

Code of Conduct Review West Exe Mixed User Meeting

Minutes

18:00 Tuesday 14th November 2017

Location: Starcross Fishing & Cruising Club, Brunel Tower,
The Strand, Starcross, Exeter EX6 8PR



Attendees

Stephanie Clark, Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)
Rowena Garne, Exe Estuary Management Partnership
Emma Barton, Royal Yachting Association (RYA)
Richard Bentley, River Exe Moorings
Councillor Andrew Cadbury, Starcross Parish Council
Paul Cottrell, Local Resident
Dave Curno, Royal Yachting Association
Kate Fortnam, The Green Blue
Sarah Meacock, Teignbridge District Council
Owen Perkins, Lower Exe Crab Tilers Association
Tony Rooke, Warren Gold Club
Jon Ross, Devon and Cornwall Police
Kevin Rouse, Starcross Fishing and Cruising Club
Roger Scobie
Mark Tribe
Mike Western
John Wilkinson, Dawlish Warren Tourism
Alan Wood, Royal Yachting Association
Russell Thompson, Starcross Fishing and Cruising Club

Introduction to Review of Codes from Exe Estuary Officer

- As you will all already know, codes of conduct are in place to allow users to undertake their chosen activities safely, within the law and without creating conflict with others.
- This is particularly important where there is a large variety of activities as on the Exe. Especially as this is an area which attracts large numbers of visitors.
- We are not looking to introduce new restrictions, just to include safety advice and promote best practice.
- We are looking to produce a general code and then more specific codes for activities. Initial suggestions:
 - General code of conduct for all users
 - Dawlish Warren
 - Kite / windsurfing
 - Personal water craft (PWC / Jet Skiing)
 - Sailing
 - Powerboating
 - Waterskiing / wakeboarding
 - Paddle-sports (canoeing / kayaking / rowing / gig rowing / SUP, etc.)
 - Crab tiling
 - Angling
 - Bait digging and cockle raking (bait collection / shellfishing)
 - Dog walking

- In this meeting we will be looking at existing codes from around the Exe as well as codes from other estuaries.
- We'd like to find out which codes you prefer and why, which codes can be combined, what is the preferred format and how you would like them to be circulated.
- Next steps involve getting additional feedback from other groups including activity meetings. Already arranged:
 - Paddlesports: 22 November, 7.30pm, Exe Watersports Association
 - Sailing: 28 November, 2pm, Exe Sailing Club
 - Angling / bait digging / shellfish collecting / crab tiling: 29 November, 7pm, SFCC
- 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 and on signage.

Groups then split into discussions, looking at existing codes.

Discussion: Initial Ideas

- Have a blank section on the front of the codes so that clubs can put their name on it to distribute to members.
- Paid advertisement from local businesses / sponsorship to cover print costs.
- Promote in tide tables.
- Cockwood notice board could contain a supply of the leaflets; need to be distributed in local areas. People could be nominated to top up a supply of leaflets. Could possibly be distributed in Pubs.
- They need to be available at the top of slipways.
- Need to reach casual users – not so much local users. Need to be there so visitors can find out local restrictions.
- Visitors to the estuary would not necessarily search “Exe Estuary Management Partnership” so we would either need a clear page that would come up for more general searches or a new website to promote them.
 - Support for new website, but users not keen on SEDHRP managing this as they have more of a habitat focus and users would want to see inclusion of other things, such as tide times, moorings, visitor information.
 - Neutral organisation to run website e.g. EEMP.
 - Funding to set up website is required - perhaps SEDHRP or Tourism Board / Visit Devon.
 - Incorporation into existing website might be confusing but could work if made clear and easy to find.
 - Minimum requirement is the codes need to be on a website.
- With regard to the Poole example, it was suggested that the map is clear but the information is confusing (too much information).
- Other good examples: Salcombe, Dartmouth, possibly Teign harbour. Maybe not Torbay. Look up other estuary examples.
- Water resistant is preferable – laminated is easiest does not need to be expensive.
- Printed and online versions.
- PWC Partnership to be involved.

