

Approach to Circulation

- Everything needs to be consolidated on a website so people can print it out for themselves.
 - Possibility of a website run by EEMP but funded by another partnership e.g. SEDHRP.
 - App would be useful.
- QR codes on signage.
- Have the codes in shops / local business so that they can hand them out businesses – especially those that sell tide tables and encourage water use - more effective than on slipway, e.g. chandleries, marina, watersports shops.
- Map at slipway / access points – you can get a lot of information on just a map.
- Don't promote codes on SEDHRP website as this will confuse the message with habitat mitigation / Wildlife Refuges.
- Leaflets aren't maybe the best method on slipways – blow away.
- Need general points on signage. Byelaws on slipways.

ACTION: PB to include on updated signage in 2018.

Content

- “Keep to appropriate area” – this statement is vague and needs a corresponding map.
- Need a list of basic safety considerations at slipway.
- Hard to just have one map as the level of the tide dramatically changes the landscape.
- Different guidance on low and high tide to be included in the text. All users could end up using same areas at HT. Water ski area becomes part of channel.
- Compatible use at high and low water is needed. Maintain functional benefits.
- Need to look at requirement of RAMSAR convention.
- Explore whether there are any templates available on other sites. Not aware of any.
- Promotion of PWC use will influence where they go on the estuary and how they affect other users.
- Education – tide times, safety issues, Harbour Authority, fires.
- Needs to be as clear and concise as possible.
- Can provide links to more detail.
- Not lots of information.
- Softer approach.

Registration on Exe Discussion Summary

- Root of the problem is the lack of harbour authority.
- Would all activities present welcome registration on the Exe?
- It is a good idea but we would need the harbour authority to police it.
- Canoeists are headed by British Canoeing; have mechanism for water licence, however BC only covers a percentage of canoers so it might be hard to get the word out and permit.
- Exe Kiteboarders work with lifeguards.
- Could act as ‘Guardians of the Estuary’.
- MCA – coastguard 66? Do councils have access to this?
- In Brittany all ribs have a registration number and need to present ID.
- Example of permits on Camel estuary for wake boarders.
- On the Dart and Salcombe, harbour master requests permit to launch canoe.
- Paddle skiing new activity.
- Website for registration could be set up as a standalone website. Perhaps link this to visitor website.
- Exeter City Council would need to run this process.
- Need a financial incentive to make this scheme work.
- £10 fee is normal, this would not cover enforcement but would cover the set-up of the process.
- ECC wouldn’t need to check insurance, can just present a tick box for this, so onus is on owner and ECC aren’t liable (this is what LEMA does).
- Maybe start with powered watercraft.

ACTION: SC to explore registration further.

Additional Points

- Reach out to EPWSC.
- Reach out to dogwalkers through vets.
- Contact sailing clubs for a meeting (check that Lypstone Sailing Club is included).

Next steps:

- Additional meetings organised for specific activities.
- Feedback through local clubs / groups.
- Drafts will be on the EEMP website for six weeks in the New Year for feedback.
- Final designs to be endorsed by the EEMP Management Group in March.
- Promotion on the ground through officers, through local clubs, on signage.