

Chief Executive
J S PARTRIDGE

Harbour Master
B J HETHERINGTON



Harbour Office
4 Copperas Road
Brightlingsea
Essex
CO7 0AP
Tel No: 01206 302200
Fax No: 01206 308533
Email:
mail@brightlingseaharbour.org

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Local Notice to Mariners No. 5/09

Activity in the River Colne and Brightlingsea Harbour

This Notice cancels Notices to Mariners 4/09.

This Notice is being promulgated to provide advice to small leisure craft using the River Colne because of traffic created by the daily passage of the crewboats associated with the construction of the Gunfleet Windfarm and based in Brightlingsea.

Adhering to the guidelines detailed below is particularly important for the safety of all vessels especially small vessels which may be particularly vulnerable.

There has been a significant increase in traffic in the River Colne and Brightlingsea Harbour due to the movement of vessels engaged in the construction of the Gunfleet Windfarm. This traffic will continue at the current level until April 2010 and will then reduce but continue for the foreseeable future. The future traffic will consist mostly of small (circa 15 metre) high speed jet driven catamarans.

VHF Communication

For the safety of all vessels in the River Colne all vessels fitted with VHF radio and navigating in the River Colne should keep a listening watch on channel 16 & channel 68. Other vessels should be called on channel 16. If vessels cannot be raised on channel 16, they may be called on channel 68. Vessels in contact with each other should then switch to a mutually agreed working channel. The vessels working on the windfarm use a private channel for calling and communication but sometimes use channel 6 for intership communication.

Dangerous Wash

It is incumbent on all vessels to comply with the IRPCS and travel at a safe speed and avoid a close quarters situation however incidents of dangerous wash from the fast moving crewboats and generator vessels have been reported by small craft.

All small vessels should be considerate of the needs of the above when planning their passage and choose a course to keep a safe distance from the above fast moving vessels which normally use the buoyed channel and avoid anchoring in the navigable channel of the River Colne below Brightlingsea Spit Buoy.

All Gunfleet Windfarm vessels should be aware of the large number of small vessels navigating and fishing in the River Colne estuary including the area below Buoy 13 during and adjust their speed accordingly to avoid creating heavy wash when passing close to small vessels.

Bernie Hetherington - Brightlingsea Harbour Master

Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners is:-

The Competent Harbour Authority for the Statutory Trust Port of Brightlingsea Harbour
The Local Lighthouse Authority and Pilotage Authority for the River Colne from the Inner Bench Head Buoy to the Roman River at Wivenhoe.