Crab Collector Discussion Summary

- Like the current size of their existing leaflet and design.
- Like the way the leaflet opens into a large map.
- The Wildlife Refuges need to be mapped out in different colour to make it clear what is a statutory bylaw and what is a voluntary area.
- Access route marked on the map at Dawlish Warren.
- Add a statement about no access before 2 hours before low water.
- Anyone in the Wildlife Refuge needs a permit / "permit holders only".
- More appropriate image needed on front cover as it looks more wildlife related than crab collector related.
- Remove metre statement regarding commercial oyster and mussel beds – should go both ways.
- Remove dog comment as crab collectors don't go out with dogs.
- The contact details need updating. Update "want to know more" section.
- Happy for a combined code with the bait diggers. Could be called "Bait Collecting Code".
- Don't include anglers or shellfish collectors in this code.
- Some pictures could be dropped.

ACTION: SC to send draft text to all collectors for review.

Angler Discussion Summary

- Separate code for anglers from crab collectors and bait diggers.
- Replace the Angling Trust Wyvern Division logo with the new one.
- Needs to say either side of high tide rather than "approximately 3 hours either side of all tides above 3.1 metres" as this is confusing.
- Update map with different colours for byelaws and voluntary areas such as Wildlife Refuges.
- Access.
- Take your litter home – litter dropped by visitors can give local anglers a bad name.
- Bass nursery area; size of bass; include possibly a link as regulations are constantly changing.

ACTION: SC to check with IFCA for details and whether to include bass nursery area in angling code.

ACTION: SC to send draft text for Dawlish Warren angling code to RT and OP for feedback.

General Code Discussion Summary

- Combined booklet preferred.
- Concise.
- App such as iCoast
 - This would likely be Devon Wide not Exe specific.
 - Opportunity to zoom in to Exe Estuary.
- Too much information on current general code.
- Font is a bit hard to read.
- Illustrations feel juvenile and unfocussed. Need modern graphics.
- "Keep to upper area" – where? Clarity needed.
- Negative language – don't do this, don't do that.
- If drones rules are simple, include in general code – signpost to more information. Use Dartmoor example.

Dog Walking Code Discussion Summary

- Dawlish Warren example is better than East Devon Code for Dog Walking. It is better presented.
- Slightly worried it will discourage dog-less walkers from making use of the beach.

Navigation Discussion

- Scrap it.
- It is unclear.
- Navigation is spelt wrong on leaflet.
- Channel path is no longer correct.

ACTION: SC to converse with Russel Thompson regarding update.

Dawlish Warren Discussion

- Concern that restrictions will discourage visitors from visiting the Exe to avoid birds.
- The proposed plans to winter car parking facilities, to reduce the space and impose summer prices on both sites to railway, are draconian, discouraging residents from visiting the warren. TDC are the authority looking into this.
- Access under the railway is dangerous to pedestrians due to larger vehicles.

Issues highlighted by users

- Landing issue – can't land on estuary at Dawlish Warren but can still walk to the same place. Confusion why the date of landing area is 4th September.

ACTION: SC to raise with Teignbridge District Council.

- Question raised regarding a mussel collecting code.
 - Mussel activity is regulated by D&SIFCA (Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority).
 - Is regulated, rather than having a code.
 - Exmouth Mussels have been invited to speak at Forum.
- Suggestion that issue with mussel collection has caused a reduction in crab numbers and mussel boat has also been causing disruption (i.e. hitting other boats, conflicts with other users landing in mussel beds, rake up moorings). Discussions have been had before but issues have been denied by owner.
- Users would like to know mussel regulations so that they can police, would like to see license conditions.
- Question over tonnage, has this increased over the years?
- Wet moorings can become dry moorings through mussel farming underneath the moorings.
- Photographs of old hide will show difference.

ACTION: SC to ask D&SIFCA whether mussel regulations / licences can be made public, and extend invite from crab collectors to meet on-site with them. SC to also put Exe Mussel Survey 2016 on EEMP website.

- Cyclists to have a code?
 - Exe Estuary Trail and "Share This Space" initiative covers safe cycling practices.

- Cycling UK also has a code of practice.
- Concerned about access under railway – could it be improved? Narrow pavement could be dangerous.
- Winter Forum
 - Cllr Humphrey Clemens will be there to represent SEDHREC
 - We will invite someone from SEDHRP.

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.